

Victor T. Curry is now pastor of a New Birth Baptist Church in Miami. I want to evoke the same sentiments of joy and gratitude that the 10,000 members of the New Birth Baptist Church in Miami lifted up to Almighty God this past weekend at the inauguration of the New Birth Cathedral.

Mr. Speaker, Bishop Curry truly represents the best and noblest of our community. As a bishop, pastor, and teacher, he exudes a remarkable wisdom in leading his congregation in the ways of God, and has tirelessly worked to enlighten our community on the agenda of spiritual wisdom and good governance impacting our duties and responsibilities.

It is indeed fitting for those of us who subscribe to the Judeo-Christian faith to acknowledge the important role that Bishop Victor Curry plays in the day-to-day affairs of our community.

I want to commend his tremendous work in guiding not only the members of his church, but also the residents of our entire community. He has exemplified the example of Christ as the Good Shepherd and has led his flock of believers by sharing with them the words of God's wisdom and the good news emanating from the gospel.

Bishop Curry's motto is from vision to victory. This motto has positively impacted the lives of countless people. Along with many others in our community, I am indeed a fortunate beneficiary of Bishop Curry's televised teachings and radio ministry through the church-owned radio station, WMBM 1490 AM.

He is especially effective in demonstrating both by way of word and example and unconditional love for and commitment to the children and the elderly, the poor and the disenfranchised. He reaffirms the centrality of God in our daily lives, conscious of the fact that the mandate of our faith must characterize our attitudes toward those who could least fend for themselves.

Our weekly paper, the Miami Times aptly describes Bishop Curry as a forceful, courageous and visionary leader not only of the religious community, but also of our wider society, with the recognition that our churches are a part of larger network of institutions that are the pillars of our community.

Bishop Curry is fully living up to his vocation as a caring and effective pastor. His standard for learning, sharing and achieving has won the accolades of our ecumenical community. Public and private agencies have often cited Bishop Curry for his untiring consecration to the truth and his uncompromising stance on simple justice and equal opportunity for all.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, Bishop Curry's mission in teaching many a wayward youth has become legendary. He has gained the confidence of countless parents and teachers who see him as a no-nonsense motivator. They are willing to entrust him with the future of

their children, fully cognizant and genuinely confident that they would learn from him the pursuit of academic scholarship and the desire for personal excellence under the tenor of a faith-based, conscientious commitment and rigorous discipline.

With the recent inauguration of the New Birth Cathedral, our community is deeply touched and will benefit greatly by his undaunted leadership and perseverance. As head of one of the fastest growing churches in Florida, Bishop Curry preaches and lives by the adage that under God's providence our quest for personal integrity and spiritual growth is not beyond the reach of those willing to dare the impossible.

As a man of God and as an indomitable leader, he has indeed earned our deepest respect and genuine admiration.

This is a magnificent legacy, Mr. Speaker, of Bishop Victor T. Curry. I am truly privileged to enjoy his friendship and confidence, and I am grateful that he continues to teach us to live by the noble ethic of loving God by serving our fellow man. Bishop Curry has lived by the adage that service is a price we pay for the space which God has let us occupy.

TRIBUTE TO CLARENCE E. LIGHTNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), to call attention to my colleagues to the passing of a most distinguished North Carolinian, really one of the most prominent North Carolinians as it relates to the civil rights and a pioneer in that area.

Clarence E. Lightner, 80 years of age, died on July 8 of heart failure. He was the first and only African American to serve as mayor of our capital city in Raleigh. In a quiet and yet determined way he brokered the hundreds of compromises that moved Raleigh from a small segregated southern city to the growing metropolitan city that it is today. We have truly lost a giant in North Carolina.

As the son of an achiever, Clarence Lightner proved to be an achiever himself from the beginning. He graduated from a segregated school in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he went on to what is now North Carolina Central, to get a degree. And Clarence was an outstanding quarterback; most of us who knew him, he never talked about athletics, but he was an outstanding quarterback in his day on the football team.

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After that he served in World War II, went on to get a degree in mortuary service in Philadelphia, and then re-

turned to Raleigh, opened a business, his family business, and started to get involved in politics.

