

Jim Campbell pays tribute to Oak Ridge legend Pete Craven

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of July 1, 2019)

This Historically Speaking includes, with permission, the post from Technovations on Friday, 6/6/19.

Tom Ballard, Editor of Technovations, introduced the tribute by Jim Campbell, President of the East Tennessee Economic Council, with the following: "The Oak Ridge community is known for a number of distinguished leaders that have been born or had the opportunity to live in the city. Think of the world-renowned scientists who have come through Oak Ridge National Laboratory like Alvin Weinberg or legendary local government leaders like long-time Mayor Al Bissell. The community has also produced some distinguished business leaders, and one of those esteemed ones died earlier this week.

"Today, we post a guest column written by Jim Campbell, President of the East Tennessee Economic Council {ETEC}, that commemorates the impact that Pete Craven had on Oak Ridge. To say that Pete was one of a kind would be an understatement as Jim captures in his tribute titled "Pete Craven: Rest in Peace."

"To say that Pete was a larger than life presence wherever he went would also be an understatement. It is both fitting and ironic that we post Jim's tribute on Friday when ETEC, of which Pete was a founding member, will hold its regular weekly meeting at 7:30 a.m. Until a few years ago, it was an event that Pete attended regularly...

Jim Campbell provided the following:

"Clyde (Pete) Wesley Craven, 84, passed away June 2 and left a trail of loyal friends and co-workers across East Tennessee.

"An entrepreneur, pilot, nuclear physicist, banker, choir member... Pete Craven had his hands and quick wit in all kinds of enterprises. Business, education, politics – Pete Craven worked tirelessly to make things work for the good of the region.

"Sherry Hunt, president of AllMeds, his final company and a colleague of Craven for over 30 years, shut down the company on this past Wednesday for a memorial service.

"He was an amazing leader who instilled trust and value in all of us,' said Hunt. 'We have many quotes from Pete, 'AllMeds walks out the door every day at 5:00'. He reminded us to be thankful for our exceptional employees, the true AllMeds. The second quote and my favorite, was only one word, 'Great!' It relayed Pete's outlook on life, when asked how he was doing, he was always great!

"Pete loved to work and to serve others,' said Hunt. 'He loved AllMeds and he loved providing jobs. He loved Oak Ridge and making it a better city that would attract business. Pete loved his family and he loved his church. Please remember the Craven Family in your prayers.'

"Former U.S. Congressman Zach Wamp stated, 'Pete Craven was Oak Ridge in so many ways... from science to business to culture, Pete lived and loved Oak Ridge. He was a loyal friend and a wise counselor. Thankfully, his legacy will live large through many of us. What a privilege it was to be his friend.'

"Dr. Craven was an active proponent and contributor to local, regional and international economic development. He was a founding member of the Roane Anderson Economic Council (now ETEC) in 1974

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and stayed active until last year, as well as CROET (Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee) and Tech 2020. Throughout his career he remained active in technology incubators, mentored entrepreneurs and worked with the Department of Energy, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y-12 National Security Complex on technology transfer.

"Dr. Thom Mason, now Director of Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, remembers Pete's tenacity and optimism.

'The main things I remember fondly about Pete,' said Mason, 'was his always outspoken contributions at ETEC and his involvement in the early stages of the Education Foundation campaign for the high school where he was unfailingly optimistic about success because he was so convinced it was the right thing to do – this was infectious in a most helpful way.'

"Pete was hyper-aware of what would improve any situation, whether it be QZAB financing for Oak Ridge High School or founding new forward-thinking companies,' said David Bradshaw, former Oak Ridge Mayor and now head of Pinnacle Bank in Oak Ridge. 'This awareness wasn't limited to just business or technology either. We had a bad storm one day and my wife and I were trying to load hundreds of broken limbs and branches onto a small trailer (it wasn't going well). Pete lived nearby and must have seen our struggle because it wasn't long before he came down the road driving his tractor pulling a giant flatbed trailer. He helped load our limbs and took them to his burn pile, expecting nothing in return. What a terrific soul!'

"Pete Craven was a role model to me,' says Wayne Cropp, former CEO of the Enterprise Center in Chattanooga and now an attorney with Baker Donelson. 'He was a man of great faith, leadership and love. He loved life, he loved his family, and he loved his community. A stalwart within Oak Ridge, Pete Craven will never be replaced. Thanks Pete, for all your advice and all the support you gave me.'

"Dr. Craven was a life-long resident and dedicated contributor of the Oak Ridge community since moving to the area with his family in the 1940s. Dr. Craven served his country as an Officer in the United States Air Force, from 1953 to 1957. He excelled at the highest levels of academic rigor at the University of Tennessee, earning a Bachelor of Science in 1961, a Master of Science in 1963, and a Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering in 1965.

"After teaching at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville for one year, he worked at the Y-12 facility before establishing the Oak Ridge division of Science Application International Corporation (SAIC), an employee-owned systems development company, which grew to over 500 employees under his leadership. In 1987, Dr. Craven founded Integrated Systems, Inc. and Integrated Computer Systems, Inc., serving as their Chairman for over ten years.

"In 1997, Dr. Craven founded AllMeds, Inc. with D. Thomas Upchurch, MD to improve the economics and quality of health care delivery. AllMeds has experienced consistent growth and success, due to Dr. Craven's business acumen and the mentorship he has offered the company's directors, executives and employees.

"AllMeds now provides mission-critical Electronic Health Record, Practice Management, and Revenue Cycle Management solutions to independent medical practices across the United States. "AllMeds has

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been located in Oak Ridge since its founding and, today, it provides employment to over 120 professionals in the Oak Ridge/Knoxville area.

"Craven's full obituary and information about services can be found [here](#).

Thanks Tom and Jim! I admired Pete and often enjoyed talking with him about Oak Ridge's history. He frequently gave me ideas for Historically Speaking articles. He would always provide excellent contacts for the research.

I also recall some years ago when there was much discussion about what to do about the American Museum of Science and Energy when it seemed we could not get anything to come to fruition. As was Pete's standard approach, he just would not give up on it. He even tried to convince me that the best thing to do was for me to just retire right away from Y-12 and take the museum's director position.

I was not ready for that, but he persisted trying to convince me he was right. We finally agreed that would not work for me at the time. But Pete was reluctant as he really wanted to fix what he perceived as a problem for his beloved Oak Ridge!



Pete Craven presents an East Tennessee Economic Council Muddy Boot Award to Zach Wamp