

Remarks by Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse on the occasion of the presentation of the First Citizen Awards to Senator Joan Carter Conway, Speaker Michael E. Busch, and Joy Ruth Walker.

Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

On Being a *First Citizen*

President Miller, members of the Senate, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my privilege on this twentieth anniversary of its creation, to present, on your behalf, the *First Citizen Awards* of the Maryland Senate.

First Citizen is the name by which Charles Carroll of Carrollton chose to sign several articles published in the *Maryland Gazette* beginning in February of 1773. Carroll, legally a *non-citizen* who could neither vote nor hold office because he was a Roman Catholic, wrote in response to an unsigned article by the best known lawyer of the day, Daniel Dulany. Dulany defended the right of Lord Baltimore to levy taxes without legislative approval. Carroll, who had no right to choose who represented him, none the less argued that no taxes should be imposed without the approval of the legislature.

What began as a simple exchange of views on legislative authority published in the *Maryland Gazette* by Anne Catherine Green, Maryland's first official woman *Printer to the Colony*, grew into a series of eight letters in which Charles Carroll not only had the last word but also began a public career that would not end for nearly another 60 years. As *First Citizen*, Carroll strongly defended an independent legislature. He was among the first to advance a new concept of government that soon would sweep through the colonies like wildfire. No longer would the people of America allow themselves to be ruled arbitrarily from abroad. While extolling traditional community rights and liberties, Carroll launched a call for a radical restructuring of government based on the advice and consent of the people that led to one of the most creative experiments in defining self-government that the world has ever witnessed. Although not yet fully articulated in the *First Citizen* letters, Carroll was beginning to ask all citizens to think about much needed changes in the structure of government, changes that would allow people like him citizenship with "freedom of speech and thought," that would prevent appointed officeholders from having seats in the Legislature, and that would ensure that taxation could not be imposed by anyone not subject to the laws passed by the legislature. Indeed, by his words as *First Citizen*, he was launching a crusade

for a change in the very definition of the meaning of citizenship and representative government that would reach far beyond his own understanding of his world, and would ultimately lead to the overthrow of the evil institution of slavery on which in large measure his personal fortune depended.

To Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the Constitution was not something fixed somewhere in the distant past, consisting of principles not to be altered, changed or improved upon, but was, rather, a set of guidelines to be written down, debated, and tested by time. To Carroll and others like his cousin Charles Carroll the Barrister, Samuel Chase, and William Paca, all future members of 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. In effect, Carroll as *First Citizen*, saw government much as **every** citizen should see it today, in constant need of attention and thoughtful legislative action.

Not only did Charles Carroll of Carrollton write as a 'First Citizen,' he also lived his life as a *First Citizen*. In addition to helping draft Maryland's first Constitution and signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Carroll served as a member of the Maryland Senate from 1777 to 1801, and as its president. He also was one of the first United States Senators from Maryland, and became one of the staunchest advocates of the B & O Railroad which did so much to further the economic development of the state. Carroll taught by word and by example. He was willing to put his ideas, his fortune, and his time on the line in favor of better, more responsive government. It is in that spirit that the Maryland Senate presents the *First Citizen* Awards to individuals like Carroll, who have taken up the challenge to make government work better for the benefit of all.

Today you honor three people who have devoted their lives to public service with *First Citizen* Awards.

Senator Joan Carter Conway

Since 1997 Joan Carter Conway has been a member of the Maryland Senate rising to the chair of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Her concerns for the health, safety, and self-esteem of the underprivileged in our society are well known. Before becoming a State Senator she spent 24 years with anti-poverty programs working with high-risk groups. She took pride in seeing that many of those individuals achieved self-sufficiency through gainful employment, college education, and becoming

homeowners, thus as she put it in her own words “buying into the American dream.” She takes pride “in knowing that the little things that we do count for so much in the lives” of her constituents and clients. She is, in the truest sense of the word, a community activist, becoming the first African American Woman elected to the city council from her councilmanic district. She is fearless in the pursuit of what she believes is right, even to the extent of suffering the indignity of misplaced police action. She believes that citizens must be actively engaged in the political process, taking time to remember what November 1, 1864 in Maryland and June 19, 1865 in Texas represent in the long struggle for equality and civil rights in America. It is my privilege on behalf of the Senate of Maryland to present the First Citizen award to Senator Joan Carter Conway.

Speaker Michael E. Busch

Speaker Michael E. Busch is the kind of person you always hoped to have as a history teacher and a coach. You always learn from him and he inspires you to give that extra effort that just might win the game. He does not always win, but he has the patience and the wisdom that the office of Speaker demands of a House that is periodically unruly and at times long winded. At one point in his career, the Washington Post referred to him as Horatius, the legendary warrior who stood his ground at a key bridge, saving Rome from their mortal enemies. More to the point, he has always stood his personal moral ground, but at the same time guided his members on both sides of the aisle toward working partnerships and meaningful compromise. A member of the House of Delegates since 1987, and speaker since 2003, Speaker Busch teaches citizenship as he leads, always welcoming students and tour groups to learn about the history of his chamber--a history extending back two centuries that will now be vividly experienced by visitors to the recreated Old House of Delegates Chamber. He extends his skills at communication to the press and is known to drop in on them unexpectedly, such as once reported in the Daily Record. “The length and the breadth of the knowledge of some of the issues [on the part of the press] is not always based upon solid information,” he said, noting the turnover and short history of some reporters. “A lot of the time I do come down somewhat jokingly to spar with the press. I like to think it provokes some kind of thought process through press to the citizens who elect us.” That is truly the essence of what it is to be a First Citizen, not only leading, but teaching to the best of your ability what it is you are about and why, with the goal of making better citizens of us all.

Joy Ruth Walker

Joy Ruth Walker is the shepherdess of the Senate. Born in Annapolis and graduated from Annapolis High School, she grew up in Eastport. She began her civil service with the Department of Natural Resources in 1972, and since 1988 has worked on the staff of President Miller, rising to the sometimes unenviable post of gatekeeper, and enforcer of the rules. From personal experience, I know she is a pleasure to work with. She is always cheerful, helpful, and has a keen sense of honor and duty. Yet she does not hesitate to explain in the most friendly of demeanors when and how you have gone astray, all with the purpose of being certain you get it right. Joy gives her all to the Senate and to her family, taking great pride in her children and her granddaughter Seyla, now 6. One of nine children herself, six of her siblings join us today with her immediate family in honoring her. I know that she prefers biography and listening to Jazz to the book of political discourse we are about to present her with. She hears enough of that emanating from the speaker in her office, but may this award stand proudly on her bookshelf with its certificate, as a reminder of how much she is appreciated for the work she does to make better citizens of us all.