

Finally, our bill limits the amount of the refund for those less in need of financial support. The full refund is available up to incomes of \$110,000 for a joint return, \$75,000 for an individual return, and \$55,000 for a married individual filing a separate return. Above these levels, the refund is decreased by \$50 by every \$1,000 over the threshold level, and is phased out above \$130,000 for a joint return and \$95,000 of an individual return.

The need for long-term care will continue to grow as the average age of Americans increases. By 2010, those children born in 1945 will begin to retire. According to a recent CBO report, in the year 2010 there will be 40.6 million people over the age of 65—a 14 percent increase from the year 2000. The trend will continue. By 2040, there will be 77.9 million people over the age of 65, 118 percent more than in 2000. Indeed, the 85 and older age group is the fastest growing segment of the population.

This proposal will have significant effect on revenue, but given the size of the problem and in the spirit of compassionate government, it is a step that we can find a way to afford.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GEORGE VERNON IRONS, SR.

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I want to celebrate the life of Dr. George Vernon Irons, Sr., distinguished professor of history and political science at Samford University, 43 years, distinguished professor emeritus, 22 years, who passed away July 21, 1998.

Dr. Irons was a record breaking champion athlete at the University of Alabama in the 1920's. Sportswriters described him as the "Ironman of Alabama, Crimson Machine and South's Premiere Distance Runner" for his remarkable athletic feats. His accomplishments have been heralded by legendary great, Paul Bear Bryant as "truly outstanding athletic achievements," and Coach Wallace Wade (three time Rose Bowl winner) as the "greatest distance runner of his day." In 1978 Dr. Irons was inducted into the prestigious Alabama Sports Hall of Fame on the first ballot—an honor achieved by only three men: Paul Bear Bryant, Ralph Shug Jordan and Dr. George Irons.

As Captain of the Alabama distance team, he broke the record for the B'ham Road Race (1923) by twenty seconds in a cold, hard driving December rain. Captain Irons record has never been equaled or broken. Irons was the Southern (S.I.A.A. now S.E.C.) champion of the 2, 3, 3½, and 4 mile events. He is the only University of Alabama track man—the only distance man—inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame—rare honors he holds over 30 years after the Hall of Fame's creation.

A Phi Beta Kappa honor graduate—Rhodes Scholar Nominee—he went on to earn his doctorate at Duke University, before joining Samford's faculty in 1933. Dr. Irons also distinguished himself in World War II, rising to

the rank of colonel—with 33 years active and reserve duty—a Samford faculty record.

Mr. Speaker, over 50 Alabama cities have passed proclamations or resolutions honoring this admired Alabamian—yet another record for this remarkable Alabamian. I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Irons eulogy, delivered by his former student, Dr. James Moebes, senior minister, Mountain Brook Baptist Church, be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for America to share the life of this record breaking champion athlete for the Alabama Crimson Tide, distinguished university educator and valiant colonel, who defended his nation for a third of the 20th century in war and peace.

EULOGY FOR DR. GEORGE VERNON IRONS, SR.
MOUNTAIN, BROOK BAPTIST CHURCH CHAPEL,
JULY 27, 1998—DELIVERED BY DR. JAMES D.
MOEBES, SENIOR MINISTER, FULL MILITARY
HONORS

I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in Me, will never ever die. The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The world and they that dwell therein, for He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in His holy place. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity or sworn deceitfully, he shall receive his blessings from the Lord and righteousness from the Son of God of his own salvation. For reckoning that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with that glory shall be revealed in us. Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, or standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. For his delight is in the law of the Lord and in that law doth he meditate, day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water. He shall bring forth his fruit in due season; his leaf shall not wither; whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Dr. George Vernon Irons was born on the 7th of August, 1902, in Demopolis, Alabama. His father, Dr. Andrew George Irons, was a Presbyterian minister. His father came from the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. He was a magna cum laude graduate, Washington and Lee University in Lexington, VA. As instructor, Supt., Marengo Academy, he taught, and was interested in young people. He was always on the lookout for those that showed promise. He ran across a student, a young man named Henry Edmonds. He knew that he had some ability. He sought out Henry's father. Talked with him about his son going to college, getting an education, becoming a leader. But Edmonds' father thought his son would make a good southern plowboy. Well, Revered Irons arranged to get a scholarship for Henry Edmonds. And we owe him a debt of gratitude. Henry later, Dr. Edmonds established Independent Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Al—A wonderful congregation. Dr. Edmonds was a man of vision and leadership and he has acknowledged Rev. Irons as a source of his inspiration and motivation in his formative years.

Dr. Irons was one who also inspired people. When he entered the University of Alabama, he had never run in an organized race before. He said he sort of started running by accident. Because when he was a freshman, the upper class students—if they found out you were a freshman—would paddle you. And he said when they stopped you, you had one of

two choices: either you lied or you ran. He said: "Now Don't ask me which one I chose—I did some of both." So he became a runner! When the train whistle would sound every day, he knew he had 10 minutes to get to class and he would dash across campus, from where he lived, near the University of Alabama's campus.

