

ON RECOGNIZING THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF F. WILLARD VICKERY AND HIS IMPACT ON THE SCOUTING COMMUNITY AND NORTHWEST FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 80th birthday of F. Willard Vickery and his impact on the scouting community and Northwest Florida.

Mr. Vick, as he is known, began his journey in scouting in 1939, obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout 5 years later. Ever since his 12th birthday in 1939, he has held the Boy Scouts of America in the highest regard. Because of this pivotal time in our nation's history, Mr. Vick served as the Scoutmaster when adult leaders were sent off for military service. Soon he would follow his former Scoutmasters' paths by joining the United States Navy upon graduating from high school, and served in the medical corps in Tennessee. He remained in Tennessee after the War's end and attended college there. It was during this time that he became involved once again with scouting at a local camp, and also met Annie, his wife of nearly 59 years.

After graduating college, he became a full-time employee of the Boy Scouts of America in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This was the first of several scouting camps that Mr. Vick would be instrumental in having built throughout the South. Throughout the next decade, his career led him to Georgia and then Arkansas. As his professional experience grew, so did his reputation as a great scout leader. Mr. Vick became known as a leader who put passion into the development of professional young men through the Boy Scouts. In fact, the governor of Arkansas at the time was so impressed that he specifically tasked his son with learning from Mr. Vick.

In the early 1960s, Mr. Vick brought his family to Pensacola, Florida. Soon after, he was named the Executive Scout for the Gulf Coast Council. During his time in this position Mr. Vick made a very notable hire. Roy Williams, who was hired to be the Finance Director, later went on to become the Chief Executive of the Boy Scouts of America. There is no doubt in my mind that the leadership and mentoring provided by Mr. Vick played an instrumental role in shaping Roy into the scout leader he is today.

Roy also worked with many outside the scouting community, including members of First Baptist Church and Rotary International. Mr. Vick was a host for several foreign exchange students and also served on the Community Task Force addressing the problem of violence in public schools. Other educational work included serving as a volunteer drumming teacher to elementary and middle school students.

Certainly, scouting was the mainstay through most of his life, eventually earning him the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award. His strong faith, along with that of his wife Annie, helped to guide and focus men and women of all ages to become better people through helping themselves and helping others.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rec-

ognize F. Willard Vickery on the occasion of his 80th birthday. His leadership through faith and good deeds to this day leaves an everlasting impression on those who know him.

A RESOLUTION TO COMMEMORATE THE FISK JUBILEE SINGERS WITH A POSTAGE STAMP

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution to recommend that the United States Postal Service issue a postage stamp to commemorate the achievements of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers. I would like to thank my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Tennessee Delegation that have joined me to introduce this important legislation.

On January 9, 2007 Fisk University celebrated its 141-year anniversary. Known for its educational excellence and inspirational leadership the heart of Fisk University is found in its Jubilee Singers. The perseverance of the renowned Jubilee Singers has anchored Fisk University's success through the preservation of the Negro Spiritual as a musical art form and contributions to perpetuate the existence of the University.

Sponsorship for this liberal arts institution began with support from the American Missionary Association, as well as a great financial contribution by Tennessee Freedmen's Bureau member, General Clinton B. Fisk. His generosity led him to purchase 42 acres of land to start this school for newly freed slaves, ranging in ages from 6 to 67.

On August 22, 1867, three years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Fisk became incorporated and was finally able to provide students of color with the opportunity to obtain an education. When faced with financial hardship, it was the Jubilee Singers that overcame significant opposition to generate life-sustaining revenue.

The advancement of this choir throughout the racially prejudiced Nashville community brought great struggle and hostility. Parents and University staff were initially opposed to the choir traveling due to the threat of violence. As a result the financial sponsorship from the American Methodist Association denied funding for the school. Against these odds, the director and founder, George L. White, persevered and scheduled the choir a tour in the fall of 1867. Mr. White told the A.M.A., "I'm depending on God, not you," and set off with his singers and the last \$40 of the school's treasury.

Madam Speaker, the Fisk Jubilee Singers then embarked on what became an international tour to raise funds for Fisk University. Their first grand appearance was for a National Convention for Influential Ministers, in Ohio at Oberlin College. It was one of the first public performances of the secret music that African Americans had sung in fields and behind closed doors. In this performance, Negro Spirituals, which had been a means of communication and the celebration of spirituality for centuries, were first introduced to the public sphere.

The highlight of their international tour was an audience with Queen Victoria. Over-

whelmed with the choir's performance, Her Royal Majesty bestowed on the Jubilee Singers a gift of \$50,000. Her enthusiasm for the choir led to the painting of the life-size portrait of the original 11 Jubilee Singers. Over many years of performances the Jubilee Singers were able to raise over \$100,000 to finance the continued existence of Fisk University.

Madam Speaker, the accomplishments of the Jubilee Singers remain the reason Fisk University is able to educate students today. As a Fisk graduate, this institution of learning is responsible for my participation in this great Congress. Thus, commemorating the Jubilee Singers with a First Class U.S. postage stamp would be a tremendous honor to acknowledge the sacrifice and remember the services of these young individuals.

It took immense determination to pursue an education after many years of condemnation and rejection. The majority of the Jubilee Singers were ex-slaves; however, this did not hinder their achievement. Their status did not dictate or hinder their dreams of success. They used their gift of music to portray the realities and stories of their lives.

It was the commitment and hard work of the Jubilee Singers that should be highly regarded as a selfless act. Having the perseverance to fight racism, to overcome the constant hardship of personal financial troubles, through sickness, and fatigue, they continued for the sake of posterity.

Madam Speaker, commemorating the Jubilee Singers with a First Class postage stamp will acknowledge their legacy to the world. According to the National Science Foundation, Fisk alumni earned more doctoral degrees in the natural sciences than African-American graduates from any other college or university in the Nation.

The original students who left Fisk University in October 6, 1871, never had the opportunity to finish their education. Yet instead they risked their lives to save Fisk University knowing one day their dreams would come true.

Madam Speaker, for their past accomplishments and continued success for the future, I ask Congress to commemorate these heroes of my alma mater with a United States postage stamp. The legacy of the Fisk Jubilee Singers should be recognized as an enduring triumph of American history. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and ask the House Leadership to swiftly bring this resolution to the floor for consideration.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL DAY OF SERBIA AND HONORING SERBIA FOR 125 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

HON. MELISSA L. BEAN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Ms. BEAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate National Day of Serbia, which observes the anniversary of the adoption of Serbia's first modern constitution in 1835. In addition, this year marks Serbia's first National Day as an independent nation-state.

February 15th is also Armed Forces Day in Serbia which commemorates the beginning of