

David Bennett, 1915 - A Democratic Hero

I am making a contribution to honor my father, David Bennett, who continues to be my “Democratic Hero.” My dad recently turned 92 years of age. For all these years, he has been the most devoted Democrat I have known. He continues to follow politics very closely, and his hope, and my hope, is he will again see a Democrat elected President of the United States.

My dad was a product of the Great Depression of the 1930’s. Growing up on the family farm in Rockingham County, North Carolina, he spent long hours during the spring, summer and fall planting, harvesting and preparing the tobacco crop for market. Tobacco was the primary agricultural crop in Rockingham County at that time. Labor to work in the tobacco was cheap and plentiful. During the winter months, much time was spent cutting wood and preparing for the next years crop.

The price of tobacco was extremely low prior to the President Franklin Roosevelt administration and the establishment of the tobacco support program in the 1930’s. I have heard my dad tell many stories regarding the positive effect the tobacco support program and the other Federal programs had on the farmers and other citizens during the 1930’s.

I believe my dad had always been a Democrat, but the Roosevelt administration sealed the deal for him and my mother, Annie Butler Bennett. Growing up I quickly learned the difference between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and it did not take long for me to understand where my loyalties were.

Dad continued to be active in the Democratic Party and was often asked to run for public office. He preferred to remain active in the party without being in elective office. For years he was considered “Mr. Democrat” for the western part of Rockingham County. Any candidate running for office in that part of the state wanted to meet Dad and tried to woo his support prior to the election. Dad was also active in other areas. For many years he was on the school board for Bethany School. He was a member of the board of directors of First Citizens Bank in Madison, a member of the Rockingham Board of Elections, the Rockingham County Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority, and the N.C. Department of Transportation Efficiency Council. For more than 30 years dad served as a member of the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Committee and was chair most of that time. He instilled in me the value of public service and that is primarily why I chose a career in state government.

For me dad will always be my “Democratic Hero,” and for the reasons I have listed above and many more I have not mentioned I feel honored to give a contribution to the Wake County Democratic Men’s Club in my dad’s honor.

Boyd Bennett