

Lee Hamilton, Indiana Democrat and vice chair of 9/11 Commission, dies at 94

BY JASON DICK
QC-ROLL CALL

WASHINGTON — Former U.S. Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, an Indiana Democrat who went on to chair the 9/11 Commission and was one of his party’s foremost foreign policy maven’s, has died at the age of 94.

First elected in 1964, Hamilton served 17 terms and went on to a busy retirement with his roles at, among other institutions and organizations, Indiana University’s Center on Representative Government and the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, named after him and the late Indiana Republican Sen. Richard Lugar.

“Few public servants have shaped our understanding of democracy, global engagement, and principled leadership as profoundly as Lee Hamilton,” Indiana University President Pamela Whitten said in a statement. “His lifelong commitment to public service reflects the very best of our democratic ideals and left an enduring impact on our nation.”



LEE HAMILTON

Hamilton began forging a moderate and maverick reputation early on. “As a House freshman in 1965, Hamilton sent a letter to President Lyndon B. Johnson suggesting it was ‘time to pause’ in the rush to enact Great Society legislation,” according to the 1998 version of Politics in America. A chairman of the House Intelligence

Committee in the 99th Congress (1985-87), he went on to chair the select House committee investigation into the Iran-Contra Affair in the 100th Congress (1987-89) and later the House Foreign Affairs Committee in the 103rd Congress (1993-95.)

By the end of his congressional career, his votes started moving rightward, particularly after narrowly winning reelection in 1994 in a GOP wave year. He voted with Republican colleagues and against a majority of his Democratic colleagues on a number of key votes, including on denying education to the children of undocumented immigrants and to ban “partial

birth abortions,” according to Politics in America.

After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Congress passed legislation that President George W. Bush signed to create an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate the attacks and make recommendations. After congressional Democrats’ first pick for vice chair of the commission — former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine — bowed out of consideration, leadership turned to Hamilton, whose profile made him a natural fit. “Organizations representing victims of the Sept. 11 attacks have several times named him one of their top picks for the probe,” as CQ-Roll Call reported on Dec. 11, 2002.

Born on April 20, 1931, Hamilton had no previous political experience prior to his election to the House. He died on Feb. 3 in Bloomington, Indiana.

Editor’s Note: Lee Hamilton’s Comments on Congress column has appeared regularly in The Kentucky Standard over the years.

Kentuckians who knew Nancy Guthrie call her disappearance a tragedy

BY VALARIE HONEYCUTT
SPEARS
LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

People who knew Nancy Guthrie, mother of the “Today” show co-host Savannah Guthrie, and her husband Charlie Guthrie when they grew up in Kentucky are calling her disappearance a “tragedy.”

Law enforcement officials in Pima County confirmed Tuesday they were investigating reports that ransom notes had been received by media outlets following Nancy Guthrie’s disappearance. She was last seen Saturday night at her Tucson, Arizona, home where she moved in the 1970s after leaving Kentucky. The sheriff’s office said Wednesday they had not identified a suspect or person of interest.

Jack Guthrie, who from 1962 to 1963 was editor of the University of Kentucky’s student newspaper, the Kentucky Kernel, told the Herald-Leader Nancy Guthrie worked on the newspaper when she attended UK. She reported on Greek life.

Guthrie, who said he was not related to Nancy Guthrie, said he did not see Nancy Guthrie after they attended UK and worked on the student newspaper together.

“She was a very nice young

woman,” said Jack Guthrie. “Here’s this unbelievable tragedy happening to a very nice person that I knew back in my Kernel days.”

Nancy Guthrie was from Fort Wright in Northern Kentucky, the Herald-Leader reported in her marriage engagement announcement. Her father was Pierce F. Long of Fort Wright, the announcement said.

Ed Wilson of Louisville told the Herald-Leader Wednesday he knew Charlie Guthrie, Nancy’s Guthrie’s husband. Charlie Guthrie died of a heart attack when Savannah Guthrie was 16.

Wilson and Charlie Guthrie were both from Pineville, where Wilson said Charlie Guthrie’s father, Clyde Guthrie, was a coal company operator.

“It’s terrible. It’s something you don’t think would happen to anybody that you might have an acquaintance with,” said Wilson. “It’s really unfortunate.”

Police say they believe the 84-year-old woman was taken against her will.

“TMZ announced Tuesday it had received an unverified ransom note for Guthrie’s return. KGUN, the Scripps station in Tucson, also received a ransom note referencing Guthrie. It makes a specific demand for several million

dollars in Bitcoin by Thursday and threatens to kill her if payment is not received by Monday,” WCPO reported.

Guthrie, a co-host on “Today” since 2012, revealed during the morning TV show several years ago that her parents met on a blind date at a UK men’s basketball game.

“She’s quick. She’s smart. She’s well-read. She’s curious about everything. She’s daring and adventurous,” Savannah Guthrie told TV station WCPO in Cincinnati in 2022. “She’s willing to jet off anywhere, and I really do mean jet. She once got in an F-16 in Fort Wright,” the television station reported.

“Savannah Guthrie’s father was stationed in Melbourne, Australia, when Savannah was born. They then returned to the U.S., moving to Tucson,” WCPO reported.

The Facebook Alumni group for Notre Dame Academy, a Catholic High School in Northern Kentucky, posted Wednesday: “We ask our community to join us in prayer for the safety and protection of our 1959 alumna, Nancy Long Guthrie, who is missing in Arizona.”

