

WILLIE MACK (1927-1999)—A LIFE WITH INTENT

**HON. WILLIAM (BILL) CLAY**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 27, 1999*

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the death of and to celebrate the remarkable life of a personal friend and political ally, Willie Mack. For almost 40 years, "Whisper" as he was affectionately called, was by my side in the many struggles for political equity and a voice in the affairs of governance for the African-American community in St. Louis. In the early days, when I was leading the effort to build an effective political organization, Willie "Whisper" Mack was prominently present. He was my right hand, my trusted confidant in every hard fought, exciting political campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I met "Whisper" one year after my first election to the St. Louis Board of Aldermen in 1959. In 1960, I was campaign manager for Norman Seay who was seeking to be the Democratic committeeman in that 26th Ward. Seay had successfully run my campaign for Alderman the previous year. Seay's opponent had gone about the business of lining up the so-called corner boys, those who frequented the taverns, pool rooms and barber shops. One of his most effective recruits was Willie Mack. Mack owned a barber shop and had hundreds of hero worshipers who followed his lead. The story goes that the nickname was tagged on him when, as a young gang participant, he was thrown into a pool of cold water in the middle of the winter by an opposite gang faction. As a result, he temporarily lost his voice for several months.

But as those election returns bear out, speaking in subdued tones, "Whisper" knew how to work a precinct. Seay's opponent won his precinct by a margin of 2 to 1 (only one of two precincts won by him).

Much credit for "Whisper" political acumen goes to his wife, Jackie. They made the perfect political combination. He influenced the street people. She was loved by the home owners in the neighborhood.

After the election—which Seay won by 600 votes—I sought out "Whisper" and persuaded him to join our organization. From that day forward our friendship developed and expanded.

Mr. Speaker, few people lived life with the enthusiasm, determination and gusto as Willie Mack. He lived every day with the intent to do something for someone else. He lived every day with the intent to give something back to family, friends and community. He will be remembered as a giver. He gave the fullest to his fellow man. His intent was to establish, through political activism, a more perfect union between society and those citizens denied the benefits of first-class citizenship. The many people whose lives he touched and they in turn enhanced his—is a testament to his endearing respect for humanity.

Carol and I were deeply saddened by Whisper's passing. He was indeed an uncommon man with a phenomenal affect on those who graced his presence. To us, Whisper was something dear, something special, something beautiful, something precious. There were no

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

tears for Carol and me when we heard of his departure because we were not agonizing his death but rather celebrating the privilege of having looked upon this towering, incredible individual, if only for a fleeting moment.

REPORT FROM PENNSYLVANIA

**HON. PATRICK J. TOOMEY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 27, 1999*

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to share my Report from Pennsylvania for my colleagues and the American people.

All across Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District there are some amazing people who do good things to make our communities a better place. These are individuals of all ages who truly make a difference and help others.

I like to call these individuals Lehigh Valley Heroes for their good deeds and efforts.

Today I would like to recognize Mr. Harold Seibert, a retired fireman who's respect and dedication to his job led him to compile a 175-year anniversary book for the Allentown Fire Department, an invaluable document for future firemen of the community.

Harold Seibert is a commendable member of our community—not only for his documentary, but also for his heroism—having been decorated five times for saving lives during his 24 years as a firefighter.

Today, I would like to recognize Mr. Seibert, of Allentown, PA, for his hard work and dedication. He is creating a legacy for the Allentown community and I commend him on his efforts.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SHARK CONSERVATION AND FINNING PROHIBITION RESOLUTION

**HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 27, 1999*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, it is time for the United States to ban the wasteful, un-sportsmanlike and destructive practice of shark finning.

Shark finning is the removal of a shark's fins, which represent just one to five percent of its body weight, and discarding its carcass into the sea. The waste associated with this practice is horrific. The public outcry to halt it was an important factor in the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) decision to ban shark finning in federal waters of the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. I had thought that NMFS had prohibited this practice in all waters of the United States.

To my surprise and dismay, it was recently brought to my attention that shark finning is occurring in the U.S. Pacific, and increasing at an alarming rate. Between 1991 and 1998, there was a 20-fold increase in shark finning by U.S. longline vessels in the Central and Western Pacific. There are no regulations in place to stem further growth of this terrible practice.

According to NMFS, in the Central and Western Pacific fishery, the number of sharks finned rose from 2,289 in 1991 to 60,857 in 1998. The most troubling fact about this increase in the number of sharks killed is that 98.7%, or 60,085 of the 60,857, of the sharks taken in 1998 were killed just for their fins.

