

Remarks by Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse
Presentation of First Citizen Awards
Maryland Senate
March 8, 2011

President Miller, members of the Senate, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: I am honored once again to be with you here today for the nineteenth year to participate in presenting, on your behalf, the First Citizen Awards of the Maryland Senate.

The text of the award says best what it means to be a First Citizen:

"First Citizen is the name that Charles Carroll of Carrollton chose to sign a series of articles published by Ann Catharine Green in the Annapolis Maryland Gazette in 1773. They form a strong defense of an independent legislature and were among the earliest arguments for a new concept of government based upon traditional community rights and liberties that protected its citizens from arbitrary rule. At the time, Carroll, as a Roman Catholic, could neither vote nor hold public office. With the publication of these articles, Carroll launched a career of public service that would not end until his death at the age of 95 in 1832. In addition to helping draft Maryland's first Constitution and signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Carroll served as President of the Maryland Senate, of which he was a member from 1777 to 1800, and as one of the first United States Senators from Maryland (1789-1792). To be a First Citizen is to be a dedicated and effective participant in the process of making government work for the benefit of all."

Although not yet fully articulated in the First Citizen letters, Carroll was beginning to ask all citizens to think about much needed changes in government, changes that would allow people like him "freedom of speech and thought," changes that would separate the powers of the Executive and the Legislature, and that would ensure that taxation could not be imposed by anyone not subject to the laws passed by the Legislature. Carroll was among the first people in the colonies to advance a new concept of government based on the advice and consent of the people. This led to one of the most creative experiments in defining self-government that the world has ever witnessed and which abides well with us still.

To Carroll, and to other contemporaries such as his distant cousin, Charles Carroll the Barrister, Samuel Chase, and William Paca, all of whom served in the Maryland Senate, making government work for the good of the whole meant a thoughtful reworking of the structure of government by writing it all down, debating the results, and crafting the final product in committees separately and of the whole. Carroll as First Citizen, saw government much as every citizen should see it today, in constant need of attention and thoughtful legislative action.

It is no accident that the publisher of Carroll's essays as First Citizen was a woman, Ann Catharine Green, who prided herself on being printer to the then colony of Maryland, insisting that Charles Willson Peale include that reference in her official portrait on a document she held in her hand. While not permitted to participate in the electoral process for another one hundred and twenty-five years, highly educated women had long been in the forefront of disseminating the news and publishing political prose and poetry, particularly in Maryland, with Dinah Nuthead active at the end of the 17th century in St. Mary's City and Annapolis, and Ann Catharine Green who published the Maryland *Gazette* on the eve of the American Revolution. As the world recognizes International Women's Day today for the 100th year in a row, we not only honor the two recipients of this year's First Citizen's Award, but also remind ourselves that for our brand of democracy to survive, we must always be on the march for greater equality and citizen engagement in the political process. The

rights and privileges that Carroll argues for as First Citizen are only certainties today if we continue to fight for their survival through legislative action and by civil discourse.

The two recipients today are well known for their courteous and effective approach to their legislative responsibilities, although apparently they have had their moments in the heat of debate when tempers may have gotten the better of them, whether it was in the defense of a local capital project for Glen Echo, or in support of an illustrious ancestor, John Hanson, whose legislative and administrative contributions to the formation of the nation are not as widely appreciated as they once were.

The first award goes to Senator Brian Frosh whose career in the House and the Senate is marked by his devotion to environmental causes and the improvement of the judicial system. In the words of the president of Salisbury University: “ Brian Frosh is perhaps best known as one of the great gentlemen of Maryland politics. . . . He has established a well-deserved reputation as the legislature's leading conservationist, and as an enthusiastic and dependable supporter of Maryland higher education.” In one of the more entertaining accounts of his assumption of the chairmanship of the Judicial Proceedings Committee which Joseph Anselmo titled "The Frosh Prince,” Senator Frosh is accurately depicted as 'courteous and self-deprecating with a soft voice, bushy mustache and a partiality to blue shirts.’’ One senator referred to him as 'not a showoff, . . . not here for the publicity,' while President Miller reportedly said “I knew he would be very fair and objective on the issues. I might not agree with him on most of them. ...He'll bring them to the floor and I'll vote 'no.' As one of his political adversaries put it, “Brian is very fair about giving people their say, whether they agree with him or not.” In recognizing a citizen legislator committed to thoughtful debate and a well-reasoned course of action founded on a careful review of the facts, the First Citizen Award is presented to Senator Brian Frosh.

The second award goes to Senator Thomas Middleton who is well known for his leadership on issues ranging from community care of citizens with developmental disabilities and mental illness to eradicating all forms of racism that still persist in the public and private world. He has long been an advocate of increased voter participation in the political process and in the development of public policy. As he put it in a letter to the Washington Post: “History . . . shows that the greatest, most effective lobbying group has always been, is and will always be, the people. As a voting lobby, the people can move mountains . . . from environmental protection . . . to demanding an end to highway carnage [by drunken drivers].” As a farmer and an advocate for the survival of the family farm, Senator Middleton has also been a staunch defender of affordable health care for his constituents, and his opposition to gambling as a source of revenue for the state is rooted in the personal experience of his father who almost lost the family farm betting on slot machines. As he relates the story, for a time his father “thought he might be forced to sell his 288-acre farm which had been owned by Middletons since the 17th century. A relative bailed him out with a loan, but the experience turned him [and his son] against gambling for life.” As he expressed it in another letter to the Washington Post: “to turn to slots to solve our budget deficit and our education funding is to embark on a foolhardy journey down a disastrous road.” While his views on what ought to be public policy do not always prevail, his philosophy has been that in the face of insurmountable opposition, an effective legislator seeks compromises “in which no side gets everything it wants.” On behalf of the President and Senate of Maryland the First Citizen Award is presented to Senator Thomas Middleton.