

Speaker after speaker at the annual beekeeping conferences tell us that North Carolina has the best State wide organization of beekeepers in the entire Nation. Many people in many organizations deserve credit for this success.

In 1975 Dr. John Ambrose came to work for North Carolina State University as an extension bee keeping specialist. Dr. Ambrose led an important era of growth for beekeeping in North Carolina, expanding the position to a major teaching and research position that is now held by Dr. Tarp. This position is one of the best of its kind in the entire Nation.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture bee labs also play an important role in finding and developing new ways to protect of the honey bee.

J.D. Foust has been president of the North Carolina association of Beekeepers for the past 3 years and has led the organization through its fastest growth ever. Brady Mullinax of Forsyth County, has been a stalwart in the organization for more than half a century. Steve and Sandy Forrest, proprietor of Brushy Mountain Bee Farm in Wilkesboro, have build a thriving business out of supplying beekeepers with equipment and supplies and are now the third largest beekeeping supplier in the entire Nation.

The typical beekeeper in North Carolina not unlike the solitary yeoman farmer who, with an ax and hoe, carved North Carolina's vast agri-business economy from the wilderness that once swept from the Atlantic and Mississippi River. He takes his chances and usually at the end of another season, there is sufficient honey for him to sell at his roadside stand and leave enough for the bees to survive another winter.

For many beekeepers in my district the honey they produce is their Christmas money and an important part of their annual disposable income. I am proud of our beekeepers, for they are the residual spirit of the early pioneers who built this country on little more than strong backs and a desire to be free.

If Albert Einstein was correct in his fear that the survival of mankind depends in large part on the survival of the honey bee, I am confident that the honey bee is in safe hands among so many North Carolina passionate beekeepers.

□ 2320

HONORING JUDGE WILLIAM M. STEGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this week, America, Texas and East Texas mourn the loss of Federal District Court Judge William Merritt Steger.

As former law clerk and good friend Andy Tindel said, "Judge Steger was

one of the finest, fairest, most honest man I have ever had the privilege of practicing law before."

While Bill Steger was studying prelaw, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. And within 24 hours the 21-year-old had withdrawn from Baylor University and volunteered for service. The Dallas native has always wanted the opportunity to become a pilot, and with the Nation entering World War II, he took a chance.

On November 9, 1942, he got his wings. Then after training he was sent to Casablanca and flew 56 combat missions for which he received an air medal and four oak leaf clusters.

While later training other pilots, Captain Steger also tested the first U.S. jet airplanes.

Once his Nation was secure, Bill Steger went back to school and received his law degree from Southern Methodist University, that is, their law school.

He married his wife, Ann Hollandsworth Steger, on Valentine's Day in 1948. They had one child, the late Merritt Reed Steger, who was one of my younger brother David's closest friends.

Judge Steger entered and engaged in private practice in Longview and Tyler and headed up numerous east Texas campaign clubs for Dwight D. Eisenhower for President. After the election, President Eisenhower appointed Judge Steger in 1953 to the position of U.S. attorney for East Texas at the young age of 32.

In 1960, he and a good friend debated which one should run for governor and which one should run for senator. Their goal was to bring the Republican party into popularity in the State of Texas. Because Texas was conservative, it seemed to Judge Steger that it would be a good fit, but he was blazing a trail. He ended up being the one to run for governor against a very popular John Connally, and Judge Steger's good friend John Tower ran for senator. The Republican party had never before then received enough votes to hold a primary, and though Judge Steger knew he would not win the race, he hoped he would get the requisite 200,000 votes so the Republican party could hold a primary in the next election. Judge Steger actually received more than 600,000 votes.

In 1962, Judge Steger was persuaded to run for Congress and received 49 percent of the vote, lacking only 1,300 votes to beat his Democratic opponent who was the incumbent.

Bill Steger became a Federal district judge for the Eastern District of Texas in December of 1970 after President Richard Nixon nominated him. He truly loved being a jurist, and he was a hardworking, dedicated, cerebral, no-nonsense, constitutional constructionist judge whose discerning intellect could always cut straight to the heart of any issue.

In 1987, Judge Steger assumed senior active status duty, but since then still

continued to handle a full docket. December 1, 2005, marked 35 years on the Federal bench for Judge Steger, and since his appointment in 1970, he had handled more than 15,000 cases.

Judge Steger received the Justinian Award May 7, 2004, at the annual Tyler Law Day luncheon for his community service, legal ethics and professionalism.

He was a Baptist, a charter member and a deacon of Green Acres Baptist Church, helping to nurse it through its early days of going from nonexistent to its current 12,000 members. He was a confidant for me, a friend and a wise sounding board.

He and Ann endured the worst heart-ache a couple can face in the loss of their only child, Reed, in a tragic scuba diving accident, but the manner in which Judge Steger dealt with such devastation and allowed his faith, God's help, and Ann's companionship to help overcome the horrendous blow will help inspire me the rest of my life.

Judge Steger was a heroic patriot; a caring father; a loving husband; an even-handed, clear-thinking, constitutionally reverent judge; a personal mentor; and a cherished friend whom I came to know through my brother 25 to 30 years ago.

Always having had the courage of his convictions despite the odds against him, Judge Steger was and is a profile in courage whose memory will continue to inspire me the rest of my life.

God bless the Stegers and God bless America.

REMEMBERING NORMANDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, to recognize that it is now the 61st year to remember Normandy, to remember that special time when the world waited and hoped that the allies, led by the United States, dominated by the United States, would free Europe, the European mainland, from the effects of fascism, the effects of allowing a petty dictator to build an Army and begin expanding his borders.

Mr. Speaker, I find it particularly appropriate that just a week ago at the Memorial Day commemoration at Mt. Soledad in San Diego where Congressman HUNTER and I both live, we were faced with the exact same situation that we see in Normandy: crosses. We were faced looking at a memorial that remembers all of our fallen heroes from previous wars that was put there because of our fallen heroes of the Korean War and now is in jeopardy of being taken away because somebody says that if it is in the shape of a cross, it must by definition be a religious statement.