The NMFS has gone on record with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WestPac) expressing its view that finning is wasteful and must be stopped. Unfortunately, WestPac has balked and NMFS has failed to step forward and stop this terrible practice. It is my belief, and those of any responsible outdoorsman, that the waste associated with discarding 95 to 99% of 60,000 animals annually is intolerable.

With the support of my colleague, Fisheries Subcommittee Chairman JIM SAXTON, and the conservation and sportfishing communities, I am introducing two pieces of legislation to remedy this situation.

Today, I am sponsoring a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that we disagree with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's and NMFS failure to halt shark finning, while urging that Council to prohibit the practice immediately.

Later this year, I will be introducing legislation to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act by adding the practice of shark finning to the list of actions prohibited in all waters of the United States.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me by cosponsoring this important resolution. For the record, I have attached a letter of support from the Ocean Wildlife Campaign, a coalition that includes the Center for Marine Conservation, National Audubon Society, National Coalition for Marine Conservation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Wildlife Conservation Society, and the World Wildlife Fund. In addition, I have attached separate letters of support from the American Sportfishing Association and the Center for Marine Conservation. Our prompt action is critical to ensure that we will halt the rampant waste resulting from shark finning.

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION,  
*Alexandria, VA, September 23, 1999.*  
Hon. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM,  
*U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN CUNNINGHAM: On behalf of the nearly 500 members of the American Sportfishing Association, I wish to express my strong support for your resolution to ban the wasteful practice of shark finning. I commend your initiative in tackling this important, yet easily dismissed issue.

For far too long, we have neglected to take action to stop this most un-sportsmanlike fishing activity. We now know that the best shark is not a dead shark; that these oft maligned fish play critical roles in preserving balance in the marine ecosystem. Healthy shark populations help maintain robust fisheries. Your effort to ban finning will not only benefit depressed shark populations, but many other species of commercially and recreationally important fish.

Thank you for your leadership in this area.  
Sincerely,

MIKE HAYDEN,  
*President/CEO.*

OCEAN WILDLIFE CAMPAIGN,

Washington, DC, September 22, 1999.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,  
U.S. House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: We are writing to express serious concern regarding the management and health of shark populations in U.S. Pacific waters, specifically in areas under the jurisdiction of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC). Driven by the international demand for shark fin soup, the practice of shark finning—cutting of a shark's fins and discarding its carcass back into the ocean—is a rapidly growing problem that is directly responsible for huge increases in the number of sharks killed annually and appalling waste of this nation's living marine resources. The National Marine Fisheries Service has prohibited shark finning in the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. It is time to ban finning in the Pacific.

Between 1991 and 1998, the number of sharks "retained" by the Hawaii-based swordfish and tuna longline fleet jumped from 2,289 to 60,857 annually. In 1998, over 98 percent of these sharks were killed for their fins to meet the demand for shark fin soup. Because shark fins typically comprise only one to five percent of a shark's bodyweight, 95 to 99 percent of the shark is going to waste: Sharks are particularly vulnerable to overfishing because of their "life history characteristics"—slow growth, late sexual maturity, and the production of few young. Once depleted, a population may take decades to recover.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, conservationists, fishermen, scientists, and the public have pressured WESPAC to end the practice of shark finning. Nevertheless, WESPAC and the State of Hawaii recently failed to take action to end or control finning.

This issue of shark finning is characterized by a dangerous lack of management, rampant waste, and egregious inconsistencies with U.S. domestic and international policy stances. It is the most visible symptom of a larger problem: a lack of comprehensive management for sharks in U.S. Pacific waters. The history of poorly or unmanaged shark fisheries around the world is unequivocal: rapid decline followed by collapse. Sharks are not managed in U.S. Central and Western Pacific waters, and with increased fishing pressure there may be rapidly growing problems.

We urge your office to take whatever action is necessary to immediately end the destructive practice of shark finning in U.S. waters and encourage WESPAC to develop a comprehensive fishery management plan for sharks that will, among other things: 1. Immediately prohibit the finning of sharks; 2. Immediately reduce shark mortality levels by requiring the live release of all bycatch or "incidentally caught" animals brought to the boat alive; 3. Immediately reduce the bycatch of sharks; 4. Prevent overfishing by quickly establishing precautionary commercial and recreational quotas for sharks until a final comprehensive management plan is adopted that ensures the future health of the population. Given the dramatic increase in the number of sharks killed in the Hawaiian longline fishery, WESPAC should cap shark mortality at 1994 levels as a minimum interim action, pending the outcome of new population assessments.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

DAVID WILMOT, Ph.D.,  
Ocean Wildlife Campaign.

