



Dr. Davy Henderson McCall

June 30, 1922 - December 1, 2019

Dr. Davy McCall, 97, a true Renaissance Man, who made major contributions to historic preservation in Chestertown and Kent County, was a distinguished teacher of economics at Washington College, a key figure in international development, and a supporter of low income housing, passed away on Sunday, at Heron Point.

"Davy" was a family name; he was related to the famous late 18th century English scientist, Sir Humphrey Davy.

Davy was a proud descendant of Ulster Scots (or Scots Irish, as they were called in the USA) Calvinist settlers who left the North of Ireland in the mid 1700s, to settle in colonial America.

He was born in Shaker Heights, Ohio, where his father was a prominent residential property developer and President of the Cleveland Board of Realtors, but his family also had links to Baltimore and to Cecil County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Davy studied at Kenyon College graduating Magna cum laude with honors in economics. Following college he joined the army during World War II and was assigned to study Chinese Language at the University of Chicago in order to become an interpreter should there be an allied invasion of Japan and China. After the war he entered the Chinese Regional Studies Program at Harvard University under the legendary China scholar, John King Fairbank, and received an M.A.

Following Harvard, Davy taught economics for several years at Western Reserve University. He then served as an economist for the United States

Agency for International Development in Washington, DC, and later for a private firm in Saigon, Vietnam, and then for the U.S. Operations Mission in Cambodia. During his time in Southeast Asia he became interested in what would become the subject of his Harvard Ph D, focusing on the country's economic history during the French colonial period. He gradually came to see that the civil conflict in Vietnam was centered not simply on communism v. capitalism, but on a deep nationalism and anti-colonialism too. He traveled widely in the region and had many fascinating recollections of his Asia years. After his time in Southeast Asia, Davy returned to Harvard to complete his PhD. He then spent a decade at AID/ Washington DC Department of State in senior positions dealing primarily with North Africa. Davy was then recruited by the World Bank and became the key loan officer for Spain, Morocco, and the Republic of Ireland, which had been left out of the Marshall Plan, because of Irish neutrality during the war, and was then a poor country. His work at the Bank widened, but he returned to USAID to senior positions in DC and in Syria, in Damascus, working on building infrastructure, then returned to Washington, living in Georgetown until he retired from government service. But Davy had always loved the countryside of the Eastern Shore, and especially admired the elegantly built 18th century plantation residences and townhouses of the era, particularly in and around Chestertown. He commuted on weekends to his historic farm, Hodges Bar, on the Bay, near Rock Hall, restoring it from a previous fire, and he became deeply involved in the restoration of properties in Chestertown particularly. In his 60's he sold Hodges Bar and moved to historic houses he restored, first on Cannon Street, near Water Street, and later on to a house on the corner of Cannon and North Queen. Davy became president of the non-profit, Preservation, Inc., along with Christian Havemeyer, Michael Bourne, the Miller family, and others, and one of the first townhouses they preserved was the John Bolton House (1759) at the corner of Maple Avenue and North Queen street, which the group carefully restored to its original plan and layout.

Davy wrote extensively about the history of the town, including on the African American community, and on John Bolton, a major figure of the Revolution in Kent County.

Around this time, an economics professor at Washington College asked Davy to step in to a last minute slot which had opened, teaching economics, which turned into a fourteen year commitment which Davy enjoyed, and was supremely qualified to teach, both as a Harvard Ph D and a practitioner of international development economics. One of his favorite students was Larry Culp, now Chairman of GE, and a current board member and board chair of the college. Davy never sought tenure even though he eventually became Chair of the Department of Economics and Curator of the Society of Junior Fellows.

In his 80s, Davy moved to a two bedroom cottage at Heron Point, and later to a stylish two bedroom apartment, furnished with beautiful antiques, paintings, historic prints and a plethora of books.

Davy was a highly social person and had many friends from Washington and Baltimore who would regularly come to visit him in Chestertown and vice versa. Davy leaves close relatives in Sarasota Florida, San Francisco, and Cairo, Egypt.

He was a member of the Historic District Commission of Chestertown, a board member of Preservation, Maryland, a Vestryman of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, a board member of Heron Point, a member of the Maryland Club in Baltimore, a Chestertown Rotarian and a strong supporter of affordable low-income housing in the Episcopal Diocese of Easton and in Chestertown.

Davy was beloved, admired, and respected, and until just a few days before he died, had a first class mind and extraordinary memory for detail, and a love of intellectual engagement, a person with old world courtesy, manners, and kindness to others. He will be much missed. Truly, a man for all season.

Previous Events

Service

JAN 9. 1:00 PM (ET)

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
101 N. Cross St.
Chestertown, MD

Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. Davy Henderson McCall*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Dr. Davy Henderson McCall*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Dr. Davy Henderson McCall*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *He was my neighbor and dear friend. We hosted many parties together in many of his homes. I will truly miss him. He was a warm gentleman and always showed concern for his friends and community.*

Tony Hurley

Tony Hurley - December 10, 2019 at 09:11 PM



“ *I had the pleasure of having Dr McCall as a student at Washington College. He had a great impact on my education and helped to spur my interest in international affairs and economics as I pursued International Studies at WAC. After graduation, I was fortunate to see Dr. McCall on occasion in Chestertown. He always had a warm smile and a genuine interest in others. Dr McCall epitomized a true gentleman and will be dearly missed.*

Christina Seningen - December 05, 2019 at 01:19 PM

CC

“ Cheryl Conaway-Dill lit a candle in memory of Dr. Davy Henderson McCall



Cheryl Conaway-Dill - December 05, 2019 at 10:09 AM

SK

“ Davy McCall was a wonderful person. May he rest in peace.

SUSAN L KARBAUM - December 04, 2019 at 02:06 PM

SJ

“ Suzanne Jackson lit a candle in memory of Dr. Davy Henderson McCall



Suzanne Jackson - December 04, 2019 at 04:04 AM

LI

“ Luisa's Cucina Italiana lit a candle in memory of Dr. Davy Henderson McCall



Luisa's Cucina Italiana - December 04, 2019 at 12:49 AM