

A TRIBUTE TO RUBY'S COFFEE
SHOP

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2000

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, a great Knoxville institution is closing, and it is a real loss to our area and to this Nation. Ruby's Coffee Shop in Burlington, in East Knoxville, will close this Saturday after 37 years in business.

This fine restaurant, where I have eaten many, many times, has been a friendly gathering place where friendships have been made and strengthened and problems have been solved. Almost everyone felt better and happier, physically and mentally, after a meal at Ruby's.

Owner Ruby Witt, her daughter, Mary Jo Netherton, her sister, Ann Henderlight, and the entire staff are wonderful, kind, big-hearted people. They have given great service and sympathetic ears to many thousands.

Their food was always outstanding and reasonably priced. At Ruby's, no matter who you were or how much money you had, you got good food and good treatment.

As long as I live, I will never forget Roy Berrier, one of the barbers at Barnes Barber Shop next door, coming in and breaking into a rendition of the song "Pine Trees" (his own song) in front of a full house at Ruby's.

This Nation is a better place today because of places like Ruby's and the people who worked there. I am sorry to see this fine restaurant close, but I wish the very best to Ruby, her family, and staff.

I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD the following article which was published in the Knoxville News-Sentinel.

[From the Knoxville News-Sentinel, July 26, 2000]

RUBY'S TO CLOSE AFTER 37 YEARS
(By Don Jacobs)

No matter how savory the food at Ruby's Coffee Shop, it'll never match the warmth and friendliness exuded by the 37-year-old business' employees.

But that slice of Southern hospitality is about to be cut from the East Knoxville landscape with the closing Saturday of a business that has seated governors, senators, sports legends and even a vice president.

The small, family-operated business where customers are greeted by first name, are allowed to walk behind the counter to pour coffee and are invited to use the shop's phone, is closing its doors. The daughters of the owner are just plumb tired.

"It's sad but happy," said Mary Jo Netherton, the 64-year-old daughter of the owner.

"I'm just tired. I was telling somebody the other day that they let people out of the penitentiary for murder sooner than I'll be getting out of this place."

Netherton's 62-year-old sister, Barbara Williams, echoed the feeling that 10- to 12-hour work days that begin at 5 a.m. won't be terribly missed.

"You know, when you get in your 60s, you don't need to be doing waitress work," Williams said.

Owner Ruby Witt hasn't been active at the business at 3920 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue since she suffered a minor stroke six years ago. But each day the 84-year-old Witt gets an earful of current events about the lives of her customers from her daughters.

"She's interested in the people," Netherton said.

Witt's popularity among residents, public officials, police officers and the University of Tennessee sports department earned her an unofficial moniker as the mayor of Burlington. Police officers said whatever Ruby wanted, Ruby got from the city.

Emphasizing that point, a customer noted there are no parking meters outside.

Netherton has been gingerly lifting fried eggs from the grill for 37 years at the business while Williams has been a fixture for 23 years. While neither of the women will miss the work, they will never fill the chasm of daily chatter with customers.

"I'm going to miss it," Williams said. "We've enjoyed the people. They've been like family to us."

Customers feel the same way. "We're spoiled," said Jimmie Bounds. "We'll never get that kind of service. When we walk in the door, they yell to put a pan of biscuits on."

Bounds and her husband, Dean Bounds, regularly trek from their Holston Hills residence with their home-grown tomatoes. They slice their tomatoes and pour their own molasses on what they claim are the best biscuits around.

Biscuits and cornbread are the domain of Ann Henderlight, Witt's younger sister, who for 37 years has been using the same metal evaporated milk can to cut her dough. "I don't measure anything," Henderlight said. "I just put in a little of this and a little of that. I just do it like my mother did."

Lettie Glass of Lilac Avenue has been munching those biscuits for 15 years. "Honey, they're just so fluffy they melt in your mouth. They really can cook," she said.

For Glass, the food is just part of the attraction.

