

Mrs. Edith Armstead Gray. Mrs. Gray passed away December 1 at the age of 99. Mrs. Gray was a lady of style, grace, and compassion. But, most of all, Mrs. Gray earned the highest honor that could be bestowed upon any of us: "Servant."

Mrs. Gray was born in Galveston, Texas, in 1910 to Henry and Millie Armstead. She enrolled at Tuskegee Institute, now University, as a student majoring in home economics. She accepted her first and only teaching job in Conecuh County, Alabama, and returned to summer school to earn her B.S. degree from Tuskegee in 1940.

During her extraordinary teaching career, she became a great role model for thousands of young men and women who entered her classroom. But, her commitment and dedication to humankind did not limit itself to the classroom.

Shirley Chisholm once said that "Service is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth." Mrs. Gray paid her rent and she paid it well. She gave dedicated service to many community organizations to include: the Conecuh County branch of the NAACP; the Evergreen Housing Authority board of directors; the Neoteric Club, now associated with Neoteric Clubs of Alabama; the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion Church; the County Retired Teachers Association; and a life member of the advisory board at Reid Technical College. Because of her dedicated service to Reid Technical College, the library and technology center now proudly bears her name.

Mrs. Gray was a trailblazer. She was a founding member of the Conecuh branch of the NAACP and the Neoteric Club. She worked tirelessly to make sure that citizens in her community exercised their power of the ballot.

Mrs. Gray married Philander A. Gray in 1936. From that union came three accomplished children: Phyllis Hallmon, my chief of staff, Frederick Gray, and Jerome Gray. Upon the death of her husband in 1953, as a single parent, she reared her three children and passed on to each of them a love for people and public service. All of them have had distinguished careers and are making their mark on the world because of their mother's strong influence. Frederick has served for many years as a United Methodist pastor. His charge has been to bring souls to Jesus Christ for His service. Jerome has served as the State Field Director for the Alabama Democratic Conference. Like his dear mother, he has devoted his life and work to the expansion of political and civic opportunities for African-Americans. He has been involved in many capacities at the local and state levels in the fight for civil rights and equal opportunities. He currently serves as a Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Alabama. Phyllis has also had a distinguished career, serving as a public school teacher, government lawyer, legislative director to a United States Senator, and chief of staff to two Members of the United States House of Representatives. In the same vein as her mother, she has distinguished herself as a woman of hard work and compassion. The legacy of Mrs. Gray will live on through each of them and their progeny.

Her legacy of good will is something that we all should seek to replicate. Our country and our world are better because Edith Armstead Gray passed this way. She will be sorely missed. I know that after 99 years of dedi-

cated earthly service, she has now claimed her crown of righteousness.

I extend my deepest sympathies to the Gray family and thank them for sharing this special woman with the world for so many years.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR PAULA
HAWKINS

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, it is with sadness that I report to the House of Representatives the passing of former United States Senator Paula Hawkins. Florida's former State Public Service Commissioner and U.S. Senator died Friday, December 4 in Orlando, Florida. With Paula Hawkins' passing, we have lost a remarkable public servant and trailblazer for women and all Americans in the state and national political landscape.

A resident of Winter Park, Florida, who began her public career in nearby Maitland, Florida, was born Paula Fickes in Salt Lake City, Utah, on January 24, 1927. She received her education from the public school systems in Salt Lake City and Richmond, Utah, as well as, Atlanta, Georgia, attending Utah State University from 1944–1947.

In 1972, she became the first woman in Florida elected statewide with her winning a seat on the Public Service Commission. With her election and work to reform Florida's State Utility Commission, she gained the name as the battling "Maitland Housewife." In 1980, she became the first woman elected to the United States Senate without being preceded in office by a husband or family member.

In the United States Senate, she authored the Missing Children's Act in 1982. During her 6-year term, she championed children's and women's issues and created a public dialogue on the subject of missing, exploited and abused children. "Senator Paula Hawkins was tireless, tenacious and an incredible champion for America's children," said Ernie Allen, President of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. "We will cherish her memory and miss her very much."

Senator Hawkins was also responsible for the passage of Radio Marti legislation and a number of measures assisting women in the workforce. She Chaired the Investigation and Oversight Subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. In addition, the Senator served as Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Children, Family, Youth and Drugs and was responsible for establishing the U.S. Senate Child Care Center.

Mrs. Hawkins was instrumental in building the Republican Party, both at the state and national level. She began her GOP work at the local level, served as National Republican Committeewoman from Florida and co-chaired the 1984 Republican Convention Platform Committee. Senator Hawkins was also state co-chair in Florida for several successful Republican Presidential campaigns.

Senator Hawkins received numerous awards and was honored by selection to Florida's Outstanding Women's Hall of Fame.

Prior to election to the U.S. Senate she served as a vice president of Air Florida 1979–1980; director, Rural Telephone Bank

board 1972–1978; member President's Commission on White House fellowships 1975; served on Federal Energy Administration Consumer Affairs/Special Impact Advisory Committee 1974–1976; and served for 7 years as a representative for the United States on the Organization of American States Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission.

Senator Hawkins is survived by her husband Gene Hawkins of Winter Park, Florida and three children, Genean McKinnon of Winter Park and Montreal, Kevin Hawkins of Denver, Colorado and Kelly McCoy of Orlando, Florida, as well as, 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

SPEECH ON AFGHANISTAN

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, on Friday December 4, 2009, I had an opportunity to address the American Security Project Conference regarding the situation in Afghanistan. This speech followed a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, which I chair, the day before. My address is as follows:

[Speech given at the American Security Project Conference, Dec. 4, 2009]

BEYOND THE SURGE: ASSESSING THE
PRESIDENT'S AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY

(By Ike Skelton)

First, let me take a moment to thank Admiral Gunn for that introduction. You're too kind. I'd like to extend that thanks to Senator Hart and the American Security Project as a whole. You're doing great work, and I appreciate your efforts. I'd also like to say happy birthday to Evelyn Farkas, here at ASP. I would also like to thank our brave men and women in uniform. We have asked much of them in the past decade, and they have not failed to deliver.

Two months ago, I wrote a letter to the President saying, essentially, that he should listen to his commanders in the field. Being a member of Congress, I took six pages to say that, but that was the basic message. I made that same point in private conversations with the President. And so it pleased me the other night when the President agreed to provide General McChrystal with additional forces needed to make this new strategy work.

But before assessing the overall strategy, I think we should take a moment to remind ourselves why we're in Afghanistan and the threat we face there.

Al Qaeda presents a serious threat to our nation. Osama bin Laden and his minions have attacked us or attempted to attack us many times over the years. The most remarkable attack involved the murder of 3000 civilians—men, women, and children—but it was hardly the only attack. And I do not believe that anyone has a good reason to believe that they have given up their attempts to attack us.

Following our invasion of Afghanistan in response to this attack, al Qaeda largely fled to the border regions of Pakistan. Their Taliban allies, meanwhile, continue to escalate their attacks in an attempt to overthrow the Afghan government and drive out the international coalition.

Others have differing opinions on this, but I do not believe that we can ultimately destroy al Qaeda if we cannot prevent them from recreating a safe haven in Afghanistan.