Well, from such beginnings, he became known as "The South's Greatest Distance Runner," and the "Knight of the Cinderpath." During my years at Alabama, I became familiar with their yearbook—The Corolla. In the 1923 Corolla, George Irons was referred to this way. These are quotes. He was captain of the track team, captain of the cross country or distance team, and this is what fellow students said about him: "One of the true greats of Alabama athletic history. An honor man in scholarship and a record breaking athlete. That's a real man! A scholarly Christian gentleman."

Wouldn't it be wonderful to write in those terms today? "Scholarly Christian gentleman." They concluded: "He has no equal in the southland." Now, an interesting thing happened while a student. Coach Wallace Wade, head football coach, sent word to the track team, that he wanted them to scrimmage his football team. Now, this was the undefeated Rose Bowl team on which Johnny Mack Brown was all-American. When I was six or seven, Johnny Mack Brown was one of my heroes. I did not know he had been all-American at the University of Alabama. I thought he had just ridden horses all his life, shot pistols. Well, Dr. Irons never backed off a good challenge, so he fired over to the practice field. And they ran an endsweep, and Johnny Mack Brown was carrying the ball with only one man between him and goal line—George Irons. Irons took him on—one on one. And he stuck him good and he brought him to the ground.

Well, years later, in a routine examination, there was an x-ray, and his physician son—Dr. George, Jr.—said to him, "Dad, do you realize you have an old fracture in your collarbone?" Dr. Irons' thoughts raced back to that autumn afternoon, and he replied, "Yes, yes, I knew it was a little stiff for a couple of weeks, but I put him on the ground!"

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate, Dr. Irons taught at the University of Alabama from 1923-1925. Then earned his Ph.D. degree from Duke University, where he taught history from 1931-1933, before joining the faculty at Howard College—now Samford University. And I see his dear friends of Samford here—so many—even standing outside our chapel—here to pay respect to this beloved and admired Alabamian. Because of Dr. Irons—Samford is one of the finest universities in America.

Then World War II came along, and Dr. Irons served as colonel in the anti-aircraft battalion, defending New York on D-Day. The War Department asked him to write field manuals for anti-air-craft weapons and searchlights. Dr. Irons said he knew those manuals had to have fallen into the hands of the Japanese, and that's why they weren't able to shoot down a single allied plane.

Well, during his 43 years as a history and political science professor at Samford—chairman of his department 25 of those years—Dr. Irons taught seventeen students who became university presidents—more than any other university educator. He was a founding member of the Alabama Historical Society in 1947. Last year they celebrated their 50th anniversary here at Mountain Brook in this chapel. And I enjoyed sharing some precious moments with Dr. Irons—our last.

But I shall never forget, I met him in 1959. Thirty-nine years, I have known, admired and loved this man! I'll never forget how, when we started an examination, he would say, "Now class, we want to have a little spread formation." So the class would spread out.

Some of you, he would say, might want to go into "punt formation." Then he would call his questions out audibly. Getting down to questions 13 and 14, he would say, "Now there were three Napoleonic battles in this era." And you'd think, "Oh, my, I only recall two." Then Dr. Irons would say: "Questions 13 and 14—you just name two. Two battles is all I want—just two. Well, classmates sighed, "Thank you Lord, Thank you." So we answered 13 and 14. Then Dr. Irons said: "Everybody ready? O.K., question 15—list the other battle." And students would pound their desktops.

Dr. Irons has a member of the Southern Historical Association, the Alabama Baptist Historical Association, the B'Ham-Jefferson Historical Association, and the John Forney Historical Association. He was past president of the Alabama Writers Conclave. Received a service plaque from the organization in 1977. He served as vice-president of the Alabama Academy of Science. Dr. Irons was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal from Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge, PA, 1962. George Washington Honor Certificate in 1963. As director of Samford's Freedom Foundation project, the school received eighteen consecutive awards. An achievement unmatched by any other school or institution. Dr. Irons received the dedication of the *Entre Nous*—the university annual—on four occasions: 1941, 1960, 1969, and 1974, the student body's highest honor. No other has received that number.

Dr. Catherine Allen recalls Dr. Irons' leadership as chairman of the board of deacons at Rhuama Baptist Church during her years there. Dr. Tom Camp recalls his loyal service at Southside Baptist—as a member, Sunday school teacher, deacon and lifetime deacon—a beloved member there.

He was preceded in death by the love of his life—Velma—distinguished educator in her own right. Many folks don't realize that Dr. Irons was a distinguished member of the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. Only Samford faculty man ever inducted. Only three have been elected to membership in the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame on the very first ballot in the history of that organization: Paul Bear Bryant, Ralph Shug Jordan and Dr. George V. Irons. They will miss him indeed at those gatherings.