"They treat people like people," Glass said.

Former Gov. Ray Blanton, U.S. Congressional members Bill Frist and John J. Duncan Jr., former UT football coach Johnny Majors, country music icon Archie Campbell and vice President Al Gore have taken a seat at one of the dozen booths or seven counter stools, Netherton said.

Netherton recalls mixing six raw eggs in a glass of orange juice and cooking 25 strips of bacon for former heavyweight boxing champion John Tate while he was in training.

But nowadays, Williams said, the business isn't as profitable as it used to be. The sisters just couldn't bring themselves to raise their prices as food costs climbed. The menu demands a total of \$3.50 for two eggs, three bacon strips, a biscuit and coffee.

"We didn't think the everyday people coming in here could afford it if we raised the prices," Williams said.

Several customers noted the sisters often fed the penniless. "If somebody came in here hungry, they got fed," Williams said.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RESTORA-
TION OF FAIRNESS IN IMMIGRA-
TION LAW ACT OF 2000

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce today the Restoration of Fairness in Immigration Law Act of 2000. Today is truly a seminal event when the Congressional Black, Hispanic and Asian Pacific Caucuses along with Members on both sides of the aisle unite

behind a single piece of comprehensive immigration legislation.

For too many years, Congress has witnessed a wave of anti-immigrant legislation, playing on our worst fears and prejudices. Since 1994, we have considered proposals to ban birthright citizenship, ban bilingual ballots, and slash family and employment based immigration, as well as to limit the number of asylees and refugees. In 1996 we passed laws denying legal residents the right to public benefits and denying immigrants a range of due process and fairness protections, including prohibiting courts from reviewing many INS decisions, requiring lawful permanent residents be deported for minor offenses committed years ago, and imposing mandatory detention on non-criminal asylum seekers.

This year, I believe we have turned the corner, as business and organized labor have joined the advocacy community in recognizing the critical role immigrants play in our workplaces, our communities, our schools, and our culture. I particularly want to commend John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, and the other 29 organizations who yesterday endorsed this historic piece of legislation. With the introduction of this comprehensive bill, I, along with the bipartisan list of co-sponsors, the Black, Hispanic and Asian Pacific American Caucuses, and the many supporting community organizations, send a clear message that Congress needs to fix what we did in '96.

Our work will not stop with the introduction of this legislation. We only have one month left in the legislative session, but I believe that many provisions of this bill can be passed into law, including providing Haitians and Central Americans with immigration parity, enacting late amnesty relief, and protecting battered immigrants.

Attached is a summary of the key provisions of this legislation.

SUMMARY OF THE "RESTORATION OF FAIRNESS
IN IMMIGRATION LAW ACT OF 2000"

TITLE I.—DUE PROCESS IN
IMMIGRATION PROCEEDINGS

Subtitle A.—Judicial Review (Sections 101-
107)

Repeals all of the provisions from the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 ("IIRIRA") which strip the courts of jurisdiction over immigration-related matters. It returns court jurisdiction to exactly what it was before IIRIRA.

Subtitle B.—Fairness in Removal
Proceedings

SEC. 111. BURDEN OF PROOF.—IIRIRA created a higher threshold for persons seeking to enter the U.S. by requiring them to establish their admissibility "clearly and beyond doubt." This section implements a "clear and convincing evidence" standard, which is the same standard INS applies in deportation cases.

SEC. 112. WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION.—Creates a presumption in favor of granting a request for permission to withdraw an application for admission to depart from the United States immediately, unless an immigration judge has rendered a decision on the admission seeker's admissibility.

SEC. 113. ABSENCES OUTSIDE THE CONTROL OF THE ALIEN.—Under IIRIRA, a person with lawful permanent resident status is subject to a full inspection upon returning from a trip abroad if he has been absent from the United States for a continuous period of 180 days. This section changes the time period from 180 days to a year or longer in some situations, which comports with INS's current procedures.