

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF  
ELIZABETH CARROLL ESKEW

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 28, 2006*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to congratulate Lisa and Tucker Eskew of Alexandria, VA, on the birth of their new baby daughter. Elizabeth Carroll Eskew was born on February 23, 2006, at 3:56 p.m., weighing 7 pounds and 1 ounce. Elizabeth has been born into a loving home, where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. Her birth is a blessing.

ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF ELECTED AS FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF INDEPENDENT AFRICA

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 28, 2006*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on January 16, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was sworn in as the first elected female president in the history of independent Africa. Mrs. Sirleaf had run against Charles Taylor in 1997, but lost, at least partly due to the impression that Taylor would return to war if he failed to win the election. Following the election, Mrs. Sirleaf spent a great deal of time outside Liberia, and many observers felt her gender and her supposed lack of common touch would prevent her from ever being elected President.

In 2005, former international soccer star George Weah captured the imagination of many inside and outside Liberia, who felt that his connection with Liberia's youth made him an almost inevitable winner, despite his lack of education and political experience. However, in the run-off election between the two, Mrs. Sirleaf employed modern campaign techniques, including polling, message development and targeted campaigning to achieve a stunning victory. Her connection with women voters may have made not only the difference in her election, but also may pave the way for other female candidates throughout Africa.

Now that she is leading this West African nation, the question is: What can she do to turn it around from the chaos and poverty into which it had fallen? From its independence in 1847 until 1980, Liberia was ruled by the descendants of former slaves from the United States. They managed to turn this nation into an economic engine, using the country's wealth of natural resources. Abundant sources of water and fertile soil supported rubber, palm oil and tropical fruit plantations, as well as some of the richest timber supplies in Africa. Liberia's mountains contained some of the highest quality iron ore in the world, and there were significant deposits of diamonds and gold.

Unfortunately, the so-called Americo-Liberians denied the descendants of the indigenous people their benefit from Liberia's natural wealth and their fair share of political power. The 1980 coup by then-Sergeant Samuel Doe led to the ascendancy of indigenous ethnic groups, but it also led to a poisonous political

atmosphere and rampant official corruption. In late 1989, Charles Taylor, a former member of the Doe government and an escapee from a prison in America, began an insurgency that eventually toppled the Doe government in 1990. Several years of factional fighting devastated the capital city of Monrovia, as well as much of the country. Following a rather shaky cease-fire, a 1997 election brought Charles Taylor to power. By that time, more than 150,000 of his countrymen had died in the fighting, and more than half the population had been displaced.

The Taylor regime was a disaster for Liberia. Taylor and his government looted the treasury and Liberia's natural resources. Political opponents were jailed, or in the case of Sam Dokie and his family members, they were killed. However, Taylor also was a catastrophe for its West African neighbors. Rebels who had been supported by Taylor have destabilized Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire.

Taylor's crimes against his own people stimulated an insurgency that eventually led to his negotiated exile in Nigeria. His crimes against the region led first to United Nations sanctions in 2001 for his support of the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone and subsequently to an indictment for war crimes by the UN-sponsored war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone in 2003.

The issue of Taylor's extradition to the Sierra Leone Special Court remains high on the agenda of the U.S. Government. Nevertheless, there are internal issues facing the new government in Liberia that also are pressing, and that was the main focus of our hearing last week on Liberia and the impact of its election on West Africa.

During the Taylor regime, and apparently also during the transitional government headed by Gyude Bryant, corruption became a way of life in Liberia. Illegal logging and mining and just plain theft of government resources were commonplace. In fact, the transitional government officials reportedly took furniture, computers and even rugs and light fixtures when they left office just a couple of weeks ago. In one of her first acts as President, Mrs. Sirleaf fired the entire staff of the Ministry of Finance for corruption and told the officials to stay in the country pending an audit. The ministry and the Central Bank significantly differ as to the amount of money on hand for government operations.

