

26th Ward. Seay had successfully run my campaign for Alderman the previous year. Seay's opponent had gone about the business of lining up the so-called corner boys, those who frequented the taverns, pool rooms and barber shops. One of his most effective recruits was Willie Mack. Mack owned a barber shop and had hundreds of hero worshipers who followed his lead. The story goes that the nickname was tagged on him when, as a young gang participant, he was thrown into a pool of cold water in the middle of the winter by an opposite gang faction. As a result, he temporarily lost his voice for several months.

But as those election returns bear out, speaking in subdued tones, "Whisper" knew how to work a precinct. Seay's opponent won his precinct by a margin of 2 to 1 (only one of two precincts won by him).

Much credit for "Whisper" political acumen goes to his wife, Jackie. They made the perfect political combination. He influenced the street people. She was loved by the home owners in the neighborhood.

After the election—which Seay won by 600 votes—I sought out "Whisper" and persuaded him to join our organization. From that day forward our friendship developed and expanded.

Mr. Speaker, few people lived life with the enthusiasm, determination and gusto as Willie Mack. He lived every day with the intent to do something for someone else. He lived every day with the intent to give something back to family, friends and community. He will be remembered as a giver. He gave the fullest to his fellow man. His intent was to establish, through political activism, a more perfect union between society and those citizens denied the benefits of first-class citizenship. The many people whose lives he touched and they in turn enhanced his—is a testament to his endearing respect for humanity.

Carol and I were deeply saddened by Whisper's passing. He was indeed an uncommon man with a phenomenal affect on those who graced his presence. To us, Whisper was something dear, something special, something beautiful, something precious. There were no tears for Carol and me when we heard of his departure because we were not agonizing his death but rather celebrating the privilege of having looked upon this towering, incredible individual, if only for a fleeting moment.

REPORT FROM PENNSYLVANIA

HON. PATRICK J. TOOMEY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to share my Report from Pennsylvania for my colleagues and the American people.

All across Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District there are some amazing people who do good things to make our communities a better place. These are individuals of all ages who truly make a difference and help others.

I like to call these individuals Lehigh Valley Heroes for their good deeds and efforts.

Today I would like to recognize Mr. Harold Seibert, a retired fireman who's respect and dedication to his job led him to compile a 175-year anniversary book for the Allentown Fire Department, an invaluable document for future firemen of the community.

Harold Seibert is a commendable member of our community—not only for his documentary, but also for his heroism—having been decorated five times for saving lives during his 24 years as a firefighter.

Today, I would like to recognize Mr. Seibert, of Allentown, PA, for his hard work and dedication. He is creating a legacy for the Allentown community and I commend him on his efforts.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SHARK CONSERVATION AND FINNING PROHIBITION RESOLUTION

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, it is time for the United States to ban the wasteful, unsportsmanlike and destructive practice of shark finning.

Shark finning is the removal of a shark's fins, which represent just one to five percent of its body weight, and discarding its carcass into the sea. The waste associated with this practice is horrific. The public outcry to halt it was an important factor in the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) decision to ban shark finning in federal waters of the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. I had thought that NMFS had prohibited this practice in all waters of the United States.

To my surprise and dismay, it was recently brought to my attention that shark finning is occurring in the U.S. Pacific, and increasing at an alarming rate. Between 1991 and 1998, there was a 20-fold increase in shark finning by U.S. longline vessels in the Central and Western Pacific. There are no regulations in place to stem further growth of this terrible practice.

According to NMFS, in the Central and Western Pacific fishery, the number of sharks finned rose from 2,289 in 1991 to 60,857 in 1998. The most troubling fact about this increase in the number of sharks killed is that 98.7%, or 60,085 of the 60,857, of the sharks taken in 1998 were killed just for their fins.

The NMFS has gone on record with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WestPac) expressing its view that finning is wasteful and must be stopped. Unfortunately, WestPac has balked and NMFS has failed to step forward and stop this terrible practice. It is my belief, and those of any responsible outdoorsman, that the waste associated with discarding 95 to 99% of 60,000 animals annually is intolerable.

With the support of my colleague, Fisheries Subcommittee Chairman JIM SAXTON, and the conservation and sportfishing communities, I am introducing two pieces of legislation to remedy this situation.

Today, I am sponsoring a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that we disagree with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's and NMFS failure to halt shark finning, while urging that Council to prohibit the practice immediately.

Later this year, I will be introducing legislation to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act by adding the practice of shark finning to the list of actions prohibited in all waters of the United States.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me by cosponsoring this important resolution. For the record, I have attached a letter of support from the Ocean Wildlife Campaign, a coalition that includes the Center for Marine Conservation, National Audubon Society, National Coalition for Marine Conservation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Wildlife Conservation Society, and the World Wildlife Fund. In addition, I have attached separate letters of support from the American Sportfishing Association and the Center for Marine Conservation. Our prompt action is critical to ensure that we will halt the rampant waste resulting from shark finning.

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION,

Alexandria, VA, September 23, 1999.

Hon. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN CUNNINGHAM: On behalf of the nearly 500 members of the American Sportfishing Association, I wish to express my strong support for your resolution to ban the wasteful practice of shark finning. I commend your initiative in tackling this important, yet easily dismissed issue.

For far too long, we have neglected to take action to stop this most unsportsmanlike fishing activity. We now know that the best shark is not a dead shark; that these oft maligned fish play critical roles in preserving balance in the marine ecosystem. Healthy shark populations help maintain robust fisheries. Your effort to ban finning will not only benefit depressed shark populations, but many other species of commercially and recreationally important fish.

Thank you for your leadership in this area.

Sincerely,

MIKE HAYDEN,

President/CEO.

OCEAN WILDLIFE CAMPAIGN,

Washington, DC, September 22, 1999.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,

U.S. House of Representatives,

Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: We are writing to express serious concern regarding the management and health of shark populations in U.S. Pacific waters, specifically in areas under the jurisdiction of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC). Driven by the international demand for shark fin soup, the practice of shark finning—cutting of a shark's fins and discarding its carcass back into the ocean—is a rapidly growing problem that is directly responsible for huge increases in the number of sharks killed annually and appalling waste of this nation's living marine resources. The National Marine Fisheries Service has prohibited shark finning in the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. It is time to ban finning in the Pacific.

Between 1991 and 1998, the number of sharks "retained" by the Hawaii-based swordfish and tuna longline fleet jumped from 2,289 to 60,857 annually. In 1998, over 98 percent of these sharks were killed for their fins to meet the demand for shark fin soup. Because shark fins typically comprise only one to five percent of a shark's bodyweight, 95 to 99 percent of the shark is going to waste: Sharks are particularly vulnerable to overfishing because of their "life history characteristics"—slow growth, late sexual maturity, and the production of few young. Once depleted, a population may take decades to recover.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, conservationists, fishermen, scientists, and the public have pressured WESPAC to end the practice of shark finning. Nevertheless,