CARL SAFINA, Ph.D.,  
National Audubon Society.

LISA SPEER,  
Natural Resources Defense Council.

TOM GRASSO,  
World Wildlife Fund.

SONJA FORDHAM,  
Center for Marine Conservation.

KEN HINMAN,  
National Coalition for Marine Conservation.

ELLEN PIKITCH, Ph.D.,  
Wildlife Conservation Society.

CENTER FOR MARINE CONSERVATION,  
Washington, DC, September 22, 1999.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,  
U.S. House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: On behalf of the Center for Marine Conservation (CMC), I am writing to express our grave concern for Pacific sharks, specifically those under the jurisdiction of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC). High demand for shark fin soup has driven a dramatic surge in shark finning (the practice of slicing off a shark's valuable fins and discarding the body at sea) by the Hawaiian longline fleet. This appalling waste of America's public marine resources is tied to alarming yet unrestricted increases in mortality of some of the ocean's most biologically vulnerable fish.

Shark conservation has long been a key element of CMC's fisheries program due in large part to the life history characteristics that leave sharks exceptionally susceptible to overfishing. In general, sharks grow slowly, mature late and produce a small number of young. Once depleted, shark populations often require decades to recover. In the U.S. Atlantic, for example, several overfished shark stocks will require four decades to rebuild to healthy levels, even with strict fishing controls. Indeed, nearly every large scale shark fishery this century has ended in collapse.

Off Hawaii, the number of sharks killed and brought to the dock (landed) has increased by more than 2500 percent, skyrocketing from just 2,289 sharks in 1991 to 60,857 sharks in 1998. In 1998, over 98 percent of these sharks were killed solely for their fins. Considering that shark fins typically comprise only one to five percent of a shark's bodyweight, 95 to 99 percent of the shark is going to waste.

CMC has been calling upon Western Pacific fishery managers to restrict shark fisheries and ban finning for more than five years. More recently, similar demands have been made by many other national conservation organizations as well as local Hawaiian environmental and fishing groups, international scientific societies, concerned citizens, and several Department of Commerce high-ranking officials. A recent poll by Seaweb found that finning was among the ocean issues most disturbing to the American public. Nevertheless, WESPAC and the State of Hawaii have yet to take action to control finning or limit shark mortality.

Shark finning in particular runs counter not only to the will of the American public, to which these resources belong, but also to

U.S. domestic and international policy as expressed in: The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA); the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Sharks of the Atlantic Ocean; the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; and the FAO International Plan of Action for Sharks.

In addition, as you are likely aware, California is just one of many coastal states to ban finning within their waters.

In the U.S. Atlantic, the lucrative market for shark fins drove an intense fishery that led to severe depletion of several shark populations within less than ten years. Citing "universal and strong support" for a ban on finning on behalf of the non-fishing American public, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) banned the practice in U.S. Atlantic in 1993, stating that:

NMFS believes that finning is wasteful of valuable shark resources and poses a threat to attaining the conservation objectives of fishery management under the Magnuson Act.

This year, NMFS expanded the existing finning ban from the 39 regulated species to all sharks in the Atlantic while Department of Commerce officials have repeatedly, yet unsuccessfully, called upon WESPAC to halt finning.

In recent years, the United States has emerged as a world leader in crafting and promoting landmark, international agreements pertaining to sharks and continues to lead efforts to raise global awareness of their plight and special management needs. Yet, our inability to address an egregious finning problem within our own waters threatens to undermine the U.S. role in these important, international initiatives.

CMC asks for your assistance in ensuring an immediate end to the wasteful practice of finning, accompanied by a requirement that all incidentally-caught sharks brought to the boat alive be released alive. In addition, a comprehensive Pacific shark management plan that prevents overfishing and reduces bycatch is absolutely crucial to safeguarding these especially vulnerable animals; precautionary catch limits in the Western Pacific (no higher than 1994 mortality levels) are needed until such a plan is complete.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

SONJA V. FORDHAM,  
Fisheries Project Manager.

IN HONOR OF RETIRING MAYOR  
OF EASTPONTE, HARVEY CURLEY

**HON. DAVID E. BONIOR**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor one of my district's most beloved mayors, retiring City of Eastpointe Mayor Harvey Curley. Harvey is retiring after 23 years of holding elected office in Eastpointe.

Born in the small town of Minonok, Illinois, Harvey was first introduced to the public as the host of the Air Force Radio show "Music to Dawn". Upon his return from the military, he married Carole and settled in East Detroit, just as my family did, in the 1960's. A salesman by profession, Harvey was elected to the East Detroit School Board which became the foundation for his career at City Hall.