

role in the formation of Appalachian Computer Services in London. He also had a hand in Laurel Insurance Company and worked in the printing industry. In his spare time, G.W. loved UK athletics, rarely missing a home game.

G.W. was a close personal friend to me and a strong support of mine going back to 1984. I will always be thankful for his belief in me and his help over the decades. It was a pleasure to see him every time I made my way to London. I will miss our friendship.

Elaine and my prayers go to G.W.'s family, including his wife Elizabeth; his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Hal McCoy; his son and daughter-in-law, George William and Becky; his son and daughter-in-law, Winston and Shannon; his sister, Margaret Fouts; his five grandchildren; and many other friends and family members. G.W. was preceded in death by his parents, George W. Sr. and Willie Lee, and his brother William.

Mr. President, I ask my U.S. Senate colleagues to join me in mourning the loss of Mr. George Washington "G.W." Griffin and extending sympathies to the Griffin family. Kentucky is poorer for his loss.

An obituary detailing Mr. Griffin's incredible life appeared in the Laurel County-area publication the Sentinel Echo. I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[The Sentinel Echo, December 23, 2011]

GEORGE WASHINGTON "G.W." GRIFFIN—OWNER OF LAUREL GROCERY COMPANY

LAUREL COUNTY, KY.—George Washington "G.W." Griffin, 85, died December 19, 2011, from complications of pneumonia.

Born on February 28, 1926, in East Bernstadt, Griffin attended the Kentucky Military Institute, Wake Forest University and graduated from the University of Kentucky, where he was a member of the Kappa Alpha Fraternity. Having served in World War II, he was a proud veteran of the United States Navy.

He was a member of the First Baptist Church. He was a founding member and past president of the London Country Club and long-time member of Biltmore Forest Country Club. He served on the board of trustees of the University of Kentucky for 16 years, which is how he met his partner in crime and close friend, the late, great Dr. Otis Singletary. Griffin was past chairman of Laurel Grocery Company, Cumberland Valley National Bank, Institutional Distributors, London Rotary Forms, and the Food Marketing Education Council (the Red Coats). He was a board member of Cumberland College, National-American Wholesale Grocers Association, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Appalachian Computer Systems, and the Kentucky Grocers Association. He was an initial inductee into the Kentucky Grocers Hall of Fame. An avid golfer and thoroughbred horse owner/racing enthusiast, he traveled all over the world to pursue his passions, but his favorite place was always the great state of Kentucky. A diehard UK fan, Griffin never missed a home football game until he became too ill to attend.

He was preceded in death by his brother, William "Bill" Griffin.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Elizabeth Park "Sis" Griffin, and sister Margaret Fouts of Lacey, Wash.

The couple have three children, Elizabeth (Hal) McCoy of Hopkinsville, Ky.; George William (Becky) Griffin of Lexington; and Winston (Shannon) Griffin of London; and five grandchildren, Winston Park Griffin, Charlotte Grace Griffin, Griffin Bell McCoy, Catherine Rose Griffin, and Bella James Griffin.

The Griffin family extends heartfelt gratitude to Don Dossett for his loving care and assistance with G.W. Griffin these last two years.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday at First Baptist Church, 804 W. 5th Street, London, with Dr. Terry Lester officiating.

Burial will be in A.R. Dyche Memorial Park.

Visitation will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at House-Rawlings Funeral Home, 510 E. 4th Street, London.

Memorial contributions can be made to George W. Griffin Charitable Scholarship Trust, PNC Institutional Investments, 1900 East 9th Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44114, Attn: Lauren Middleton.

CONSTITUTION DAY OBSERVANCE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this Monday, September 17, our Nation celebrated one of our greatest founding documents the document that has guided the discourse of our great Nation for 225 years. Every September 17, we celebrate Constitution Day.

Americans of all walks of life are united by the ideals of equal justice, limited government, and the rule of law. It was the vision and determination of the Founders who wrote and signed the Constitution that makes our celebration today possible.

More than two centuries ago, the Founders met in Philadelphia to create a constitution that would preserve liberty and foster freedom. They established three separate branches of government and a system of checks and balances among them. Ours is still the oldest written Constitution in use in the world.

The most important purpose of Constitution Day is to teach these lessons to the younger generations. I am pleased to say that the Kentucky Department of Education has made resources available to secondary schools across the Commonwealth to help them recognize this special day.

The University of Kentucky marked Constitution Day by inviting speakers and holding historical forums. And at the University of Louisville, Constitution Day was celebrated with a constitution quiz bowl and constitution cupcakes.

So on this day, we recognize the students, teachers, and community leaders in Kentucky and across the Nation who promote and protect the ideals of our glorious Constitution.

We also say a special thanks for our men and women in uniform who defend it.

More than two centuries ago, the 39 signers of our Constitution gave us a more perfect union through a document that endures and guides us here today.

