

In his adult life, Art had a long and successful career in the auto sales business. He purchased a Ford dealership in 1965, which he sold in 1982 to become Emerling Ford and Mercury. Following the sale of his business, he worked as a sales representative for Towne Lincoln-Mercury in Orchard Park, NY.

The success that Art's work ethic and affable nature led to in the private sector brought him even more success in the public sector. A strong believer in the economic benefits that expanding U.S. route 219 would bring to western New York, politicians and development officials nicknamed Art, "Mr. 219." He was the road's most influential advocate, making public statements on its expansion even in his final days.

His leadership did not end with route 219. As president of the Springville Chamber of Commerce, he pressed for the creation of Springville's Pre-School Learning Center for the Handicapped. He was also a driving force behind the establishment of the Town of Concord Industrial Development Agency.

As I noted earlier, perhaps some of Art's greatest contributions to his community were made in his private life. A former alcoholic, Art beat the disease 37 years ago and has been a friend and counselor to other recovering alcoholics ever since. According to his son, Michael, Art would do anything in his power to help alcoholics, even when it meant leaving home in the middle of the night to offer support.

But the aspect of Art's life which made him most proud was his family. Art was the husband of the former Marie Chute, who passed away in 2000, and is survived by his sons Michael, Arthur, Robert, and Claytus, daughters Marie Pitello, Colleen Benson, and Kathleen Benson. Arthur also leaves behind his great prides and joy—his 16 grandchildren.

Citizens of Art Benson's caliber are hard to come by. Whether it was through the gifts he was born with or his personal struggles, he consistently found ways to give to his community. Many in western New York will miss his leadership, enthusiasm, and friendship. I was proud to call Art Benson my friend and I am pleased to honor his memory today.

CONGRATULATIONS TO McMINN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, this month, the McMinn County, Tennessee Soil and Water Conservation District will celebrate its 50th anniversary. This milestone is much more than a birthday. It is a celebration of a voluntary conservation program that has involved more than 30,000 farmers, and other land users.

This program has benefited thousands of East Tennesseans by implementing flood prevention plans, creating recreation areas, and putting many other soil conservation projects in place.

I have enjoyed working with the McMinn County Soil and Water Conservation District in the sixteen years I have served in the House. My father also worked closely with this program when he served in this seat from 1964 to 1988.

Mr. Speaker, let me again congratulate the McMinn County Soil and Water Conservation for fifty years of excellent service to east Tennessee. I have enclosed a written history of the program that I would like to call to the attention of my fellow members and other readers of the RECORD.

THE HISTORY OF THE McMINN COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The McMinn County Soil Conservation District was founded on December 28, 1954. The original charter members were Rex Moses, Clarence Miller, Carl D. Stager, J. G. Wilson, and J. K. Pickens.

Conservation Districts are local government subdivisions established under state law to carry out a program for the conservation, use and development of soil, water and related resources.

In 1972, The McMinn County Soil Conservation District, along with nine other sister districts, took an active part in the drive to establish the ten county Southeast Tennessee Resource Conservation and Development Districts. We met with other SCD Boards several times in making and submitting an application to the Secretary of Agriculture for an RC&D project. This project was approved and funded in September 1972. The Board asked for and received active support on this project from the County Council, City Governments, Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, and others interested in the resources of McMinn County.

The Sweetwater Creek Watershed District was organized in 1958 by local landowners with the help of the three sponsoring organizations—McMinn, Monroe, Loudon Soil Conservation Districts. A flood prevention plan for the Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia and all the low-lying land along the Sweetwater Creek from its origin in McMinn County to the outlet at the Tennessee River in Loudon County was completed in 1970.

Sweetwater Creek Watershed Program is a local project with technical and financial assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture. The principal problems were floodwater and sediment damage to agricultural lands, industrial, commercial and residential properties and roads. There are 37,460 acres in this watershed.

With the help of the sponsoring districts the watershed board requested funding from the three counties and the City of Sweetwater for operational and maintenance expenses in the amount of \$6,600.00 annually. Funding was provided in 1974.

Congress authorized funding for the Sweetwater Creek Watershed Project in July 1972. Without the help of the Honorable John Duncan, Sr., the project would not have been funded.

The McMinn Board of Supervisors asked the County Council to budget \$600 per year for maintenance of dams on the Sweetwater project. The council was very happy to comply with this request.

Four flood retarding structures have been completed in McMinn County, channelization for the creek in the City of Philadelphia, and 9 miles of clearing and snagging of the creek between the Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia. The construction on the first flood retarding structure begins in October 1975. In 1989 the fourth flood retarding structure was completed. This was the final phase of the project for federal funding. The total cost of the work was 4.6 million dollars. Benefits to the area have been substantial. The Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia have not been flooded since the structures were built and the channelization complete.

