

Chandler, Brynden and Tristen wrote carefully crafted and insightful essays detailing the accomplishments of three of American history's Black leaders. I had the pleasure of speaking with each of them when they appeared on the "WHBU Morning Show with LeLand Franklin and Bret Busby" last week.

Chandler Boys of Eastside Elementary wrote about Medgar Evers, a 1950s civil rights leader and Army veteran who taught the importance of education, religion and hard work.

Brynden Danner of Liberty Christian School wrote about the struggles faced by Charles Cooper, the first Black athlete drafted by the Boston Celtics.

And Tristen Horton of Erskine Elementary wrote about Lonnie G. Johnson, an Air Force veteran and NASA scientist who is noted as the inventor of the super soaker water gun.

Mr. Speaker, I again congratulate Chandler, Brynden and Tristen for their fine work in honoring America's Black leaders and wish to submit their essays into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

MEDGAR EVERS
(By Chandler Boys)

Medgar Evers was born on July 2, 1925 in Decatur, Mississippi. Medgar would grow up in the Depression of the 1930's. His father worked in a sawmill. His mother was a laundress. He was the youngest of four children. In their home they believed in education, religion, and hard work. Medgar went to all black schools. Medgar and his siblings had to walk a long way to school. They did not have many school supplies. Their schools had few teachers, many students, small classrooms, and old books.

In 1942, Medgar joined the United States Army. He joined the Army to see the world. He was in World War II. He fought in France and Great Britain with a segregated group. When he returned home from the war he registered to vote. But angry whites wouldn't let him.

Evers returned to school on the G.I. bill. He finished high school and college. He met his wife, Myrlie Beasley, during this time. During school he was elected into many student offices and joined many sports teams.

In December 1954, he was elected to be the NAACP state field secretary. His family moved to Jackson. Myrlie was made the secretary. Evers faced many challenges. He investigated racial murders and cases of abuse of black victims. He tried to convince local youth to get more involved. Statewide membership of the NAACP chapters almost doubled from 1956 to 1959.

On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was shot in the back in his driveway. He was coming home. He died later that night. On June 22, 1963 Byron Beckwith was arrested for shooting Evers. Beckwith had two trials with all-white juries. They ended with a hung jury. In February 1994, Beckwith was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. Beckwith died there. Medgar Evers was a hard working man. He was loved very much by his family.

THE STAR WHO COULDN'T SHINE
(By Brynden Danner)

Charles H. Cooper was an N.B.A. basketball star who was never allowed to let his talent shine. On April 25, 1950, Cooper was the first black player to be drafted by the Boston Celtics. He played on a N.B.A. team for six hard years where race was more important than his skills.

Owners of white only hotels refused to rent a room to Cooper separating him from his

teammates on long trips. When they played games in the southern states, the Celtics were told to leave Cooper behind. Cooper's teammates supported his right to play and that made the violence grow more and more.

Black players received very little national attention. Even though Cooper played four years for Boston, one year for the Milwaukee Hawks and one year for the Fort Wayne Pistons he was never recognized for his great athletic talent.

Cooper ended his career with a bad feeling about basketball. All of the racial teasing hurt him very deeply. He decided not to have bad feelings about people who treated him so badly. In 1961 Cooper got his masters degree in social work. Nine years later he was named the first black person to head a city government agency. He became the director of parks and recreation in Pittsburgh. At the time of his death in 1984, he was an officer of Pittsburgh National Bank.

Chuck Cooper is an inspiration to me because he suffered many hard times in his life but never gave up. His story will always be a great lesson for me to remember.

LONNIE G. JOHNSON, WATER GUN MAKER
(By Tristen Horton)

Lonnie G. Johnson invented the world famous water gun, the super soaker. For years Lonnie G. Johnson has been inventing things for NASA and other organizations; but he has achieved his greatest fame with his squirt gun, the super soaker.

Johnson started a childhood of creating with inventing things out of old appliances. In his senior year of high school, he won an around the world competition for a remote controlled robot he had built out of junkyard scraps. He went on to more formal training at Tuskegee University where he first earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and then M.S. in Nuclear Engineering. Soon after, Lonnie G. Johnson joined the U.S. Air Force. In the Air Force, he became advanced in space systems.

I am really happy he invented the super soaker water gun because it's just plain fun.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT E. RICH

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor prominent Buffalo businessman Robert E. Rich who passed away peacefully on Wednesday, February 15, 2006. He was a loving and dedicated husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He was an inspiring colleague and friend. He was an athletics enthusiast. He was an innovative and legendary entrepreneur and founder. And, he was a generous and compassionate community and industry advocate.

Mr. Rich began his path to frozen food industry fame in 1935 as owner and operator of Wilber Farms Dairy. In 1945, while serving as the war food Administrator in Michigan, he learned about successful research at the George Washington Carver Institute on the use of soybeans to create innovative food products. After investigating the use of soybeans, he developed the world's first non-dairy whipped topping. Rich's industry-leading reputation was as a family-owned business dedi-

cated to treating customers around the world like family. He was also committed to continuing the company's aggressive worldwide growth while maintaining its headquarters in Buffalo, NY.

In 1965, Mr. Rich was a charter member of a group which attempted to bring a National Hockey League franchise to Buffalo. In 1972, through Rich Products, he purchased the naming rights of the new football stadium for the Buffalo Bills. In 1988, he authorized the purchase which kept the Buffalo Bisons, the Triple-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians, in town. Under his chairmanship of the Bisons, the city constructed Pilot Field, which is now Dunn Tire Park, which has become a source of city pride and national attention.

Rich founded and headed up the University at Buffalo's Christmas Scholarship Fund which made 30 annual scholarships available to outstanding scholar-athletes. In 1991, he was inducted into the inaugural class of the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. Rich continued his commitment to his Buffalo home in 1989 with the decision to renovate and redevelop the historic 1200 Niagara Street complex on the banks of the Niagara River on the city's West Side. Today, the state-of-the-art facility is home to the Rich Research Center, hailed as the industry's finest, the Rich Renaissance Niagara Atrium and Conference Center, site of weddings, banquets and business meetings, the Rich Wellness Center, and the Rich's Family Center, Western New York's first on-site child daycare center which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 1999.

In 2004, Rich's made a significant pledge to the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation to establish the Robert E. Rich Aspiring Entrepreneurs Scholarship. Four scholarships each year support the continued education of undergraduate students pursuing careers in the restaurant and foodservice industry.

In 2005, Rich Products celebrated its 60th birthday posting annual sales in excess of \$2.5 billion. The company sells more than 2,300 products in more than 85 countries and employs more than 7,000 Associates worldwide, including more than 1,300 in its headquarters in Buffalo, NY.

Frozen food industry pioneer, architect of the nation's largest family-owned frozen foods manufacturer, sportsman, and community leader all describe Robert E. Rich. Rich Products will continue to grow and thrive as a family business under the ongoing leadership of his son, Bob Rich Jr. But Western New York will sorely miss Robert E. Rich.

IN MEMORY OF CORRIN FITTS
BOWERS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, all South Carolinians mourn the loss of the late Corrin Fitts Bowers of Estill who was the devoted husband of the beloved Mary Eleanor Bowers who served with distinction as Office