They understood, as we all must, that above all, government serves to

secure the blessings of liberty for the people of our great Nation. It is an honor to stand on this floor and recognize how we have reaped the fruit of their efforts these many years later.

REMEMBERING GEORGE JOHN 'G.J.' SMITH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a Kentuckian who was a coach, athletic director, and teacher to many and a confidant and good friend to even more. Kentucky mourns the passing of Mr. George John Smith of London, KY, who passed away on August 17 of this year at the age of 59.

Known as G.J. to his many players, friends, and fellow baseball fans, Mr. SMITH was a Laurel County native born in 1953. He began his coaching career at Laurel County High School in 1977. When he stepped down from that position 26 years later, he was ranked among the winningest high school baseball coaches in Kentucky with over 600 victories.

G.J. was also the athletic director at South Laurel and the Laurel County Board of Education. He was inducted into the Laurel County Sports Hall of Fame and the Kentucky High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He was also a member of Mt. Zion Church of Christ.

In college, G.J. played basketball at the University of Kentucky under coach Adolph Rupp. He is survived by his wife Judy; two sons, Cameron and Trey; a sister and brother-in-law, Charlie Jean and Terry Mack; and many other beloved family members and friends.

I ask my U.S. Senate colleagues to join me in extending sympathies to the family of G.J. Smith as well as his many friends and players. As the home of Pee Wee Reese and the Louisville Slugger, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has certainly contributed more than its share to America's greatest pastime. I am pleased the legacy of G.J. Smith will be remembered as a part of the Bluegrass State's baseball history as well.

Mr. President, an article describing G.J. Smith's life of achievement recently appeared in the Whitley County-area publication the Times Tribune. I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Times Tribune, Aug. 20, 2012]

G.J. SMITH: 1953-2012

FORMER WILDCAT, COACHING LEGEND
DEAD AT 59

(By Chris Parsons)

LONDON.—The Commonwealth of Kentucky lost one of its sports legends Friday when G.J. Smith, former Kentucky Wildcat and long time Laurel County coach and athletics director, died of a heart attack at the age of 59.

Smith was considered an ambassador of sports in Laurel County on many occasions

and his love of student athletes is something he'll always be remembered for. Though he held many titles in his career, the one title most common among those that knew Smith was that of a friend and teacher.

Former South Laurel basketball coach Steve Wright, who coached under Smith in baseball as an assistant and basketball when Smith was the AD, said Smith's experiences and heartfelt dedication is what sticks out to him more than anything.

"He's the most fierce competitor I have ever been around," Wright said. "When you were around him, he just taught you the value of winning and doing well."

"The thing I learned from him most was that the kids always came first," Wright added. "No matter what he did, he always wanted what was best for the students no matter what the situation was."

Wright said one of his fondest memories with Smith was after South Laurel won the state championship in 2005, when they shared a special moment after the game.

"He wasn't a real emotional guy, but after that game he came over and gave me a big hug," Wright said. "It was a moment as coach, it was a moment as an AD and it was a moment as a father and I'll always remember that."

"We were able to share a dream that we both had," he added. "It really was like a mountain top for both of us, and I look back on that because it was a moment that I think he really enjoyed and could say 'my school just won the state championship.'"

As a basketball player in his younger days, Smith became the only player to lead two different teams to the Sweet 16 in consecutive years after he first led Hazel Green in 1970, and Laurel County after consolidation in 1971, when he was also named a High School All-American and played for the Kentucky All-Stars.

Smith's coaching career spanned 26 years, with a career total of 662 wins, 15 district titles and six region championships as head coach. Smith's teams never had a losing season during Smith's tenure and won 30 games six times.

Current Corbin baseball coach Rob Ledington, who played for Smith in high school and got his first coaching job under him, said his relationship with Smith was often misconstrued, yet grew in Smith's later days.

"Our relationship was a lot stronger than a lot of people realized," said Ledington. "I got my start in baseball with him as a player and I got my first coaching job under him."

"A lot of the stuff that I do as a coach, as a teacher, and as a father, I learned from him," he added. "Outside of my immediate family, he was the most influential person in my life. We've had disagreements, but that's just part of being a family. It's a sad day for baseball and it's just as sad a day for me personally."

As a result of Smith's high-school basketball accolades, he was a member of Adolph Rupp's famed Super Kitten recruiting class. While he was at UK, Smith was a part of history twice as he played in the final games of John Wooden of UCLA (the 1975 NCAA Championship game) and Rupp. Smith said on several occasions that his favorite UK memory was when the Wildcats knocked off top-ranked Indiana, 92-90, to end the Hoosiers' 34-game winning streak in the Midwest Regional final game in Dayton, Ohio.

Arrangements will be handled by House-Rowlings Funeral Home in London.

