

2. RECOGNITION

RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SPEAKER A. L. PHILPOTT

BACKGROUND

Albert Lee Philpott, senior member and Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, a pivotal figure in Virginia politics for most of the latter half of this century, and a devoted and committee leader in the Southern Legislative Conference, died on September 28, 1991. Born in 1919, in the small village of Philpott, near Bassett in Henry County, A. L. Philpott's Virginia roots ran deep, nourished by the traditions of a family that settled in the area before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Building on the traditional, conservative, Southside Virginia democratic legacy of his ancestors, A. L. Philpott created an astonishing career of public life, based always on the values of his heritage, but demonstrating the flexibility to respond to and shape the breathtaking changes that have characterized Virginia politics over the past few decades. A unique combination of keen intellect, iron will, unparalleled loyalty and unquestioned integrity, A. L. Philpott was an indomitable force in the General Assembly of Virginia for 33 years, combining the interests of his native Henry County with those of the Commonwealth and the South as a whole. A graduate of the University of Richmond and its T. C. Williams School of Law, A. L. Philpott's knowledge of the law and the Code of Virginia was encyclopedic -- knowledge he used in heading the commission that rewrote substantial portions of the Code of Virginia, including the criminal code, to bring it into compliance with the Constitution of Virginia.

His conservatism, his uncompromising principles, his fierce partisanship, and his legendary scowl often failed to mask Speaker Philpott's kindness, loyalty, inherent decency, and utter devotion to what was best for Virginia and the South. The vivid stories of his many political battles and triumphs notwithstanding, the legacy of A. L. Philpott will likely focus on the flexibility and pragmatism of his leadership during a career that spanned over 30 years, beginning in a Virginia dominated by rural, conservative legislators and ending in a startlingly changed, pluralistic, and urban-dominated Commonwealth and New South.

RECOMMENDATION

The life and career of Speaker A. L. Philpott are now in the hands of the historians, but it can be said with certainty that his passing marks also the passing of an era in Virginia and the South, that he was the last and one of the best of his kind, and that the Southern Legislative Conference will be a lesser body without him. The Southern Legislative Conference, meeting in Miami Beach, Florida, notes with great sadness the passing of the Speaker of Virginia House of Delegates, A. L. Philpott; and, the members of the Southern Legislative Conference join with the legions of friends, colleagues, associates, and admirers of Speaker Philpott in

celebrating a life and career of incomparable spirit, productivity, integrity, and service to the people of Virginia and the South; and, prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Albert Lee Philpott as an assurance that the Conference shares their grief over the loss of an irreplaceable leader and an assertion that his like will not soon be seen again.

Adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference, August 11, 1992, Miami Beach, Florida.

Sponsored by: Senator John Chichester, Virginia

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