Every year the watershed board maintains the flood retarding structures and the channel. The retarding structures are mowed an-

nually; any trees removed from the embankment, and eroding areas are seeded. The channel is inspected and cleared of any fallen trees, logs or trash that may cause problems. Sand bars are removed from the channel.

Benefits to the area have been substantial. The Cities of Sweetwater and Philadelphia have not been flooded since the structures were built and the channelization completed. Preventing damage to the agricultural, industrial, commercial and residential properties has saved millions of dollars.

The McMinn County Soil Conservation started Tree Day in March 1972. We gave away 10,000 white pines which were donated by Bowater. The District requested the assistance of the City of Athens to distribute the trees in 19—. Later, Arbor Day and the State Forest Service absorbed Tree Day. Citizens National Bank joined the District and City in sponsoring this event, which continues today.

The County Council requested the District assist in planning and implementing a nine-acre recreation area at the County Landfill. The District supplied tuff-cote Bermuda sprigs for the ball fields and supervised planting and land grading. The District Board assisted in three seminars on landfill operations, and site selection at the request of the County Council, for visiting county officials, schools, health departments, etc.

In 1982, the Chestuee Creek Special ACP Demonstration Area was co-sponsored by the Soil Conservation District. Approximately thirty-five thousand (35,000) acres of land in the McMinn County Soil Conservation District is within this watershed. At a dedication ceremony held in April, over 500 people from East and Middle Tennessee attended to close out this project. The Board of Supervisors was very proud to have had a part in the success of the Chestuee Creek project. This project brought over \$1,250,000 in federal funds to the area. Many conservation practices were installed by local farmers, which they would not have otherwise been able to accomplish.

The District signed a Memorandum of Understanding with McMinn County in March 1983. The Memorandum spells out the responsibilities of both parties in our joint conservation efforts. The district has been able to lead the state in many areas of conservation application because of the support of our County and City officials. The commitment to the conservation effort by these groups makes the job much easier and satisfying.

The orphan strip mines continued to be a problem in the county. The District completed an inventory of these mines in 1984. Special funds were requested to reclaim these areas through a Special ACP funding for critical area treatment. We are awaiting approval of this project.

Our Conservation District was pleased to have our local nominee named as a Five Star Farmer by TVA for outstanding soil conservation accomplishment. Lowry Dougherty won the award for the excellent progress to controlling erosion on his 240-acre dairy farm.

In 1984, the Upper Oostanaula Creek Special ACP Demonstration Area was co-sponsored by the Soil Conservation District. Approximately twelve thousand acres of land in the McMinn County Soil Conservation District is within this watershed. This is the second national project that has been approved for McMinn County. The Board of Supervisors was very proud to have had a part in the success of the Oostanaula Creek Project which brought over one million dollars in federal funds to the area. Many conservation practices were installed by local farmers, which they would not have otherwise been able to accomplish.

Work was started on the Flood Hazard Study on Oostanaula Creek in October 1987. A series of public hearings were held in November and survey work has proceeded on schedule. The final plan was completed and ready for funding by September 1988.

In 1987, a group of volunteer conservationists formed an "Earth Team" to assist the McMinn Soil Conservation District with their conservation programs. The members included Hugh "Doc" Lamb, J. Neal Ensminger, Harold "Prof" Powers, Herbert "Dick" Williams, F. W. Adsit, Rex Moses, Charles Engle, E. H. Looney, Clarence Streetman, and Ginger Wheeler.

The McMinn "Earth Team" was the first recipients to receive state and national recognition for their volunteer efforts in conservation. They were cited by the National Association Conservation Districts for their exemplary volunteer efforts to attain conservation goals. They were honored at the NACD National meeting in February 1988 at Little Rock, Arkansas. The "Keep McMinn Beautiful" committee was formed as a direct result of the Earth Team.

Some of the projects carried out by the Earth Team were:

- I. Conservation Education Program
  - a. Conducted conservation school camps for city and county schools.
  - b. Presented programs to civic and garden clubs.
  - c. Contacted farmers to explain the provisions of the Farm Bill.
  - d. Developed a forest information program for area woodlot owners.
  - e. Assisted with conservation tours, meetings, etc.
- II. Water Quality Concerns
  - a. Conducted an extensive public awareness campaign on the water quality problems in McMinn County.
  - b. Developed a slide presentation on roadside litter and dumps.
  - c. Assisted the county in locating suitable landfill sites.
- III. Formed a Speakers Bureau
  - a. Sent out brochures to civic, school, and church groups on conservation speakers available for programs.
- IV. Conservation Application
  - a. Located farm boundaries on maps.
  - b. Compiled list of Highly Erodible Land (HEL).
  - c. Assist with layout of strip cropping, animal waste systems and waterways
  - d. Gather information on soil loss for SL-1 referrals.
  - e. Contact farmers concerning sodbuster-swampbuster provisions of Farm Bill.

