

CONGRATULATING EASTERN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL'S CLASSES OF 1957, 1958 AND 1959 ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR 50TH YEAR CLASS REUNION

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Eastern High School graduating classes of 1957, 1958, and 1959. These alumni will be remembered in the history of our country as the first African Americans to attend classes that were no longer segregated in the District of Columbia after the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The courage and determination shown by these pioneers when they were teenagers were harbingers of the success, professional achievement, and exemplary lives that have characterized the classes of 1957, 1958, and 1959.

I ask the House to join me in honoring the 50th anniversary classes of 1957, 1958, and 1959 at Eastern High School in the Nation's capital.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AS THE HONORED SERVICE AT MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY AT EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today before you to pay tribute to the United States Coast Guard, who will be the honored service on October 18th, 2008, during Military Appreciation Day at East Carolina University's home football game against Memphis. East Carolina University, which is in my district, has long demonstrated an appreciation for the Armed Services and the incredible sacrifices their members make on a daily basis.

The United States Coast Guard operates several commands in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, which I have the privilege of representing. Among these commands is the National Strike Force Coordination Center (NSFCC), which is responsible for responding to chemical, biological, and radiological events, National Security Events, and Weapons of Mass Destruction events. The NSFCC is the command component of three subordinate teams and oversees operations of the Atlantic Strike Team, Gulf Strike Team, and Pacific Strike Team.

Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City is an Air Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, Port and Waterway Patrols, and Homeland Security component. Air Station Elizabeth City also supports the Coast Guard Atlantic Area, and International Ice Patrol. Support Center Elizabeth City is responsible for providing logistical support for the tenant commands located on the Coast Guard base in Elizabeth City.

Coast Guard Station Elizabeth City deals with surface response for Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, Port and Waterways Pa-

trols, and Homeland Security. The Aviation Repair and Supply Center (AR&SC) is responsible for maintaining the parts and supply inventory, technical data and conducting repairs for Coast Guard aviation assets. The Aviation Technical Training Center (ATTC) is responsible for training mechanical and electrical aviation engineers and airmen.

During the ECU game, Rear Admiral Ronald Hewitt, Commander of Maintenance and Logistics Command Atlantic Area, will serve as the senior Coast Guard representative. Petty Officer Joseph Ruggiero will assist with the coin toss. Petty Officer Ruggiero received the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal for his selfless service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A Coast Guard fly-over will precede the action on the field, and the Coast Guard will display several small boats, a dive locker, and information tables to represent various service missions.

Madam Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to all of our armed services, but especially the United States Coast Guard for their continued support and vigilance in defense of our Nation.

HONORING JAY CEE PAGE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jay Cee Page of Kansas City, Missouri. Jay is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1740, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jay has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Jay has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Jay Cee Page for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN CURRY

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to submit the following thoughtful memorial that ran in the *Island Packet* in Hilton Head Island, SC, remembering the life and service of John Curry. John was a dear friend and a lifelong leader in his community.

[From the *Island Packet*, Sept. 28, 2008]

A LOOK AT THE LIFE OF ISLAND TOURISM CHAMPION JOHN CURRY

(By Janet Smith and David Lauderdale)

For 35 years, John Curry had a singular impact on the development of Hilton Head Island's tourism industry and the island's place in the world.

That impact came in a determined pursuit to keep Hilton Head viable, even through the toughest of economic times, and to maintain what drew millions of visitors and the island's nearly 40,000 permanent residents here in the first place.

Curry, 78, died Friday night at Hilton Head Hospital after suffering a brain aneurysm during lunch with his wife, Valerie, and friends at the Hilton Head Yacht Club.

Only the late Charles Fraser, who carved a new community out of the forests of Sea Pines and set the stage for future planned communities, did more to shape the island's modern development. But Curry, who came to Hilton Head to work for Fraser in 1973 as executive vice president of the old Sea Pines Co., dealt with the nuts and bolts of legislation, incorporation and operations that ultimately shaped Hilton Head as a resort destination and residential community. In the process, he shaped tourism statewide.

Along the way, he played a critical role in creating the Town of Hilton Head Island and establishing the island as a year-round resort community. He also helped negotiate and get through the legislature the state accommodations tax, which has provided millions of dollars in marketing money for the local tourism industry, as well as funding for arts and cultural groups here.

CENTER OF THE STORM

Curry's work was not without controversy. He often was caught up in the clash of competing tourism and residential interests and served as a lightning rod for those who thought the island was changing for the worse. As the tourism industry's most visible spokesman, he took the heat for the industry, accused of putting self-interest over community interests.