He was one of the leaders in that area. As I said, he was quiet spoken, always well dressed, of a courtly manner, and keenly intelligent. Clarence was a man for his time. He understood what needed to be done. He was a man of good will who attracted other people of good will in that very trying time that we found ourselves in.

He spoke softly and listened well. The issues of the day called for vision, hard work, determination, negotiation and compromise; and he proved to be great at all those. He followed his father in the Lightner funeral home business and he ran it successfully. He then became a Raleigh city councilman in those trying days. He saw his business grow and followed his footsteps and became a city council member in 1967.

He served in that post for 6 years, during which time Raleigh moved forward with equality for all of its citizens in a fair and, what many thought were, a justifiable way. But Clarence Lightner said it was time to move forward to the next level, and so Clarence Lightner was elected mayor in 1972, having put together a coalition of suburban precincts with African American precincts to capture city hall, being the first African American and the only African American to serve as mayor of the city of Raleigh. His election as mayor really became national news immediately. His election was a precursor to what would happen across the South in later years.

As the son of an achiever, Clarence Lightner proved to be an achiever from the beginning. He graduated from a segregated Raleigh High School, then from what is now North Carolina Central University, where he was an outstanding quarterback. After service in World War II, he completed a course at Echols College of Mortuary Science in Philadelphia and returned to Raleigh to take over the family funeral business. He immediately became involved in the political questions of the day in a period that marked the Civil Rights Movement in the segregated South.

Quiet spoken, always well dressed, courtly, keenly intelligent, Lightner was the quintessential man for the times in which he found himself. He was a man of good will who attracted other people of good will in that most trying of times. He spoke softly and listened well. The issues of the day called for vision, hard work, determination, negotiation and compromise. Lightner proved to be adept at all.

Lightner, whose father established Lightner Funeral Home, had run unsuccessfully for the Raleigh City Commission in 1919 in the tightly segregated city. Calvin Lightner then saw his businesses suffer because of a white backlash. Clarence Lightner, following in the footsteps of his father, ran successfully for the Raleigh City Council in 1967. He served in that post for 6 years, during which Raleigh moved toward equality for all its citizens. It is fair, perhaps, to say that Lightner was the "go to" person on any question that involved racial equality during that period. The Raleigh of today is testimony that his decisions were good ones.

Lightner was elected mayor of Raleigh in 1972, having put together a coalition of suburban precincts with African-American precincts to capture a City Hall that had been run previously by bankers, merchants, and longtime established neighborhoods. His election as mayor of a capital city was national news. His election was the precursor to what would happen across the South in later years.

Defeated for re-election in 1975, Lightner never again ran for public office, though he was appointed by Governor James B. Hunt to the State Senate in 1977 to complete a term for developer John Winters, a close friend. He remained on the forefront of every question that had to do with Raleigh development and, in particular, with anything that would affect the south and southwest parts of the city.

Lightner's contribution after his service as mayor was of major importance. He was, in a sense, the power broker with whom politicians had to deal if they wanted to be successful in Raleigh and Wake County. He served as a model for—and mentor of—other African-American young people in whom he saw promise. Former State House Speaker Dan Blue, now running for the U.S. Senate, was a protégé. So was Brad Thompson, state director for U.S. Senator JOHN EDWARDS. Most of Raleigh's current African-American leaders share the Lightner stamp.

Clarence Lightner was a successful businessman, husband and father. He served his business profession at all levels, including as president of the National Morticians Associations. He served the Raleigh Citizens Associations, Rex Hospital, the Raleigh Human Relations Council, the NAACP, the Southern Policies Board and dozens of other organizations. He was chairman of both the Saint Augustine's College Board of Trustees and that of North Carolina State University.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I yield to the gentleman from Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina (Mr. WATT), who knew Clarence well.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I thank my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), and my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), for taking the time out to do this tribute to Clarence Lightner.

For African American politicians in North Carolina, there are a number of people on whose shoulders we believe we stand as Members of Congress, as mayors of cities, as city council people. Clarence Lightner was among the first of those on whose shoulders we stand and on whose shoulders a number of politicians in North Carolina have stood over the years.

I remember very well back in the early 1970s when I started getting into politics, managing Harvey Gantt's campaign. Harvey Gantt went on to become, in later years, the first African American mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina, but he did that on the history and with the history there that Clarence Lightner had broken that barrier in Raleigh some years earlier.

