



Thomas W. L. "Lud" Ashley

January 11, 1929 - June 15, 2010

The life of Thomas W. L. "Lud" Ashley, former congressman for Ohio's ninth district, will be celebrated in a public gathering Saturday, September 25, from 2:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m. at The Toledo Club, 235 14th St.

Mr. Ashley, died June 15, 2010 at his home in Leland, MI. He served in the U.S. House for 26 years, from 1955 to 1981, representing Toledo and surrounding areas of northwestern Ohio.

A private memorial was held June 25 in Washington, D. C., and included a eulogy delivered by former President George H.W. Bush, who was among Mr. Ashley's closest friends.

The Toledo event will be preceded by a private graveside service at Woodlawn Cemetery. Arrangements handled with Coyle Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may take the form of a donation to the Leland Township Library, 203 E. Cedar St., Leland, 49654.

Thomas W. Ludlow Ashley

The late Sen. Edward Kennedy once said: "Americans sleep in better homes today because of Lud Ashley." He was right.

Mr. Ashley, the longtime Toledo congressman who died this week at age 87, chaired a House committee on housing and community development. For years, he worked hard to provide federal grants to improve low and moderate-income housing nationally, as well as close to home.

Thomas Ludlow Ashley also was important to and instrumental in the development of the city where he was born, which he represented in Congress from 1955 until 1981.

"Lud" Ashley was the great-grandson of James Ashley, who settled in frontier Toledo, changed political parties because of his opposition to slavery, and represented Toledo in Congress during the Civil War. James Ashley was a co-author of the 13th Amendment, which outlawed slavery. In that tradition, his great-grandson sought to free Americans from the squalor of terrible housing.

Lud Ashley served in the Pacific during World War II before he attended Yale University. He and George H.W. Bush, who would become President decades later, were classmates and fellow members of the ultra-elite secret society Skull and Bones. Though they were of different political parties, the men remained longtime friends.

Mr. Ashley earned a law degree at Ohio State University and worked for Radio Free Europe before he returned home in 1954 to campaign for Congress. He ousted independent Rep. Frazier Reams, in part because of the support of the late Paul Block, Jr., publisher of The Blade, who felt Toledo's interests would be best represented by a member of Congress with ties to a major political party.

During his career, Mr. Ashley landed millions of dollars for public housing in Lucas County. He got a crucial \$11 million to improve Toledo's port.

Late in his career, during the energy crisis of the 1970s, Mr. Ashley was chairman of a special committee that successfully steered through Congress a controversial package of bills proposed by President Jimmy Carter that were designed to reduce oil consumption.

That assignment won him some enemies in the auto industry but high praise from then-House Speaker Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, who counted Mr. Ashley as a personal friend.

In 1980, Mr. Ashley was defeated for re-election by Republican Ed Weber in a stunning upset. Mr. Ashley fell victim to Ronald Reagan's landslide victory and huge negative feeling against the Carter administration.

His death came days after the federal courthouse in Toledo was renamed in both his and his great-grandfather's honor. That tribute is appropriate.

When the energy bills were passed, Rep. Ashley knew the legislation was unpopular with Jeep. But he responded: "My view is that my district elected me to represent, when called upon, a wider national interest."

That is who Thomas Ludlow Ashley was. As he is laid to rest in his hometown, that is how Toledo's congressman should be remembered.