

without disabilities. I am so grateful that the health care associates and young professionals in my firm got the opportunity to hear from Bobby just one week before he passed away.

Bobby presented virtually to the Powers health care group on the “Art of Negotiation” and imparted years of wisdom on the younger members of the Powers Team. Bobby was his old self, methodically presenting his well-prepared remarks, highlighting his points with examples of bill negotiations from his Senate days, and laying out his process which relied heavily on preparation.

I took a look at some of Bobby’s binders over the past few days and could not believe what I saw. Well-organized, tabbed, color-coded, and dog-eared for sure, but each page is full of comments in the margins, underlined words, double underlines, circled words, pencil, pen highlighter, sticky notes, stars, exclamation points! Double explanation points!!

He sucked the pulp off those pages. It was an exercise in aggressive reading!

His dedication, passion, and clarity of focus left me awe-struck. Those were not the work papers of a casual lawyer. Bobby was no 9-to-5er. He was most fulfilled after a full weekend of work, producing a 12-page, single-spaced memo and seeking review and substantive comment; before 12:00 Noon on Monday.

Bobby was the consummate professional who lived and breathed disability policy. As he said many times, Bobby considered his work to be his therapy, even in his final hours.

His list of accomplishments is remarkable: The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown University Law Center, cutting his teeth at a public interest law firm, House committee staff, Senate Disability Policy Chief Counsel and Staff Director, Director of the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy, and mediator for the U.S. Appellate Court in Washington, DC—all before settling into the last 15 years of his career at Powers law.

His awards are too numerous to mention. While he accepted them graciously, his beloved wife Lynne tells me that he housed them in his closet. And that’s really all you need to know about Bobby Silverstein.

Bobby never sought the limelight. He never craved credit. They say “Success has many parents and failure is an orphan.” There are many who can legitimately claim playing a key role in enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, some of whom will speak after me, but Bobby went out of his way to stay behind-the-scenes: To do the heavy lifting; the principled negotiation; always with a goal of getting to “yes.” And his track record demonstrates his effectiveness: Twenty federal laws impacting people with disabilities, all bipartisan and all based on consensus. It is an incredible legacy to leave behind.

In the past few days, I have heard from literally hundreds of Bobby’s colleagues and friends expressing their sentiments:

1. A genuine, kind, and humble man
2. An endless fountain of good humor and optimism
3. One of a kind; he has no equal
4. Such a force and a relentless advocate
5. Uncompromising defender of what is right and true
6. Thorough and analytical yet thoughtful and compassionate
7. A selfless mentor to anyone in need of guidance
8. A visionary, yet practical
9. Tough but warm, and always the voice of reason Case in point: When Bobby told a room full of leaders that their theory was

“preposterous”—We were all thinking it, but he was the only one brave enough to say it!

10. A giant in the disability community

For me personally, I will miss Bobby pain-fully in our internal policy debates, our ad-vo-cacy on behalf of people with disabilities, and on our weekly Legislative Practice calls. But mostly, I will just miss my friend.

Bobby was the most positive person I have ever known and I will always be grateful for the time we spent together. For that, let me say thank you, Bobby. Thank you so very much.

COMMEMORATING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Ms. STEVENS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the City of Birmingham, Michigan, for its role in the American abolitionist movement and to recognize the bravery and sacrifice of those who risked their lives seeking freedom from the atrocity of slavery in the United States. As important work continues to appropriately recognize and educate around this terrible period of American history, it is a great honor to highlight the story of Birmingham, Michigan, and two individuals who dedicated themselves to helping others achieve their freedom.

The Birmingham Museum of Birmingham, Michigan, documented the remarkable role the city and its residents played in the anti-slavery movement through its research into Birmingham’s Black heritage. The city was proud to submit its application to list Birmingham’s Greenwood Cemetery on the National Park Service’s Underground Railroad Network to Freedom list. Birmingham’s application to the network was officially accepted in March of 2022 and was further recognized by the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission. The stories of two men, Elijah S. Fish and George B. Taylor, were compiled as accounts of Birmingham’s connection to the Underground Railroad, and I would like to share more about their harrowing stories today.

Elijah S. Fish was among the first settlers to purchase land in what is now Birmingham, Michigan, in 1820. Mr. Fish’s land acquisition occurred just two years after Birmingham’s founding as one of the oldest settlements in Michigan. Described as a “principled and hardworking man,” Mr. Fish became an influential figure in Birmingham’s early history, founding its first Presbyterian Church and becoming its first deacon. As territorial Michigan grew, Birmingham became an important stop along the route from Detroit to Pontiac. Its convenient location expanded Birmingham’s potential to influence regional economy and politics, and Mr. Fish seized upon this opportunity to become a key figure in the abolition movement of early Michigan.

Mr. Fish served as a dedicated organizer of anti-slavery efforts through the associations he formed with other abolitionists, such as lawyer and state legislator George Wisner of Pontiac and Quaker activist Nathan Power of Farmington. Even before Michigan was granted statehood, Mr. Fish and 50 other abolitionists founded the Oakland County Free Discussion

and Anti-Slavery Society. His work with the organization continued throughout the early 1840’s, as he continued to fight to end the enslavement of black Americans from his home in Birmingham, Michigan.