He was just a magnificent man whom we all looked up to, respected, and ad-

mired; and his memory will certainly live on for years and years. He is the person who gave us advice and who mentored us.

TRIBUTE TO CLARENCE LIGHTNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) to continue with a few comments on this tribute to Clarence Lightner.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for continuing to yield to me. I know I am kind of butting in on others' time, but the one thing I do want to say about Clarence Lightner, that I think both of my colleagues will acknowledge, is that all of us went to him for advice, but Clarence did not always tell you what you wanted to hear. He was sometimes blunt, he was sometimes humorous, but every time he gave advice, he did it in the context of a story that was based on some experiences that had shaped his life in many ways. And he did it with humor and with a smile, and he was always giving in that respect.

That is the thing that I will remember about Clarence Lightner above all else.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those recollections, and also my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), for taking the time to pay tribute to our friend, Clarence Lightner, who was a friend and a mentor to me and to so many others.

He was a prominent businessman, he was a ground-breaking political leader. Clarence Lightner, Raleigh's first and only African American mayor, died this week at the age of 80. He served a single term as mayor, as the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) has pointed out, from 1973 to 1975; and then he played a critical leadership role in North Carolina politics for decades to follow.

I have experienced firsthand Clarence's exceptional talent for bringing disparate groups together to effect positive change in both official and unofficial capacities. He led the city of Raleigh during a tumultuous period of expansion and development. His success was directly attributable, I believe, to his ability to relate as easily to people on the street as he did to business and community leaders.

Clarence was frequently sought out for his insight and his guidance. It was often said, and was actually reported again in the News and Observer of Raleigh this week, that any candidate seeking voter support in Raleigh had better secure Clarence Lightner's support first. That was the truth, and I can attest to it.

Clarence was a mentor to me personally as I attempted to lead our State Democratic Party and then to represent the fourth district in Congress. I valued his wise counsel very much. It was always delivered with unfailing good humor, and his spirit was a generous one and a cooperative one.

Clarence Lightner offered leadership to organizations ranging from the National Funeral Directors and Morticians Association to the National League of Cities to the Democratic National Committee, the Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association, the Board of Trustees of St. Augustine's College, North Carolina Central University, and North Carolina State University.

He had a huge impact for good in Raleigh and throughout North Carolina and across the Nation. We will continue, Mr. Speaker, to feel this impact long after he is gone. We will miss him. We treasure his legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I enter into the RECORD at this point the editorial tribute to Clarence Lightner from the Raleigh News and Observer from July 10, 2002.

A PATHFINDER FOR RALEIGH

Clarence Lightner was a gentle, soft-spoken man of resolve. At his core he possessed a strength and a courage that helped him overcome racial barriers—and then he helped Raleigh overcome them, too. That is but one of the legacies he leaves following his death Monday at the age of 80.

Lightner, long-time proprietor of a funeral home that bears the family name, was the Capital City's first and thus far only African-American mayor, serving from 1973 to 1975. He also was the first mayor to be elected under a then-new procedure whereby the mayor is chosen directly by the people and not by the City Council.

Lightner grew up in a segregated city, the son of a prominent businessman, Calvin Lightner, who had run for the city commission in the early 1900s. In Clarence Lightner's lifetime, Raleigh was to change dramatically, and he was to help achieve that change.

Though he served just one term as mayor following a period as a council member, Lightner remained a powerful force in politics through his influence in Southeast Raleigh. Long after his term was over he continued to advise candidates whom he favored and to help shape issues in citywide campaigns.

Lightner was always unfailingly gracious, and keen in his remembrances of his growing-up in Raleigh. He had, after all, belonged to a family that was active in helping the city grow. He also served by spotting those young people he felt one day could serve in leadership roles. Many of them did not disappoint him, and in their service especially, Clarence Lightner's legacy is a living one.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Just briefly, Mr. Speaker, let me thank both my colleagues, because Clarence Lightner was an exceptional man; and my colleague was right when he said that if you ran for public office, as he and I did, and others, we are here to attest to the fact that you sought Clarence Lightner's counsel. You really wanted his support;