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# Top Stories

## Emotional tribute to former mayor Pip Moyer draws diverse crowd

By E.B. FURGURSON III, Staff Writer

Ladies and gents dressed to the nines crammed into the old Annapolis High School gym last night for a tribute to former mayor Pip Moyer. Some sported period wear from the 1940s to match the set, a mock-up of the old jazz joint the Washington Hotel where Naptown swingers used to dig Duke Ellington back in the day.

The occasion was a tribute to the former mayor and a fund-raiser for a movie being made about his decades-long relationship with Zastrow Simms.

Their teamwork in the hours and days after the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King helped to keep the lid on rioting and violence in Annapolis while other cities burned.

The movie got a notable boost from County Executive Janet S. Owens, who announced a \$50,000 county grant for the documentary project by award-winning filmmakers Victoria Bruce and Karin Hayes.

With about 200 tickets sold at \$150 a pop, the fund-raiser also was a booming success.

But it was, perhaps, more successful on another level.

The standing-room-only crowd at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts was there not only out of admiration for Mr. Moyer, but for his core value - respect for people from all walks of life.

That is what helped him and his friend

Mr. Simms, keep Annapolis from going up in flames during those days in 1968.

Mr. Simms told the crowd that Mr. Moyer was like the "godfather" walking the city's streets: "He made those men an offer they could not refuse - he gave them respect."

That was the beginning of major changes in the city. African

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By Paul W. Gillespie -- *The Capital*  
Pip Moyer looks at a binder with clippings and photos of him with his daughter Loni. Behind them is Zastrow Simms, Mr. Moyer's oldest friend.



Americans got jobs at City Hall and moved up to be foremen on city work crews and other jobs, said Mr. Simms. Known for flashy dress, he outdid himself for the occasion in a turquoise suit.

Former police officer and community leader George Phelps also talked about Mr Moyer's values.

"Annapolis is a beautiful city. All we have to do is understand each other ... people understanding people," he said.

Later, as the crowd thinned, he sat toward the back of the room reflecting on the sense of togetherness he felt during the evening.

"This is wonderful. Never in my life, never in my life have I seen a night like this," Mr. Phelps said.

Before the Naptown Players performed "Washington Hotel," a short play written and directed by Janice Hayes-Williams and taken from true stories about the old jazz club on West Washington Street, others stood to speak about Mr. Moyer.

Comments ran from the comical to heart-wrenching.

His daughter, Loni Moyer, thanked her dad for lessons learned about how to treat people fairly and not take yourself too seriously.

"Your favorite book is 'To Kill a Mockingbird,' and like Atticus Finch you have spent your life protecting the Boo Radleys and Tom Robinsons of this world ... You were at your best when we were at our worst," she said.

House of Delegates Speaker Mike Busch, D-Annapolis, stood to talk about his mentor and friend who he met when he was about 15.

"He was my coach, my mentor. He taught me basketball, he taught me everything I learned in life. Other than my father ... there is no man I love more," he said choking up.

But there were lighter moments too. Mr. Busch fondly recalled how Pip would take him home and feed him, how he would take Mr. Moyer's new Pontiac Bonneville up to Fred's Restaurant, and how absent-minded his mentor was: "We'd play basketball at St. John's and he would always leave his bag there. We'd have to run back to get it."

Ms. Owens spoke about her naivete when she took office nearly eight years ago.

"Pip called me every day. Sometimes he would ask me for tickets. I didn't know I could get tickets. He would call and say he needed tickets for the Preakness. But I never saw him there - I would always see Zastrow. I'd see Zastrow at all the races," she said as the crowd chuckled at the little scam.

Halfway through the evening, Mr. Moyer, who once scored 36 out of 40 points for Annapolis High to send the team to the state

championship, and now is wracked with Parkinson's Disease, had to leave.

Those who hung on danced to the music of the Spa Creek Swing Band, enjoyed the bar and buffet stocked with donated goodies, and talked about their friend.

- No Jumps-

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