He played that same lightning rod role at the Hilton Head Island Airport, serving on the Beaufort County Aviation Advisory Board for many years.

Native islander Perry White said he and Curry agreed on little, if anything, in 35 years of tangling on issues from incorporation of the island to expansion of the airport.

But White said their disagreements were never personal. They even swapped stories about lessons learned from their grandfathers.

"I had tremendous respect for John, and I think he had respect for me," White said. "John's contributions were tremendous. I'll miss John. He was one of the mediating forces on the Airport Advisory Board, and with all the firebrands coming on now, I'm beginning to appreciate that more."

The last time the two saw each other was at a recent Beaufort County Council committee meeting. Curry handed White a copy of a proposed charter change to the airport advisory board.

BACK FROM THE BRINK

One of Curry's toughest business challenges came in November 1986, when he was tapped to run Hilton Head's largest employer as it plunged into bankruptcy.

Curry was named trustee for Hilton Head Holdings Corp., a company that had been cobbled together from the assets of two long-time island companies—the Sea Pines Co. and the Hilton Head Co.—less than two years before. The company owned property and business operations in Sea Pines, Shipyard, Wexford, Port Royal and Indigo Run. Its collapse directly affected a third of the island, but the entire community reeled from the blow.

The company was in debt to the tune of \$100 million, 90 percent of that in real estate mortgages. But more than 2,000 creditors, many of them local businesses, were owed \$10 million.

The bankruptcy threatened not only individual livelihoods, but the reputation of Hilton Head as a first-class resort and the future of the island's premier sporting event, the Heritage Classic professional golf tournament. National media swarmed to Hilton Head to cover the story of a premier resort falling into disrepute.

The island company had been wrested from developer Bobby Ginn earlier in 1986 and put in the hands of a New York businessman, Philip Schwab. But Schwab's financial empire collapsed, along with the savings and loan industry, pulling down the Hilton Head properties.

Schwab was supposed to prop up the failing island company. Instead, he started pulling money out of Hilton Head. Schwab said that his net worth at the time he took control of the company was \$50 million to \$60 million; he estimated in 1987 that he owed \$500 million.

When asked in October 1987 what he had told people he would do to save the company, Schwab replied, "Nobody ever asked me."

U.S. District Judge Sol Blatt Jr., who appointed Curry as trustee, and former S.C. Gov. John West succeeded in getting the South Carolina properties separated from the rest of Schwab's holdings. Blatt took the rare step of holding on to the bankruptcy case rather than turn it over to a U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge. Blatt for many years owned a house in Palmetto Dunes and was a longtime friend of West.

Blatt, West and Curry had no bankruptcy experience. (At one of the first hearings in the case, Blatt described himself and West as "the blind leading the blind.") Curry's resort operations experience brought him to the table.

The challenge was to balance what they thought was right for Hilton Head with the pressures to sell the company's assets for the most money possible to pay off creditors. Those competing interests made for fiery court hearings, and it eventually resulted in Blatt's removal from the case by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. The court said Blatt's Hilton Head ties had created at least the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Blatt's activism was extremely unusual, but the fear of lasting repercussions for Hilton Head was palpable. In January 1987, Blatt said, "I'm not going to supervise the demise of Hilton Head Island when I can stop it."

Throughout 1987, Curry and his team struggled to keep resort and real estate operations going while figuring out how to keep the gated communities caught in the bankruptcy as intact as possible.

KEEPING THE HERITAGE

Saving the Heritage also was a primary goal. The PGA Tour was unhappy with the condition of Harbour Town Golf Links, where the Heritage was played. The course had been neglected as the Sea Pines Co.'s fortunes sank. Making matters worse was that the purse check for another Tour event held at Harbour Town in the fall of 1986 had bounced.

Curry flew to Jacksonville, Fla., to meet with the PGA Tour commissioner. When told the only way to keep the Heritage was to sell Harbour Town Golf Links to the Tour, Curry got up and walked out. It worked.

The tournament stayed, and Curry then leaned on Angus Cotton, who had moved to the island in 1981 as general manager of the Marriott resort hotel in Shipyard, to produce a \$1 million letter of credit from local businesses to guarantee the purse for the 1987 tournament. To do it, they formed the non-profit Heritage Classic Foundation to stage the tournament. To date, that group's charitable giving from tournament proceeds has topped \$16 million.