The family will hold a visitation after 6 p.m. Monday night and the funeral will be Tuesday at 11 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO ERNESTINE CORNETT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I stand before you today to pay tribute

to a woman who has spent a significant amount of her life working to inform and entertain local communities in eastern Kentucky through the television station WYMT. After 20-plus years and a plethora of job titles within the company, Ms. Ernestine Cornett retired from her position as general manager in May of 2012 with as much passion and joy in her heart as when she first began.

In the mid-1980s, Ernestine, her husband, and their daughter relocated from the city of Lexington to Perry County. It was here that the admirable works produced by Cornett began. Responding to an ad in the newspaper began the journey of this extensive television-business career. I have great respect for Ernestine as she started at the bottom, worked hard, and eventually progressed to the top of the hierarchical ladder.

Ambitiously, she pressed through to accomplish great things, not only for eastern Kentucky but also for the television company in which she was employed. Working for WYMT television station, Ernestine knew that her friends and family would be adequately updated with weather and news announcements, as well as sports and other forms of entertainment. The television station matured and displayed ample signs of success while Ernestine was aboard with the company.

Her motivation in life was to make sure that eastern Kentucky was knowledgeable and well-informed. Finally, after 27 years of working, Ernestine Cornett retired in order to enjoy time with family and the next phase of her life. Ernestine trusts that WYMT will continue to prosper and the team members will carry on with her same passion.

The Hazard Herald recently published an article about the accomplishments of Ms. Ernestine Cornett, and I would ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Hazard Herald, May 30, 2012]

Ronald Reagan was president, very few people had ever heard of high-definition television, and a small CBS affiliate with the call letters WYMT was about to revolutionize the way eastern Kentuckians got their news each day.

It was 1985, just two years after Ernestine Cornett and husband Keith had returned to their native Perry County with their four-year-old daughter Ashley in tow. Keith had just sold his accounting and income tax business in Lexington.

They were, as Ernestine put it, "starting over in familiar surroundings."

A graduate of Hazard High School, and then Morehead State University, Ernestine Cornett had been substituting in the city and county school districts when she ran across an ad in the Hazard Herald for a position at this new television station. She answered the ad, interviewed with a Lexington broadcaster by the name of Ralph Gabbard, and got the job in the avails coordinator position, a job which she described as con-

sisting of inputting advertiser information and ensuring that the ad would have time on the air.

"Frankly, at the time, I had no idea what I was suited for in the television business," Cornett said. "Certainly I had no experience, but evidently Mr. Gabbard knew."

Mr. Gabbard must have known, because in a couple of years she took the position of sales assistant and then office manager. And then, in 1990, when station manager Wayne Martin was promoted to the WKYT station in Lexington, Cornett also received a promotion and began what would be a career heading WYMT that would last more than 20 years. That career will come to an end with Cornett's retirement later this month, but it was Martin whom she credited with her long tenure at WYMT, and with her landing the job in the first place.

"Certainly Wayne Martin was a big part of my success at WYMT, as he recommended me for his replacement, and although I was intimidated at the prospect, I knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Cornett said.

Martin returned to Hazard on Tuesday of this week, as he attended a special lunch to honor Cornett's career and noted that her leadership has been a cornerstone at WYMT now for 22 years.

"Her leadership has been one which I know I've tried to emulate because of her integrity, and sense of fair play, and her absolute passion for eastern Kentucky," Martin said.

WYMT was purchased by Gray Television in 1994, an Atlanta-based media company that owns several other stations, including WKYT in Lexington and WVLT in Knoxville. When Gray took over WYMT, Cornett's title changed to vice-president and general manager.

In the years that Cornett has headed WYMT, the station has shown growth and success, and has also maintained its relevancy as eastern Kentucky's only localized television broadcast. There are no other television stations that cater solely to the eastern Kentucky market. The station has been able to do that, Cornett explained, because the station serves the community, both as a local advertising source and a news outlet that offers hard news updates and features, as well as weather, sports, and entertainment options for the residents of eastern Kentucky. That was something that had never been done on television prior to WYMT's creation.

And as a native and resident of eastern Kentucky, as well as the leader of a media outlet, Cornett knows well the importance that a news organization can represent, and the service it can provide.

"As a local, I was a manager fully invested in the success of this station because I can remember what it was like before WYMT came along," she said. "I would not want to return to those times. Now, I will be fully invested in the station in new ways, as a viewer, as a consumer."

But there have been a lot of changes and challenges along the way that Cornett oversaw during her career. Gone are the analog broadcasts, and WYMT's newscasts are not solely offered on television anymore.

"Our news can be watched on the World Wide Web and on mobile devices," she noted. "And, although it took us years to get a satellite truck, there are now small portable devices that can transmit news packages through phone and data lines. Technology in this business is always moving forward. Our challenge is to keep up."

Cornett will spend her last day at the station in Hazard on Friday, and of course, after a long career there are going to be some things she will miss, from the people she meets every day in the station's hallways to