

On Being a First Citizen

Remarks by Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, State Archivist
on the occasion of the presentation of the First Citizen Awards to
J. Frank Raley, Jr., C. Bernard Fowler, and Martin G. Madden
Friday, February 23, 2006

President Miller, members of the Senate, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: I am honored to be here again today to present, on your behalf, the First Citizen Awards of the Maryland Senate, a privilege that has been delegated to me since 1992, when President Miller instituted this tribute to public service. On each occasion you have heard me relate how a young man, despite the fact that his Roman Catholic religion prevented him from holding public office, chose to take up the cause of the rights of the General Assembly to set the fees collected by public officials in response to his opponent's assertion of the privileges of office.

The ensuing newspaper debate in which Charles Carroll of Carrollton called himself 'First Citizen,' made a mark for the young man, and started him down the path of a political revolution in which he would stake his considerable fortune, and from which he would emerge a member of this body and a United States Senator. When it became clear that it was unconstitutional for him to hold both offices at the same time, he chose this body instead of the United States Senate in which to continue his public service, retiring from public life in 1800.

While Charles Carroll's successful fight for religious and political freedom is well known, until the publication of the award winning edition of his letters with his father by Professor Ron Hoffman, few realized how close Maryland came to losing him to Louisiana. In the midst of the French and Indian War, when Catholics in Maryland were being double taxed and persecuted for their beliefs, Papa wrote Charley who was then studying in England that he left his son "to judge whether Maryland can be a tolerable Residence for a Roman Catholic,"

It is true, Nature has been almost beyond bounds bountiful to [Maryland] [Papa Carroll wrote Charlie]. The Climate is very good, & every year improving as the Country is opened[.] The Soil in General is very fruitful & yields with very little labour a plentiful increase of what ever is trusted to it; cattle & poultry of all sorts multiply surprisingly with moderate care & are Excellent in their kinds, a vast variety & succession of several sorts of grain, ... make a famine almost impossible: our fruits are delicious, add to these that no Country in the world is better watered & no water] more plentifully stocked with a vast variety of excellent fish Fowl with plenty of other game: in short if the people could be in any way compared to the country, Maryland in time might be in reality what the most pleasant & delightful countries are described to have been by the fruitful fancy of the best Poets.

Instead of moving to Louisiana as his father wished, Charley came home to fight for his political and religious rights. He countered Papa's despair of the people by providing constructive leadership, in and out of office, taking stands that were not always popular

and led to his defeat at the polls. He was a tireless advocate of improved and less wasteful methods of farming, and caring for the natural resources which his father so glowingly and eloquently described.

Today we honor three former State Senators who in and out office have led by example in the grand tradition of a First Citizen. All three share a love of the environment and have continued to further the cause of preserving and restoring the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Senator J. Frank Raley, Jr., suffered political defeat because of his efforts to wean Southern Maryland from dependence on gambling as the primary source of local revenue. He takes pride, none the less, in the first broad development program for Southern Maryland that he and Senators Parrin and Hall helped to enact in the 1960s, which encouraged an economic resurgence of the region following the elimination of gambling. Senator Middleton recalls that in the mid 1990s when the Pentagon moved about 5,000 mostly civilian jobs to St. Mary's County, Senator Raley was in the forefront of helping them learn what Southern Maryland was like, where they would live, where their kids would go to school, and in general helping to educate the newcomers about the region.

Senator Raley is a strong advocate of the study of democracy and religious freedom and has long recognized how well those lessons can be taught in the context and the story of Maryland first Capital, St. Mary's City, and at St. Mary's College where he is a trustee. When it comes to protecting the environment, Senator Raley, in typical fashion, took personal action in his ongoing effort to lead by example. As the Maryland Environmental Trust pointed out in its 2003 Annual report, "In Southern St. Mary's a lovely property on Potter Creek owned by J. Frank Raley was perpetually protected with a 63-acre easement. It encompasses a scenic rural landscape, agricultural land, and wildlife habitat adjacent to Point Lookout State Park. Today we honor J. Frank Raley with the First Citizen Award.

Senator C. Bernard "Bernie" Fowler has one of the most famous pair of sneakers in America.

In the words of the poet and folklorist Tom Wisner,

*I think I got a test
I think I have a measure
that can't be beat
You just wade out in the river
And look down to see your feet.*

Since 1988 Senator Fowler has annually applied his sneaker test to the waters of his beloved Patuxent, in a successful effort to raise public consciousness about the need to restore the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. He has also pursued tough legal action in order to force public authorities to improve sewage treatment and pump

out stations along the Patuxent. When the University of Maryland Chesapeake Biological Lab was named after him in 1998, the director aptly referred to Senator Fowler as a 'tireless advocate for wise stewardship" of the bay and its tributaries..

As a boy growing up on Broomes Island, Bernie Fowler developed a life long love and admiration for the Patuxent River. "When you live on river like that, it becomes part of you, he told the Bay Journal in 2001. In and out of office, protecting and restoring the environment is his passion. As the Bay Journal pointed out in March 1998, Senator Fowler has led efforts to restore the Bay as a waterman, county commissioner, state Senator, and private citizen. He has chaired the Patuxent River Commission and led the development of Patuxent River Policy. He has served on the Chesapeake Bay Commission, Chesapeake Bay Program, the Oyster Recovery Program, and the Hughes Commission. The June ritual in which he wades into the Patuxent River off Broome's Island to see how deep his sneakers will still be visible has caught the public's attention nationwide and has focused us all on Maryland's shared responsibility in caring for the Chesapeake. His goal continues to be, in the words of Tom Wisner,

*to move people
Toward Critical Mass
Well- we should do this yearly
On Bernie Fowler Day.
Dress up fit to kill
And wade out all the way.
And somewhere in the future,
We'll look and see our feet again.*

...

*It's Bernie's measure,
and it ain't hard to do.
It's a pleasure!
And it will soothe you too.*

It is my pleasure to present Senator Bernie Fowler with the First Citizen Award on behalf of the Maryland Senate.

Senator Marty Madden served first in the House of Delegates between 1991 and 1994, when he was elected to the Senate. Here he rose to the position of Minority Leader, before resigning to be with his family and to pursue business interests in 2001. At the time he left the Senate he said that one of the proudest achievements of his public life had been his role in welfare reform, and for showing that, in his words, "being pro-business and pro-environment are not mutually exclusive.

Since 2003, Senator Madden has chaired the Critical Areas Commission with wide ranging responsibilities for the care and protection of Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay. He has always been known as a consensus builder. When he left the Senate, President Miller referred to him as "part of the glue that held the Senate

together." When Governor Ehrlich appointed him to the Critical Areas Commission it was met with praise from environmentalists and applause from both sides of the aisle. His love of history and his appreciation of the arts, are well known. In his first interview after his appointment to the Critical Areas Commission, he quoted the early narratives of the exploration of the Bay to prove that 7 foot sturgeon and oysters 13 inches were once commonplace in the Bay. As he explained, "It is important to know how truly magnificent our great bay once was. ... Protecting the Bay with balanced environmental policies was an important priority for me as a legislator, and I look forward to working with all involved parties in preserving Maryland's greatest natural resource." In tribute to Senator Maddens leadership, his years of public service, and his devotion to what one of his favorite authors, Captain John Smith, described as a 'the most pleasant place knowne, ... with mountains, hills, plaines, valleyes, rivers, and brookes, all running into a faire Bay, compassed but for the mouth, with fruitful and delightsome land," it is my honor to present him with the First Citizen Award on behalf of the Maryland Senate.