

Proposal to Rename McCathran Hall-open letter to Mayor and Council

March 6, 2024

To the Mayor and Council:

I awoke in the middle of the night troubled by the thought of changing the name of McCathran Hall. Reading the attached letters appear to show that most residents are opposed to the name change. I find that very refreshing. Many of the letters echoed my sentiments. I am opposed to digging up the hate and division of the past, but instead of using love, kindness, and optimism to improve the future.

My earliest memory of grandpa was when I was four or five years old that served as the first building block of who I was to become. We were always free to run next door to spend time with him after his work in D.C. and before his work for the Town. One night I was enjoying his larger than life personality when he said he had to leave to attend a Council meeting. I was upset and asked him why he did that all the time. Why couldn't someone else do it? He sat me on a chair and knelt down beside me to say that you get out of life what you put into it. He went on to say that in order to create a community to be proud of, you need to step up as a leader and get as many people of the community involved to make it so. I remember thinking at the time (at age four or five) that this is what "leaders" do.

I have used that "magical" time with him, treating me as an adult, to develop myself as a leader to the best of my abilities. I first served as Treasurer of the Washington Grove teen club, later serving on a citizens committee for Mayor Bohrer of Gaithersburg, President of the Gaithersburg Jaycees, President of my homeowners association in Shady Grove Village, working to gain the highest position in my various assignments with the U.S. Navy, and rising to an equity partner in our CPA firm that I entered after graduation from Maryland.

In his honor, I used our CPA firm to expand audits of local governments in Maryland who generally had difficulty hiring audit firms to do so. I managed the audits of four Maryland counties and over a dozen local governments. That touching moment with grandpa McCathran was my driving force all the way! I still think of him all the time. Getting the government involved in changing a legacy reminds me of something my first business teacher said when he spoke of tax and government. He said "you can't legislate morality".

Joe McCathran