He became a distinguished professor of history and political science, emeritus, 22 years of total service to Samford—65 years—a record. He was a gentle spirit—a gentle man. For me, like many of you—he was a mentor. The primary reason I minored in history. His lectures were so captivating, instructive yet entertaining. I'll always be grateful for a copy of his hand-written testimony—he shared that personal testimony wherever he went. As you might guess for a noted sportsman, he entitled it: "My Gameplan." It had three simple points. The first was: I have faith in God. He had under that particular point made reference to a hymn—"Awake My Soul—Stretch Every Nerve." Listen to the runner's heart and soul in this hymn: "Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve, and press with vigor on! A heavenly race demands thy zeal, and an immortal crown and in an immortal crown. A cloud of witnesses around, hold thee in full survey, forget the steps already trod, and onward urge thy way,

and onward urge thy way, blest Saviour, introduced by Thee, have I my race begun, and crowned with victory, at thy feet, I'll lay my honors down, I'll lay my honors down!"

He won 30 trophies as a record breaking champion athlete at the University of Alabama. None of those and all of them combined would not begin to have the meaning to him compared to the love of the Lord Christ. Have faith in God! Here was his second: Have faith in yourself. As a distance runner—you had better! And this is how Dr. Irons said it: "When your helper is in you (not just with you) you cannot fail in all that really counts—regardless of this world's outlook and evaluation."

Then, he concluded his personal testimony with this final point. III. Read the holy word. This is contact with your God. George Irons knew the Lord. I conclude with this part of the scripture. Do you not know, have you not heard, the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the Earth. He will not grow tired or weary. And His understanding, no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary, and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord, will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.

Thank You God—for George Vernon Irons. His wonderful, wonderful family—those who have known him best and loved him best. Who he has known best and loved so dearly. Holy Father, he has run with patience the race of life and he has brought the banner home. He has fought a good fight, he has finished his course, he has kept the faith. Thank Thee for what he has meant to every one of us. Thank Thee for George, Jr., thank Thee for Bill, grandson, great grandson—all the family. For the happiness they have shared together. For the joy they have known in life because of this wonderful man. Thank Thee for the many lives in which he has made a difference. Thank Thee, that he has taken that which was so very rough and polished a few of the edges, knocked off some of the sharp places, taught us a few lessons, and helped us to be on our way. Thank Thee for his wonderful Christian spirit—for that mountain of modesty at the center of his being, for that quick mind, for that winsome personality, for that wonderful wit. For those things in life in which he stood so very tall. Thank Thee for this Christian southern gentleman. Having shared some of life with him, may we be found the stronger for the living of life in these days. May his light always shine before us, that we would see his good works, but then glorify his father who is in Heaven. Thank Thee that he lives there now with Thee. Bless him and hold him close now and forever. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus our Saviour, we pray. Amen. For this Christian soldier who defended his nation for a third of the 20th century in war and peace we will close with the organ piece: onward Christian soldiers—as he requested. Please remember the words and how they related to the life of this admired and beloved Alabamian, as we stand together and depart.

THE COUNTY SCHOOLS FUNDING REVITALIZATION ACT OF 1999

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, along with my colleague Representative NATHAN DEAL, I introduced H.R. 2389, the "County Schools Funding Revitalization Act of 1999." This legislation is based on principles that were part of a compromise agreement reached by the National Forest Counties & Schools Coalition. This bill is significant because it was developed not by a "Washington knows best", top-down approach, but rather through "a home-grown", bottom-up approach that has finally reached a consensus. This unique coalition includes over 500 groups from approximately 32 states including school superintendents (including Hal Summers, School Superintendent of Liberty County, Florida Schools), county commissioners (including the Columbia County, Florida Board of County Commissioners), educators, several labor groups, the National Educational Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

In 1908, the federal government recognized that counties with federal lands were at an economic disadvantage since the federal government was the dominant landowner in many of these communities and therefore these counties were powerless to tax these lands. Recognizing this, Congress entered into a compact with rural forest communities in which 25% of the revenues from National Forests would be paid to the states for impacted counties in compensation for their diminished local property tax base. By law, these revenues finance rural public schools and local road infrastructure. As one can imagine, these counties relied heavily on this revenue for education and infrastructure.

However, in recent years, the principal source of these revenues, federal timber sales, has been sharply curtailed due to changes in federal forest management policy, and those revenues shared with states and counties have declined precipitously. Payments to many counties have dropped to less than 10% of their historic levels under this compact. This impact on rural communities and schools has been staggering. The decline in shared revenues has severely impacted or crippled educational funding, and the quality of education provided, in the affected counties. Many schools have been forced to lay off teachers, bus drivers, nurses, and other employees; postpone badly needed building repairs and other capital expenditures; eliminate lunch programs; and curtail extracurricular activities.

Rural communities have also suffered from severe economic downturns causing high unemployment, domestic violence, substance abuse, and family dislocation. They are finding it difficult to recruit new business and to meet the demands of health and social issues associated with the displacement and unemployment. Finally, local county budgets have also been badly strained that communities have been forced to cut funding for social programs and local infrastructure to offset lost 25% payment revenues.