By 1840, Michigan had developed a strong network of anti-slavery organizers and thousands of freedom seekers were aided through Michigan’s Underground Railroad network. As bounty hunters became more aggressive in their efforts to recapture freedom-seekers in the region, and upon the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, anti-slavery advocates redirected freedom-seekers through the state and toward Canada as a safer destination for those escaping enslavement. Individuals such as Henry Bibb, an influential abolitionist lecturer, relocated across the Detroit River to Windsor, Ontario, around 1850, to assist in resettling escapees who arrived via the Underground Railroad and began publication of The Voice of the Fugitive. Helping people who were enslaved establish new lives in Canada required a system of abolitionists on both sides of the border. Organizations such as Michigan’s Friends of Humanity had active anti-slavery advocates from Oakland County such as Elijah Fish and Nathan Power, and Wayne County’s Reverend Marcus Swift who were instrumental in fueling the continued efforts to combat slavery in America and safely usher Black Americans to freedom in Canada.

A convention of anti-slavery advocates was held in May of 1851 in Detroit with Elijah Fish presiding as President. The convention resulted in the formation of the Refugee Home Society to raise funds necessary to make land purchases in Canada for freedom-seekers. Mr. Fish remained committed to the cause following the convention by funding and providing supplies to freedom-seekers navigating the Underground Railroad and by organizing influential abolitionist speakers to the region to raise awareness and speak on the anti-slavery movement. While Mr. Fish was unable to celebrate the successful prohibition of slavery due to his death in February of 1861, his contribution to the movement in Michigan helped propel the nation toward abolition, a feat that was accomplished just four years after his death. His admirable dedication to abolition makes him a noteworthy historical figure of Birmingham and deserving of this posthumous recognition.

Mr. George B. Taylor’s story illustrates the cruel conditions that were withheld by those who were enslaved, and the sacrifices made to gain their freedom. Mr. Taylor, like many other people born into slavery, did not know his family history and did not have birth records, but his estimates place his birth year around 1822 to 1824. Despite years of inhumane treatment during his enslavement by the Greathouse family of Hancock County, Kentucky, it was not until 1855, after experiencing a public whipping, that he became determined to escape to the north. Throughout his treacherous and long journey northward, he encountered unimaginable risk that was, sadly, not unique to him. He narrowly evaded capture by armed bounty hunters who were aided by bloodhounds and navigated hundreds of miles of difficult terrain using only the stars in the night sky. His journey can be described as nothing short of incredible.

The month-long trip from Hancock, Kentucky, to Michigan was over 300 miles, and even upon arrival in the north, significant danger remained as raids of known abolitionists’

homes and inconsistent enforcement of laws pertaining to slavery victimized freedom-seekers. Of the thousands who escaped toward Michigan, many were captured and returned to their enslavers. Upon Mr. Taylor's escape, he faced the difficult crossing of the Ohio River, and on April 1, 1855, he began a slow, two-week journey through the rugged terrain only by night, avoiding settlements and farms to evade capture. Deciding his progress was significantly hindered by the darkness, he sought to travel by day. Experiencing significant exhaustion as he slowly advanced in his travels, he fell asleep in bushes alongside the road one day only to be awoken by two bounty hunters and their bloodhounds who had taken him prisoner. Narrowly escaping, Mr. Taylor hid in the undergrowth as the bloodhounds and gunshots followed. The next five days of his trip were inconceivably taxing. He traveled five days by foot, without food or water, before being discovered by an abolitionist family who helped him regain his health before recommencing his trip northward. Although he had walked for three weeks, he was still far from his destination.

Just two days after resuming his trip, he was once again run down by bloodhounds. This time, Mr. Taylor was unable to escape his abductors and was arrested to be taken before a local justice. Through good fortune, the justice, an abolitionist, granted his release, and he continued on his way before finally reaching Niles, Michigan. From there, the Underground Railroad network assisted him in the final leg of his trip, east to Detroit and then to his freedom in Windsor, Ontario.

Two years after achieving his freedom, Mr. Taylor returned to Michigan, settling in the Birmingham area. Upon his arrival in rural Birmingham, Mr. Taylor worked as a farmhand and began living with Mr. J.P. Stewart. The Stewart's neighbor, Reverend James S. T. Milligan of the Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church, was known to be active with the Michigan Underground Railroad network and his farm remained a safe place for freedom-seekers leading up to the Civil War's conclusion. By 1870, slavery had officially been abolished in the reunited country, and Mr. Taylor had continued to build his new life in Michigan. No longer a laborer, Mr. Taylor now farmed his own land with his wife, Mrs. Eliza Dosier, also someone who was formerly enslaved. His position as a respected and contributing member of society grew, and in 1872, Reverend Milligan sought the Taylors' help to set up a new church in Denison, Kansas, relocating the family westward.

