

He earned a bachelor's degree in commerce and a law degree from the University of Alabama. He also learned to fly airplanes which would later play an important role in his business. "He set up a law practice and trained French and British Pilots in Tuscaloosa County when World War II broke out," said his brother, Joseph Tyler Phifer, of Tuscaloosa. Later Mr. Phifer ferried airplanes needed in the war effort from the United States to Europe.

After the war, he resumed his law practice, but he sought new challenges. "He told me that he wanted to get into manufacturing," his brother said. "He said that's where the money was. He looked all over for something that wasn't manufactured in the South. He came up with screen because we use more screen in the south than anywhere else."

Once he started the Phifer Aluminum Screen Company in 1952, Mr. Phifer did a little of everything. "He was doing the selling himself," Joseph Phifer said. "He'd get in the plane and sell the wire and then come home and help make it. He had a little bitty office with one secretary and the guy who helped him set up the looms."

The company was renamed Phifer Wire Products in 1956. In 1973, the company moved to its current site, and has experienced almost constant expansion.

Though he preferred to keep a low profile, Mr. Phifer was also widely known as a civic leader and philanthropist. In honor of his contributions to the University of Alabama, the university's trustees renamed the old student union building Reese Phifer Hall in 1991. It now houses the School of Communication. He also received an honorary doctorate from the university in 1984.

In 1964, Mr. Phifer established the Reese Phifer, Jr. Memorial Trust, a charitable arm of Phifer Wire, in honor of his son, who died in an airplane accident.

In addition to his brother, Mr. Phifer is survived by his wife, Sue Clarkson Phifer of Tuscaloosa, three daughters, Beverly Clarkson Phifer, Karen Phifer Brooks and Susan Phifer Cork, all of Tuscaloosa, and seven grandchildren.

DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR
EATON AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S
"HOUSE THAT CONGRESS BUILT" PROJECT

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 1998

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a moment today to recognize the following caring and generous folks who, in one way or another, contributed to the Eaton Area Habitat for Humanity's "House That Congress Built" project in Charlotte, Michigan:

Kebs, Inc., Larry Clark companies, Fannie Mae, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Larry Bowen/Silk Screen Stuff, Construction Managers Jerry Lockman and Dan Christie/Christie Construction, Fulton Lumber, Wolohan Lumber, Dave and Lorraine Green, and Schultz, Snyder & Steele Lumber Co.

Reliant/Care-free Windows, Lumbertown Citizens Lumber, Wickes Lumber, Fox Broth-

ers Co., Kane Heating & Ventilation, Hedlund Plumbing, T.A. Gentry, Plumber Trent Mauk, B & D Electric, A-C Electric, and Drakes Insulation.

Larry's Floor Covering & Paint Spot, Larry Ruyston, M.P.C. Cashway Lumber Co., Parker Built Homes, The Kitchen Shop, Consumers Energy, Williams Carpet, M & M Concrete, Concrete Cutting & Breaking, Inc., Crandell Bros., Trucking, and Gale Briggs, Inc.

Builders Redi Mix, Ackerson & Son Excavating, Granger, GM Cleaning, Floyd Jewel & Eaton Federal Savings Bank, Lansing Automakers Federal Credit Union, Lansing Community Credit Union, Ann Garvey & the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Eaton County United Way, Greater Lansing Home Builders Association, and Pastor Fleming & Lawrence United Methodist Church.

Pastor Hall-Neimann & Peace Lutheran Church, Leroy Hummel & City of Charlotte, Alro Steel, Mulvaney Building & Remodeling, Nolan, Thomsen, Villas & Sural, PC, Linda Rybicki, Felpausch Food Center, Quality Dairy, Carter's Food Center, Pizza Hut, Riedy's Pizza, and Little Ceasar's Pizza.

These individuals made an invaluable investment in this home, neighborhood, Charlotte community, Eaton Area Habitat for Humanity, and perhaps most importantly, the lives of the new homeowners, Julie, Hailey and Skyler Hartig. I am proud to say we will dedicate the home this Sunday, December 20, 1998, at 3 p.m., just in time for the family to move into their new home for the holidays.