Kentucky lawmaker seeks to criminalize church service disruptions

BY HANNAH PINSKI
LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

FRANKFORT — A Kentucky lawmaker wants to make it a crime to interfere with a religious service following a controversial church protest in Minnesota and subsequent high-profile arrests last month.

State Rep. Mitch Whitaker, R-Fleming-Neon, is the primary sponsor of House Bill 540, filed Feb. 3, which would make it a Class A misdemeanor when a person disrupts or prevents participation in a religious service.

A person is guilty of disrupting a service when they do any act intending to “obstruct, or physically or audibly interfere” with access to the service, attempt to damage or destroy any of property of the religious organization or “injure, intimidate, or interfere” with someone attending the service, according to the bill’s language.

Additionally, a person found

guilty would be liable in any “civil cause of action” by the religious organization or “a victim who was lawfully exercising or seeking to exercise a right of religious worship.”

The legislation comes amid protests in Minneapolis and beyond against the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown and surge of federal officers in the state. Over the last several weeks, thousands of people have protested after 37-year-old ICU nurse Alex Pretti and Renee Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, were fatally shot by federal agents in two separate occurrences.

One of those protests occurred at Cities Church in St. Paul on Jan. 18, where protesters said one of the pastors was an immigration enforcement official.

Whitaker said in a press release that he was troubled by the protests at the church and believes current Kentucky

law “falls short” in protecting religious services. Although the law provides “modest penalties for religious disruptions, they do not go far enough, given the gravity of the offense,” he said.

“I’ve filed this bill with the hope that it would prevent something similar happening in our commonwealth, and to ensure prosecution if it were to occur,” Whitaker said.

Angela Cooper, Communications Director for the ACLU of Kentucky, said in a statement Kentucky already has laws in place to protect religious services.

“Destruction of property and other items mentioned in the bill are already considered criminal,” Cooper said. “Drafting new legislation based on a single event that took place in another state is a poor use of time when Kentucky has so many existing laws in need of modernization and repair.”

Since the protest, two journalists have been arrested

for covering the protest at the church and face federal charges, a development that has alarmed free speech advocates and press freedom groups.

“This is an egregious assault on the First Amendment and on journalists’ ability to do their work,” said Jodie Ginsberg, CEO of the Committee to Protect Journalists in a statement. “As an international organization, we know that the treatment of journalists is a leading indicator of the condition

of a country’s democracy.

“These arrests are just the latest in a string of escalating threats to the press in the United States — and an attack on people’s right to know.”

Former CNN host Don Lemon and eight other co-defendants, including another journalist, were arrested and charged with “conspiracy against religious freedom at a place of worship and injuring, intimidating, and interfering with the exercise of the right

of religious freedom at a place of worship,” according to BBC News.

Lemon, who is now an independent journalist, has since been released from custody and was not asked to enter a plea. The other journalist arrested was independent Minnesota journalist Georgia Fort, who has also been released from custody.

Both have promised to fight their charges and continue reporting.

Wrapping up the Christmas season

Our Christmas decorations came down last night. It was February 1st. Since they went up in early October, it was probably time.

I usually drag my Crocs when the day comes to un-decorate the parsonage — not my favorite thing at all.

The tree, lights, candles, smells, curtains, and pillows all contribute to an atmosphere of peace and warmth. My favorite Christmas colors are red and green.

Decades ago, I read in an encyclopedia (remember those?) that red stood for the blood of Jesus, and green was for everlasting life. As in “evergreen.” That sold me right then and there. Red and green are everywhere during the Christmas season. While we are not fancy, we focus on cozy.

Each year, I wrap all our hanging pictures in bright Christmas paper and add bows for a finishing touch. It’s an inexpensive way to zhuzh up the walls. It also puzzles our guests.

Shiny red ceramic boots line the top of the kitchen cabinets along with a large Santa cookie jar. My Aunt

Pat made each one in the ‘90s.

Nativities are all over the place. My favorite and largest set has seen quite a few Christmases.

My wise men have been a mile or two. One has a cracked turban you can see all the way through. A rough Christmas a few years ago caused him great bodily harm. His head-wrap was glued back together

three times. Another wise guy is missing a hand. Same rough Christmas.

Our fake Baby Jesus who rests beneath the Christmas tree is also a bit of a mess up close. Made of porcelain, it was gifted to our daughter when she was little by her Granny. The baby doll had been given tender care for over 30 years. But ... one Christmas play not too long ago I was rushing through the door at church and hit the door frame. Broke off three of its fingers. When the baby is wrapped tightly you can’t even tell.

While it is a bit sad for me to finally wrap up the Christmas season, I know other things/seasons are ahead. I can’t stay rooted in

the past. Though we are currently encased in snow and ice, beneath the ground, God is working. We are in full winter mode now, but in a few months, the earth will spring forth with new life.

In Isaiah 43:19, God said, “Behold, I am doing a new thing ...” If I’m honest, there are times when I don’t want a new thing. I am perfectly comfortable in the old thing. That’s when I need Him to take my hand, lead, pull, and occasionally drag me into a new season or opportunity.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 tell us, “For everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” Are you facing a new season? Are you dragging your feet as you go? Some seasons of life seem to last longer than others. January felt like it had 88 days. Still, God is faithful every day of every long month of the year. He will help us through one at a time.

After the decorations are packed up and put away, all the pictures unwrapped, everything seems so neat and tidy. Almost like a clean slate.

Ready for the next season to begin.

Email religion columnist Dawn Reed at preacher-swife7@yahoo.com.



DAWN REED

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