

House Resolution 36

[Offered by Mr. Speaker, Mr. Thompson, On Behalf of All Members of the House]

“Paying tribute to the long and colorful career of Oce W. Smith, Jr., Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Delegates, from the County of Marion.”

WHEREAS, Oce W. Smith, Jr., became interested in politics at an early age and that interest led him to Page at the West Virginia House of Delegates and to periodic visits to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, where he worked for Senators Matthew Neely and Jennings Randolph.

Oce Smith received his education in the public schools of Marion County, and at Fairmont State College (now University), and he did post-graduate work in Political Science at West Virginia University. In private life, Oce began his career as a sportswriter, he taught school briefly and was a licensed realtor and property appraiser for more than twenty-five years.

When Oce began working around the West Virginia Legislature, the legislative sessions were thirty days in length ever other year. There were no Interim Committee Meetings and Special Sessions were a rarity.

Oce was elected Sergeant-at-Arms of the House on January 31, 1967, to fill a vacancy in that office created by a resignation. He became the 43rd Sergeant-at-Arms, and has held that position for forty-five years.

Aside from the political world, Oce has held positions on the Board of Directors of the North Central West Virginia Airport Authority, served as president of the Fairmont Board of Realtors, and served on the Board of Directors of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce. Oce Smith is also a lifetime member of the Fairmont State University and West Virginia University Alumni and Lettermen's Associations.

Oce's professional legislative life has included involvement with the National Legislative Services and Security Association, which he helped to form in the early 1970s. He is the only living founder still in office.

Awards and honors are not foreign to Oce Smith. He was bestowed the “Award in Letters” by the Fairmont Arts and Humanities Commission; the “Alumni of Achievement” Award by Fairmont State University; he was chosen by *The State Journal* as “One of West Virginia's Fifty-five Greatest Assets”; he was declared “The Official Walking Encyclopedia of the History of Marion County” by the Marion County Commission, and was inducted into the “Order of the 35th Star” by Governor Joe Manchin. Oce was named a Distinguished West Virginian by two different Governors and was the recipient of the 32nd prestigious “Tony Beard, Sr. Memorial Award” by the National Legislative Services and Security Association. He was chosen in 2008 as a Presidential Elector by the West Virginia Democrat Party.

Oce Smith has had personal acquaintance with practically all the major political candidates in West Virginia over the last fifty-five years, including having traveled the State with the Kennedy family in 1960.

Oce's fascination with the world of politics, at the national, state and local levels, has only been matched by his colorful character and love of recounting the thousands of stories that make up the fabric of his life. He knows no stranger, and usually upon meeting anyone for the first time, he will meticulously pull from his memory some remote story or family or personal connection relevant to the situation.

Married to Carol Bunner Smith for forty-six years, they together have one son, Oce Smith III, and two grandsons, Oce "Sonny" Smith IV and Joey Smith.

Although Oce Smith has been absent from his daily service in the House for a couple of years, he has continued to follow the Legislature's every move. He abides in the knowledge that his position with the House has remained intact and preserved, as he has personally done for the last four and a half decades, and his Assistants and friends have continued to carry on his work in his absence; therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Delegates:

That this House of Delegates hereby formally notes the 45 years of outstanding dedication and service of Oce W. Smith, Jr., its beloved Sergeant-at-Arms, thanks him profusely for giving of his life to this institution, and on this momentous occasion hereby formally bestows upon him the title of

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS EMERITUS

Further Resolved, That the Clerk of the House prepare a certified copy of this resolution for presentation to Oce W. Smith, Jr., in testimony hereto.