The Taylors returned to Michigan from 1876 to after 1880, when they once again relocated to Denison, Kansas. When Milligan retired and left Denison, the Taylors returned to Birmingham in 1893, and were proudly the first African American property owners in town. While Reverend Milligan and Mr. Taylor's connection can be verified through their work in Kansas, it is possible that the two had known each other since Mr. Taylor's escape in 1855 and remained in contact as anti-slavery advocates. Records suggest that, during his time in Michigan, Mr. Taylor may have played a key role in resettling newly freed Black Americans. Census records show several children present in the household who then are absent from the household by the time of the next census. While it is difficult to verify, it is speculated that Black families, such as the Taylors, were

fostering homeless African American minors and orphans, continuing their contributions to the abolition movement by assisting with their transition to freedom. Mr. Taylor faced unimaginable hardship in his early life, but he courageously pressed on, finding his purpose in service to others.

Madam Speaker, it is a great honor to represent the City of Birmingham, Michigan, a community that's history is so closely intertwined with the fight for a more just nation. Its role as a destination for freedom-seekers and home to influential abolitionists, including Mr. Elijah S. Fish and Mr. George B. Taylor, makes the 11th Congressional District proud. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the rich history of Birmingham, Michigan, and honor the two men whose stories were highlighted today, and may Michigan maintain its role as a destination for freedom-seekers and those who fight for a more just society.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE
CHARLES STONE UPON COMPLETION
OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE
ON THE BELMONT CITY COUNCIL

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize my friend and colleague Belmont City Councilmember and former Mayor Charles Stone as he concludes his term of office on the city council. The city is losing a truly conscientious and forward-looking leader.

Charles Stone is a lifelong resident of San Mateo County and a resident of Belmont since 2004. He was first elected to the city council in 2013 and then was re-elected in 2017. He is a graduate of Hillsdale High School, the University of California at San Diego, where he received his degree in political science, and Santa Clara University School of Law. He practices law at the Law Office of Katherine R. Moore in Redwood City.

Prior to joining the city council, he served on the Board of Directors of School-Force!, a nonprofit raising funds for Belmont and Redwood Shores schools. His interest in city policy began as he noticed a lack of cooperation between the city and school district. As he put it, "It was more like two fists pounding together than two hands being aligned and I didn't like that." In 2013, he threw his hat into the ring to create more family-friendly policies and those more amendable to working families.

Throughout his time on the city council, Charles Stone has been focused on housing, transportation and economic development. After two terms on the council, and after many long nights discussing housing and the city's general plan, Belmont is one of the few cities in San Mateo County that is on track to meet its state-mandated goals to produce affordable units. The most recent development, Firehouse Square, is 100 percent affordable and has 66 units adjacent to the Belmont Caltrain Station. There are 331 units of affordable housing built in recent years or in the pipeline, along the El Camino Real transit corridor. Charles has been a leader in making this new housing a reality.

As a councilmember, he serves as the council's representative to seven intergovern-

mental agencies and to multiple nonprofits. He has six council committee assignments.

However, his most time-consuming assignment outside of the council chambers is his role as a member of the board of our local transit agency, Samtrans, and as a board member of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain). He is an undisputed regional leader in transportation. He successfully negotiated, along with two other local leaders, for the payment of \$35 million to Samtrans for its 1991 purchase of the Caltrain right of way on behalf of three counties. For more than a year, and in the midst of confusion and finger pointing by leaders in other counties, Charles repeatedly and publicly read the terms of the longstanding contract and demanded that the terms not be changed without appropriate repayment of the outstanding debt. The money and new terms were approved this year, marking a rare moment when San Mateo County and its transportation interests were treated equally by the other two counties.

Charles fought successfully to raise the minimum wage in Belmont. He twice served as Mayor. He worked with a neighboring community to end traffic gridlock near a high school. He supported his police department while embracing the need for change to ensure equity. He also supported the arrival of Stanford University to the campus of a small liberal arts university long located in Belmont. During his time on the council, bioscience discovered Belmont. Councilman Stone supported conversion of office space to lab space and the construction of new labs. During the darkest days of the pandemic, Charles and his colleagues created a \$100,000 fund for local businesses, adding to state and federal small business funds. He also appropriately chastised the federal government's business pandemic relief programs for leaving too many behind and for operating with insufficient controls. "Had [the federal government] dug in a little more and spent more time on this I think we'd be in better shape today," he noted in April 2020. I think the GAO auditors tracing fraud would agree with Councilman Stone.

It is now time for Charles Stone to step down from the city council and to regain time to hike with his daughters, Sophia and Sara, around Waterdog Lake. I want to thank him for putting his astute mind to use on behalf of working and middle-class families in San Mateo County for over 10 years. He can honestly state that the difference he made is cast in concrete, framed in steel, and sits within a beautiful city blessed with green hills and oak trees that he cherishes. He improved the lives of tens of thousands. This ex-rugby player is temporarily leaving the field, but the score on the board shows that, despite occasional injuries and perhaps a few involuntary blood donations, he was key to delivering a win for the people of Belmont.

HONORING COUNCILMEMBER JOHN
SAWYER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John Sawyer of Santa Rosa, California in honor of his retirement and sixteen years as a council member and mayor.