

## *A Salute to Carrington Williams*

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Former House of Delegates member Carrington Williams passed away last week from complications following a car accident. Carrington served with great distinction in the House from 1966 to 1970 and again from 1972 to 1978. He was a friend and mentor.

Carrington was one of five at-large delegates who represented the 18th district. That district included Reston and the northern half of Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. I ran unsuccessfully with Carrington in 1973 and 1975 and was elected in 1977 when Carrington left the House and unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate.

I regret that I was out of town attending the Southern Legislative Conference when his memorial service was held. I greatly admired Carrington.

Carrington's campaign literature during the 1970's was the most sophisticated available on the issue of transportation. With great foresight, he predicted the fate of Northern Virginia if adequate investment was not made in improving the transportation infrastructure of roads and mass transit including airports. He was the founding chairman of the Washington Airports Task Force from 1982 to 1996. The Task Force's annual award for leadership service is named for him.

Carrington was a tax lawyer, and he put his professional knowledge about taxes to work as a member of the House Finance Committee where he was recognized as one of its most effective members. He was not a demagogue on taxes, promising something for nothing as present day political candidates tend to do. Rather, he applied rules of fairness and equity to the tax code and helped to improve the laws of Virginia. He helped establish fair market value as the constitutional standard for property tax assessment eliminating the confusion caused to taxpayers by the manipulation of the assessment rate as well as the tax rate.

Carrington's contributions to the quality of life of our region were numerous. He was a great booster of George Mason University and received its highest recognition in 1991. He served on the board of the Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum. In recent years he was founding chairman of a foundation to preserve Civil War battlefields.

Our community is a better place to live because of the unselfish service of Carrington Williams. I will miss his sage advice, statesman manner, and his long-term positive vision. It is up to us to build on what he started and what he represented.