In the end, the bankrupt company's Sea Pines assets went to residents of that community who put together their own company, Sea Pines Associates. Most of the other properties went back to mortgage holder Marathon Oil Co. Indigo Run ended up in the hands of the Federal Resolution Trust Corp. and was sold to the Melrose Co. in 1991.

After getting baptized in the arcane world of bankruptcy law, Curry continued to work as a trustee in many other cases.

'HEADS IN BEDS'

But Curry's most enduring legacy will be his work in tourism.

"Before John, we had tourism but it was almost always linked to selling real estate," Cotton said. "He was interested in putting heads in beds and pushing tourism in the off-peak months."

Curry and Cotton took countless trips to cold cities, pitching the island and offering tourism leaders there free stays back on Hilton Head.

Friends say that no matter where Curry went around the world, he always seemed to know people.

Cotton and others worked with Curry to shape the state Accommodations Tax Act in 1984. With assurances that part of the 2 percent tax on overnight lodging would go to local tourism marketing and to local organizations to promote tourism, Curry helped sell it to skeptical industry leaders statewide.

Curry, who led the island's Visitor and Convention Bureau for 17 years, also pushed legislation to relax state liquor laws and allow Sunday sales.

"He was very pragmatic," Cotton said, "very pragmatic. In the arts and education and a lot of other ways people didn't see, he was behind the scenes trying to smooth the way and work things out."

FLYING HIGH

To understand Curry's involvement with the airport, one first must understand his passion for flying, said David Ames, chairman of county Aviation Advisory Board and a close friend of Curry's. They shared office space for 20 years.

"I think he was happiest in the air," Ames said. "He just loved the adventure and the freedom flying gave him."

As a tourism leader, Curry also understood how important the airport is to the economy and the island experience, Ames said.

"John believed the airport provided an essential support for the standard of life on the island," he said. "The convenience of the island airport is tremendously important, and John knew that. And coming from the service business, he knew it was important how a passenger feels about Hilton Head when getting off that airplane. He was always looking for ways to make the airport better, and he spent whatever time it took."

Bill Miles, president and CEO of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, said, "The Hilton Head Island we know today is in part due to the tireless efforts of John, with his wonderful obsession to get it right and make this the unique destination it has become. He created a lasting legacy for us all, with courage, true grit, determination and with a real grace and style that was all his own."

In memory of John Curry.

A memorial service for John Curry, 78, is at 2 p.m. Monday at First Presbyterian Church, 540 William Hilton Parkway.

Surviving are his wife of 36 years, Valerie; three sons, David (Rozana) Curry of Burbank, Calif., Edward (Kelly) Curry of Toluca Lake, Calif., and Donn Curry of Portland, Ore.; two grandchildren, Matthew and Adam Curry; a brother, David Curry of Berkeley, Calif.; and a former daughter-in-law, Lynn

Curry. He was preceded in death by his twin sister, Jeanette; and his first wife, Martha Weathersbee Curry.

100-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF METHODIST HOSPITAL, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the 100-year anniversary of the Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. I am fortunate to have such a hospital facility in my district. Over 100 years ago, on October 25, 1905, the cornerstone for Methodist Hospital was laid. Three years later, in 1908, the hospital was open to the public. Patient fees started at \$7 a week and the hospital adopted a policy to care for the impoverished at no charge. Many things have changed since then. The hospital has grown in size and provides new services to fit the ever-growing needs of the city. But many things have stayed the same. The hospital's commitment to serve the disadvantaged and provide state-of-the-art, innovative medical care is as important a part of Methodist's mission today as it was 100 years ago.

Methodist Hospital has always been on the forefront of health care. During the baby boom of the 1940s, it established the first premature birth station in the state. Methodist was the first Indiana hospital to perform open-heart surgery, in 1965. Seven years later, in 1972, its doctors performed the state's first kidney transplant. In 1982 the world's first successful heart transplant at a private hospital was performed at Methodist, followed 7 years later by the performance of the state's first heart lung transplant.

Today, Methodist is one of only two adult regional Level 1 Trauma centers in Indiana. It houses an 899-bed facility and is one of the largest teaching hospitals in the Midwest. It runs the Indiana Poison Center in addition to staffing the LifeLine helicopter ambulances. Additionally, Methodist is also the official health care provider for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the doctors, nurses and health care professionals for being part of such an exceptional health care organization and thank them for their dedication to the health and well-being of the people of Indiana.

HONORING JEREMY JAMES FAJEN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 2, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Jeremy James Fajen of Blue Springs, Missouri. Jeremy is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1763, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Jeremy has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the