

The Connecticut General Assembly



**Rep. Claire Janowski, Chairwoman
Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee**

MEMORIAM ON THE LOSS OF GENE PITNEY

**Delivered at April 11, 2006 House Session by Rep. Claire Janowski
56TH District – Rockville & Vernon**

MR. SPEAKER, I RISE FOR PURPOSES OF AN ANNOUNCEMENT. ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND THE RESIDENTS IN MY DISTRICT, I RISE TO EXPRESS GREAT SADNESS ON THE RECENT DEATH OF GENE PITNEY AT THE AGE OF 66 AND WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY CONDOLENCES TO HIS FAMILY & FRIENDS --- HIS WIFE, LYNNE AND HIS SONS ---TOD, CHRISTOPHER AND DAVID.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE CHAMBER FOR PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR AND ACKNOWLEDGE HIS MEMORY AND HIS MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR NATION, STATE AND, PARTICULARLY THE TOWN OF VERNON, WHICH INCLUDES THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE, GENE PITNEY'S BOYHOOD HOME, LOCATED IN THE 56TH DISTRICT THAT I REPRESENT AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

VERNON IS VERY PROUD OF THE SUCCESS OF THIS TALENTED SINGER AND SONGWRITER AND ALSO PROUD THAT HE SPENT HIS YOUTH IN THE ROCKVILLE SECTION OF VERNON, GRADUATING FROM ROCKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL IN 1958.

WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL, IT RECENTLY CAME TO MY ATTENTION THAT HE WAS PART OF A BAND CALLED "GENE PITNEY AND THE GENIALS" – A 5 MEMBER BAND THAT HE PUT TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER CLOSE FRIEND. IT WAS DURING THESE EARLY ROOTS THAT HE DEMONSTRATED HIS TALENT FOR SINGING AND SONGWRITING, PLAYING AT LOCAL EVENTS SUCH AS THE POLISH CLUB AND THE FORMER PALACE THEATER IN ROCKVILLE.

IN 2002, HE WAS RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY BY BEING INDUCTED IN THE "ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME FOR SUCH HITS AS --- 'TOWN WITHOUT PITY', "IT HURTS TO BE IN LOVE", "THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE" AND MUCH MORE. BUT, HE WAS MORE THAN JUST A 'TEEN IDOL". HE WAS ALSO A TALENTED SONGWRITER WHO WROTE SUCCESSFUL HITS FOR RICKY NELSON, BOBBY VEE, THE CHRYSTALS AND ROY ORBISON.

HIS UNIQUE AND DISTINCTIVE SOUND WAS UNMATCHED AND CONTINUES TO BE UNMATCHED TODAY.

IT IS THAT UNIQUENESS AND TALENT THAT STOOD OUT TO MAKE HIM AN "INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS" IN EUROPE AS WELL, PARTICULARLY ENGLAND AND ITALY.

ALTHOUGH I NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET GENE PITNEY PERSONALLY, I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE SOUND AND LYRICS OF HIS MUSIC AT AN EARLY AGE..... THROUGH MY OLDER SISTER WHO WAS A HUGE FAN AND PLAYED HIS MUSIC CONSTANTLY AS A TEENAGER... AND IT IS THAT UNIQUENESS AND TALENT THAT HE LEAVES BEHIND FOR US TO REMEMBER.

I ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT HIS BOYHOOD HOME ON HAMMOND STREET IN ROCKVILLE DURING A DOOR KNOCKING VISIT WHEN I FIRST RAN FOR LOCAL OFFICE.... AND WAS GIVEN AN ENTHUSIASTIC TOUR BY THE CONSTITUENTS WHO LIVED THERE AT THE TIME.....AND IT WAS A JOY TO SEE HOW PROUD THEY WERE THAT THEY LIVED IN THE HOUSE WHERE GENE PITNEY, AS A YOUNG BOY GROWING UP IN THAT MODEST HOME, HAD DONE A BEAUTIFUL CARVING IN THE WOODWORK ABOVE THE BASEMENT DOOR...PERHAPS A CREATIVE OUTLET BEFORE HE DISCOVERED HIS GIFT OF SONGWRITING!

GENE PITNEY IS AN ICON THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND HIS PRESENCE WILL BE MISSED.

HE WILL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF THE VERNON & ROCKVILLE COMMUNITY WHERE HIS ROOTS BEGAN.... AND HE WILL FOREVER REMAIN THE TALENTED SINGER AND SONGWRITER KNOWN TO US ALL AS THE "ROCKVILLE ROCKET".