In 1993, The Tennessee Department of Conservation and Environment published a list of all streams in Tennessee, which have water pollutants. Oostanaula Creek was identified as having pollutants nitrogen and pathogen. Best Management Practices were installed and cost shared through funds received from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture with the help of the Southeast Tennessee Resource Conservation and Development. Water Quality practices included stream fencing to prevent livestock having direct access to the creek, stream crossing, alternative livestock watering systems, conservation buffers strips and animal waste management systems

The Farm Bills bring many programs under Conservation Compliance. To participate and receive benefits from USDA is voluntary to the farmer. The District strives to make program participation clientele friendly and manageable to the farmers as it can, while meeting conservation goals.

In 1993, 484 landowners received assistance from Field Office staff. To date, 23,546 acres of highly erodible land were identified with

20,996 acres under conservation plan, and 13,084 acres plan applied and on the ground. The ACP program had 171 referrals. There were 25 LTA's, 13 Farm Bill Status Reviews, 1 569 compliance investigation, and 7 water quality complaints were investigated.

The McMinn County Water Quality assisted the Tennessee Department of Health & Environment with investigations of citizen complaints involving water pollution from animal waste and dairy operations waste, poultry operations waste, mining runoff, and disposal of dead animals. Investigations were conducted of numerous potential groundwater pollution problems (wells and springs in the county). Through these investigations, samples were collected to be analyzed by private laboratories. The test results were then analyzed and possible solutions were recommended.

Local industry and utility districts with potential groundwater problems were assisted. The County Board of Education was assisted with assessment of periodic well water sampling requirements to comply with State Regulations. Well water samples were collected for determination of lead in drinking water from several homes in response to requests. The laboratory determination results were then analyzed and citizens advised as to further action. Also, assistance was given in determining aquatic weed problems and treatment was recommended for several farm ponds.

Consultation was provided for two established watershed districts in response to water quality assessment needs. Sites for drinking water sampling were selected and samples collected to establish the need for extension of Riceville water lines to additional areas in the county.

The Water Quality Office responded to many requests for information and questions concerning appropriate authority for assistance.

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#### A PROCLAMATION IN MEMORY OF CORPORAL NATHAN R. ANDERSON

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### HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 8, 2005*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I hereby offer my heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and community of Cpl. Nathan Anderson upon the death of this outstanding Marine.

Cpl. Anderson was a member of the Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Division serving his great nation in the country of Iraq. He was a loving son, brother, and friend to all who knew him. Cpl. Anderson was an active citizen in his community and did his best to make his country a better place to live.

Cpl. Anderson will be remembered for his unsurpassed sacrifice of self while protecting others. His example of strength and fortitude will be remembered by all those who knew him.

While words cannot express our grief during the loss of such a courageous Marine, I offer this token of profound sympathy to the family, friends, and colleagues of Cpl. Nathan R. Anderson.

IN HONOR OF MR. ARNOLD  
FONTES

### HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 8, 2005*

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Arnold R. Fontes, who is retiring after 34 years as the San Benito County Assessor. His continuous re-election for over three decades speaks volumes for his ability and for the trust the people of this county placed in him.

Mr. Fontes was raised in San Benito County and attended local schools. He joined the R.O.T.C. and graduated in 1955 from the University of Santa Clara with a degree in Business Administration, majoring in accounting. He served in Germany as an Army Artillery Officer, and met his wife, Helga, while stationed there.

Upon returning to the United States he was employed by McCormick Selph as their Accounting Manager, and then with Protective Papers as Plant Manager and Controller. On September 1, 1970 Mr. Fontes was appointed Assessor of San Benito County, and ran unopposed for eight consecutive terms.

Arnold Fontes played a significant role in the community during those years. His activities include 31 years with the Boy Scouts of America, serving as District Chairman and as Vice President of Special Assignments of the Monterey Bay Area Council. He was President of the California Assessors' Association in 1982 and Treasurer from 1983 to 2000. He was a member of the San Benito Chamber of Commerce for 35 years, including Director from 1972 to 1974. During his 32 years with the Hollister Rotary Club he served as President from 1979 to 1980, and received the Paul Harris Fellowship from the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. Currently, Mr. Fontes serves as Treasurer for the Community Foundation for San Benito County.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Arnold Fontes's many accomplishments, and commend him for his tremendous devotion to his community. I join all of San Benito County in honoring this truly remarkable man for his lifelong achievements.

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REMEMBERING AND HONORING  
MR. JOHN ALBERT "AL"  
WICKLAND, JR.

### HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 8, 2005*

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to remember and honor an outstanding citizen and dear friend, Mr. John Albert "Al" Wickland, Jr. from Carmichael, CA, who died on Thursday, January 20, 2005. He was 84 years old.

Al was raised in Orland, CA. He attended the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied electrical engineering. When World War II began, Al left the University and began his lifelong dedication to his country and the communities he called home. Al entered the U.S. Army Air Corps and served honorably as a B-26 instructor during the war. On February