

Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis

1950-2007

Humble can be great. My Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis lived it. Her walk in life was her witness with the Lord. Her valiant fight with cancer was a triumph. That is what her husband, Chuck, said on Sunday. He told me that Jo Ann said that she was told by the Lord that she would be healed and so she would be. I said, "I'd believe anything Jo Ann said was going to happen would happen." Chuck explained that going to Heaven was healing indeed. I agreed.

The first time I saw Jo Ann Davis she was stepping in from a cold rain in the late winter to Republican meeting in James City County. She was running for the House of Delegates against a gerrymandered Democrat incumbent with healthy, deep roots in the community. She was nervous but determined. Over the years the jitters went away, but the determination burned into a gentle fierceness. She kept that from being a contradiction in terms. Jo Ann was fiercely determined to hold forth on her principles, but gentle in voice and words, which was the power in her presentation.

Her principles proceeded in a straight line from her faith in Jesus Christ as her God-in-man savior who died for her, physically rose from the grave and is alive today to her daily living. She found this truth, and many others which guided her thoughts, words and deeds, in the Holy Bible. Those transcendent truths guided her call to public service and her every vote serving in the public trust of elected office. Such service made for great loyalties among her voters.

Yet, another aspect of her choices on how to serve as how to live made her beloved throughout the First District of Virginia – her Tidewater home. In 15 years of grassroots service in the Republican Party I've never seen the enthusiasm and deep appreciation of citizens for constituent services. Democrats, as well as Republicans, loved her for what she and her staff did to serve the People. Every year at the Poquoson Seafood Festival folks would ask earnestly when Jo Ann might be coming by. Then, they'd tell a tale of how much she helped move some government bureaucracy to serve as it should – the People. Their voices and eyes filled with gratitude and appreciation.

Jo Ann Davis was unafraid to take on the toughest problems from the mothball fleet to limiting trash being dumped on our land. That is how she got elected. She ran unafraid. She was outspent over and over – and won. Then, she served with the same fearlessness.

Her first bill increased GI insurance for serving soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coasties. She was dedicated to serving those who served in the Armed Forces in defense

of America.

Through it all you could spot her erect posture, the quick cocking of the head from a hundred yards. When you got close you'd see the sparkle in her eyes, the dimple, and hear the warmth in her voice – actually caring about what you were saying, not listening with a professional politician's ease. Her family, of course, can tell you all that and so much more the best. There was her heart. And, she loved her horses and country living in Gloucester.

With her family at her side, she faced and passed through death unafraid. I know that being absent of the body to be present in the Lord was liking walking through a door. The pain was over for her. The grieving of her family, a grateful community, Commonwealth and Country began. But, as she would know from Psalm 30:5, "Weeping may go on all night, but in the morning there is joy."

And there are no tears where Jo Ann Davis is alive today.

James Atticus Bowden