Those funds are desperately needed to repair Liberia's roads, water systems and power supply—all of which suffered from years of warfare and neglect. The Sirleaf government will have to examine all contracts to determine if they are in the best interest of the nation and rationally exploit Liberia's resources. Too many of the population of 3 million remain displaced, and 85 percent of Liberia's people are unemployed and 80 percent live below the poverty line. About 70 percent of the population survives on agriculture, which remains disrupted due to the lingering impact of the war.

If Liberia is to recover from its long nightmare, the United States will have to take the lead among the international community to assist in that restoration. That will require focus and consistency in America's engagement.

Liberians feel a kinship to America that Americans do not share with Liberia. Nevertheless, our country's relationship with Liberia

is quite real and very important for the welfare of its 3 neighbors. The Bush administration and Congress must take these facts into account in developing policies and programs to respond to Liberia's new, post-election realities.

**IKE WEATHERLY ESSAY WINNERS**

**HON. MIKE PENCE**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 28, 2006*

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning on the last day of Black History Month to congratulate Chandler Boys, Brynden Danner and Tristen Horton. These three fine students from Anderson, Indiana were recently named winners in the Ike Weatherly Essay Contest.

Ike Weatherly was a school board member and respected community leader in East Central Indiana. The Essay Contest held in his honor is part of the curriculum to help students better understand the achievements of African-Americans in our Nation's rich history.

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 dedicated 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 Manager in the Second Congressional District Office for ARTHUR RAVENEL, FLOYD SPENCE, and JOE WILSON.

The following obituary ran in The State newspaper on February 23, 2006:

Corrin Fitts Bowers, 77, died February 22, 2006, surrounded by his loving family. He was born July 5, 1928, in Luray, South Carolina, to Grover Ford Bowers and Corinne Fitts Bowers. He was the grandson of Louisa Johnston and Dr. Paul Ford Eve Bowers and Francis Gray and Eugene deTreville Fitts, all of Luray.

He attended school in Luray and Estill, where he finished high school in 1945. He attended both the University of South Carolina and Newberry College. He was the owner of the hat that became the Bronze Derby, Newberry and Presbyterian Colleges' much contended sports trophy.

He was a lifelong farmer who farmed the family land and grew cotton, corn, peaches and watermelons. He served for many years on the Production Credit Board in Walterboro. He served as a member of Hampton County's ASCA as well as the State Board under President Jimmy Carter. In Estill, Mr. Bowers was the Democratic Committee Chairman for 10 years. In 1960 he placed in the "Outstanding Young Farmers Award" and won the State Cotton—5 acre contest. He served for many years on the S.C. District Housing Committee #2 as the chairman. He served as the first President of the Estill Jaycees and Co-Chairman of the 1964 Watermelon Festival, which was held in Estill. Mr. Bowers was instrumental in bringing astronauts Gus Grissom and John Young to Estill on Mendel Rivers' Day. He was one of the founders of Patrick Henry Academy, serving as the first temporary chairman. He served on the board of Patrick Henry for many years and remained a Trustee until his death.

Corrin Bowers was a member of Lawtonville Baptist Church and served as an active and inactive deacon there for 50 years. He taught Sunday School, Training Union and was chairman of the Building Committee several times. Mr. Bowers served on one pastor search committee and sang bass in the church choir.

Corrin and his family were avid hunters who loved to entertain. He and his two brothers, Grover and "Det," were the Lowcountry jitterbuggers. A girl cousin once said, "You have not lived if you haven't been to a dance with one of the Bowers boys." Corrin was a charter member of the Monday Night Couple's Bridge Club for 56 years. He was also a member of Estill Supper Club as well as the Estill Lions Club.

Corrin Bowers is survived by his wife of 56 years, Mary Eleanor Wiggins Bowers; his brother, Grover Ford Bowers (Macie); a son Corrin Fitts Bowers, junior (Sallie) of Estill, daughters, Sharon Bowers Green (Roy) also of Estill, and "Liz" Bowers Palles (Mitch)