

To start killing their neighbors with whom they had such relations did not seem a good idea to Pushmataha, who kept his people out of the war and guided them for another 14 years.

Like Pushmataha, Phillip Martin came home from war to embark in a career that would build education and civic action and economic opportunity for his people. He was one of those from what has been called "the greatest generation." A World War II Air Force combat veteran who lost a brother in the war, Martin served in the military until 1955. When he returned home, his people had their pride and their language, but little else. They were among the poorest sharecroppers in a poor state, acutely discriminated against. They were basically just holding on a tribal base, having come through a very dark historical period as a people of color in a racially polarized South. Suffering from 80 percent unemployment, 90 percent lived in poverty and the tribe averaged a sixth-grade education.

Appreciably, Martin returned home of sound mind and character and applied himself to the betterment of his people through self-sufficient enterprise. Martin led an early fight to construct and operate the first high school on the reservation in 1963, beginning a trend that has seen consistent improvement in the educational level of the reservation population. He began the planning that would lay out a modern community infrastructure with good housing. He pursued and constructed an industrial park and after 10 years of chasing contracts, began a successful 20 years of economic growth. General Motors, Ford Motor Co., Oxford Speakers and other companies have located manufacturing plants in the Choctaw's 80-acre industrial park, which boasts 500,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

By 1994, the year when their enterprises diversified and accelerated with construction of a casino and entertainment center, the nation ran a total payroll topping \$84 million. It had sound management and was ready to take on the complexity of gaming. The nation's Chahta Enterprises is now one of the 10 top employers in Mississippi. Its entertainment complex receives more than 2.5 million visitors a year and the tribe has built more than 1,000 new houses, constructed a major hospital, schools, nursing home, shopping center and day care center.

In what used to be the poorest county in the poorest state in the United States, in one of the most conservative states in the union, the Choctaws led an economic revolution. Today, with nearly universal employment, only 2.7 percent of household income comes from social services and this mostly involves elderly and handicapped. The tribe's manufacturing plants, still going strong, consistently win high quality awards. They employ some 8,000 people, mostly non-Natives.

Most interestingly, a stroll down the reservation's main elementary school will reveal a lot of students speaking fluent Choctaw.

"Tell the other tribes" Martin says, "we can all do this. If you really want to do it, and get your act together, you can do it." This is a generous thought, but such progress will also require vision, and political acumen. To Martin's credit, when the political winds turned right in 1994, he was positioned to solidify friendships with such Republican powerhouses as Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss.

Hiring quality lobbyists as their new wealth allowed, the Choctaw leader persuaded a good sector of Republicans to the righteousness of the Native nations sov-

ereignty from taxation. In particular, the Choctaw initiative convinced the country's major anti-tax organization—Americans for Tax Reform, whose 500-plus organizations network and 90,000 activists supported the Indian case as an anti-tax strategy.

Politics is the art of achieving your group's self-interest, and it certainly makes for diverse bedfellows. But always the proof is in the pudding. The Choctaw strategy, precise and proper for their geopolitical context, is pragmatically brilliant. In the hold of the old South, this Mississippi tribe provides a welcome signal, an example of where visionary leadership can make a huge difference to the future of a people. An appreciation and salutation is due Choctaw chief and statesman, Phillip Martin, visionary, quiet building, steady helm.

TRIBUTE TO MARK TOLBERT, JR.

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mark Tolbert, Jr., a young man fatally injured in an automobile accident December 22. Affectionately known as "Marky," he was the oldest son of Bishop Mark Tolbert, Sr. and Mrs. Emelda Tolbert, pastor and First Lady of Christ Temple Church in Kansas City, Missouri. Marky was taken to heaven by a "chariot of fire" one month past his nineteenth birthday. Although Marky left us at a young age, he led a remarkable and inspiring life.

He had recently completed his first semester of college at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, majoring in Business Administration. He was looking forward to working during the semester break at a local sporting goods store, continuing the work ethic he developed at an early age by working after school and during the summer.

Marky had a genuine love for people, especially children. He coached an after school basketball team at Faxon Montessori School that went undefeated for two years. He was a tutor at the Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy Saturday School and by his counseling, guidance, and initiative served as a role model to the youth of our community. With his strong work ethic and love of God and family he was destined to make the world a better place.

Before Marky could walk, he was involved in Christ Temple Church, beginning by making "joyful noises" on the drums. He further developed his musical talents over the years and played the keyboard at Sunday morning services even during his first semester of college. He helped serve the homeless during the church's annual "Feed the Multitude" ministry. He was President of the New Generation Choir and a member of the Sunday School. Marky was a founding member of the Radical Praise Steppers, a group of youth who showed praise to their heavenly Father through dance routines that encompassed clapping, stepping and stomping in unison while singing praises to God. They performed at church, district councils, national conventions and community events.

I attended his funeral December 30 with over 800 people. So many mourners came

that the overflow of almost 300 people had to be accommodated in the church basement to watch the service on large screen television. Senior Pentecostal Ministers from around the country spoke in praise of Marky's life and legacy. The eulogy was performed by a family friend, Bishop Norman L. Wagner, President of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. Bishop Wagner delivered a powerful, uplifting sermon from the Second Book of Kings of the Bible. He compared Marky with the prophet Elisha and ended his sermon by stating that "God had to send a chariot of fire to take him out." Those in the congregation as well as the grieving family felt their hearts lifted from sorrow to joy knowing that Marky's greatness would not be diminished by death.

Marky's memory will live on in all those whose lives he has touched. His is a loss felt by his family and congregation, and the greater Kansas City community. Marky's beacon of light may be extinguished here on earth, but it glows brightly in heaven.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in expressing condolence to the Tolbert family for the loss of this very special child, and to paying tribute to the service he gave to family friends, church and community during his 19 years on this earth.

TRIBUTE TO DON H. COX

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 3, 2001

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I wish today to honor a distinguished public servant from my district in Imperial County, California. Don H. Cox retired on December 1, 2000 after serving for 12 years as a member of the Board of Directors for the Imperial Irrigation District (IID). He represented district 4, which includes the city of Brawley where he and his family reside.

Don was elected to the Board in 1988 and reelected in 1992 and 1996. He served as Board President in 1991 and 1997, and served as Vice-President in 1990, 1995, and 1996. Don also served on the District's Water, Budget, EPA, Geothermal, Salton Sea, Energy, and Salton Sea Emergency study groups. He was appointed by the Governor of California to serve as a director of the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the Colorado River area and also served as a member/director of the Colorado River Board of California, the IID Water Conservation Advisory Board, California Farm Water Coalition, and the Association of California Water Agencies' Water Rights Committee. I had the pleasure of working closely with Don through his leadership on the Salton Sea Authority since its inception in 1993.

Don served in the United States Navy during World War II and upon returning from the war, earned his degree in agriculture economics from the University of California, Berkeley. Following his studies, Don returned to the Imperial Valley to farm with his sons, which he has done for over 40 years. He is a past member of the Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers Association and was involved with many cotton boards. Despite his recent retirement, Don remains involved in the farming