The Honorable Speaker of the House, NEWT GINGRICH, perhaps summed it up best when we kicked off the "House that Congress Built" project last year, "When you help a family grow, as well as build a house . . . when you watch the sense of ownership . . . you understand why this is a great program."

Many of my colleagues have been involved in the construction of a Habitat for Humanity home. This year, I was privileged to lend my support to three houses in my district, but never could have helped build these homes without this support, assistance and generosity. Habitat is founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, decent, affordable place to live, grow and raise their families. Because of the contributions of the above-mentioned individuals, churches, businesses and organizations, Julie and her children, Hailey and Skyler, now have such a place to call home.

My wife Bonnie and I thank all of these wonderful people who played an integral role in building the Eaton Area Habitat for Humanity's "House That Congress Built," at 521 Monroe, Charlotte.

DEATH OF JUDGE A. LEON
HIGGINBOTHAM

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 1998

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened to bring to my colleagues' attention the death of my good friend, Judge A. Leon Higginbotham on Monday, December 14, 1998. Judge Higginbotham was one of the "true giants" of the civil rights struggle. Judge Higginbotham was a leading legal scholar, au-

thor, historian and professor in addition to his stellar twenty-nine year career on the federal bench.

Judge Higginbotham believed that the law was the vehicle to right the wrongs he experienced growing up under segregation. According to stories that Judge Higginbotham often recounted, the President of Purdue University flatly told him in his freshman year of college that the school was not required under law to provide black students with heated dormitories and, therefore, never would. The Judge said that particular experience persuaded him to become a lawyer.

Judge Higginbotham was committed to a practice of law which he viewed as a commitment to social justice. He held deep convictions and continually fought for the underdog. He argued for justice and fairness. Judge Higginbotham was a friend to members of the Congressional Black Caucus. He was always available with an analysis of the issue that only he could articulate. Judge Higginbotham helped us with many projects after his retirement from the bench. The most notable was his preparation of an amicus brief in the voting rights case *Shaw vs. Reno*.

Judge Higginbotham was a frequent witness here on Capitol Hill. His most recent testimony was two weeks ago, Tuesday, December 1, 1998, in front of the House Judiciary Committee. As he often did, Judge Higginbotham provided clear, insightful testimony. In his opening statement, he asked the Members to listen to "Luther Standing Bear, a member of the Lakota Tribe, who said, 'Thought comes before speech' when dealing with one of the most important constitutional issues which this committee will ever have, to pause and to give thought before you speak and before you vote," truer words have never been spoken. "I am pleased to have broken protocol at the end of Judge Higginbotham's opening statement to give him a rousing round of applause. Who would have thought this would be the last time I would see this great man alive?"

Recently Judge Higginbotham has stated that he felt many of the advances he had applauded over his long legal career were endangered by the cutbacks in affirmative action and reduced opportunities for black lawyers and judges. He further stated in an article in *The New York Times Magazine*, "I witnessed the birth of racial justice in the Supreme Court and here now, after 45 years as a lawyer, judge and law professor, I sometimes feel as if I am watching justice die."

When I read today that Judge Higginbotham's first meeting with former Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall was during the ominous *Sweatt vs. Paine* Supreme Court case, I realized his previous statement was hauntingly true. The 1950 case was whether the court should compel the state of Texas to admit a black student to the University of Texas Law School. The 1995 Supreme Court case, *Hopwood vs. State of Texas*, was about a white student suing the University of Texas Law School for admission above their affirmative action rules. It scares me, as it scared Judge Higginbotham to see this happen right before my eyes.

I have long been a proponent of affirmative action, but I am even more resolute in my fight to ensure the continuation of affirmative action to make Judge A. Leon Higginbotham's legacy is never abandoned. We cannot sit idly by and allow affirmative action in the United States to