

Conyers shares views with kids

By Julie Brown
staff writer

The Stroh's decision to close its Detroit brewery angered U.S. Congressman John Conyers Jr.

"I was personally outraged," he said Friday. "I don't know why everybody being so nice about it."

Conyers was at Detroit Country Day School in Birmingham, speaking to its upper school student assembly.

On Feb. 8, Stroh's announced its decision to close the Detroit brewery, saying that the facility was no longer efficient. The company will keep its corporate headquarters in Detroit.

"It hurts us more than it hurts the profitability," Conyers said of the decision to close the brewery. "All they have to do is update their equipment, and then it would be as profitable as any other business."

The Stroh's closing followed decisions by several other companies to close their Detroit facilities. Vernors

no longer manufactured in Detroit, and the downtown Hudson's department store has closed.

"I'm outraged with the Stroh family, I'm outraged with the Hudson family, I'm outraged with the Vernors people," said Conyers, a Detroit Democrat. The departure of Hudson's was easy to see coming, he added; the company let the store go downhill prior to its closing.

"They brought it down, and then they said 'Business is bad.' I think the city leaders should take a much stronger stand against this sort of action than they do."

"Tax abatements shouldn't be as easy to come by for such companies as they are, he said."

"You don't get your cake and eat it, too."

Friday's assembly at Country Day was held to honor Black History Month. In his speech, and in a meeting with editors of the student newspaper, the 10-term congressman covered a variety of areas, including his reasons for going into politics.

"In a way, I'm an accidental politician."

His Congressional seat is the only elective office he has held, Conyers told the students.

WHILE SERVING with the military in Korea, Conyers began to ask himself why that conflict had come about.

"I developed a profound interest in trying to figure out why I was there."

Conyers, who holds undergraduate and law degrees from Wayne State University, practiced law for a while after finishing law school. He decided to run for Congress when a seat became available.

"Having no money or no particular political connections, but fortunately being a bachelor, I closed down everything I was doing and campaigned for one year." Although Conyers had few political connections, his father was known in Detroit for his role as an international representative for the United Auto Workers.

"I campaigned for a year on three issues: jobs, justice and peace, he told the students. "I didn't realize I was taking the three issues I would spend my whole congressional career threshing out."

Conyers authored and led the drive for passage of the Martin Luther King Holiday Bill, which was signed in 1983. He introduced the bill four days after King's assassination in 1968.

"I think it's important that we examine the life of a man who was, I think, prophetic," the congressman told the students.

CONYERS is also one of the architects of the Congressional Black Caucus Alternative Budget, an effort to give priority to human needs and to reverse the nuclear arms race.

"What I'm trying to do with you is discuss the notion of getting our priorities

straightened out," he said. "We need to examine a few important questions. The first one is an international question, how we keep ourselves from blowing this planet up."

"How do we keep ourselves from destroying the planet? I argue, quite simply, that the more arms, the more likely it is that will come."

Conyers traveled to the Soviet Union a few years ago, and concluded that the Soviet Union was far behind the United States in nuclear capability.

"I am convinced the Soviet Union is so far in second place. But now I realize how America has been built up to expect this."

Jobs and justice also remain concerns today, the congressman said.

"I've found that class has as much to do with discrimination in our society (as racism does)," he said. "I'm as much concerned about class discrimination in America as I am about race discrimination. I think it's very important that you who are tomorrow's leaders understand the makeup of the world."

The Detroit congressman has protested South Africa's apartheid policy of segregation, and was recently arrested during a Washington, D.C., protest at the South African embassy.

"I got arrested and spent the night in the slammer in Washington, D.C., as part of a protest," he told the students.

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U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr. fields questions from student reporters at Detroit Country Day School in Beverly Hills.



His reasons for entering politics and the South African apartheid issue were the topics of U.S. Rep. John Conyer Jr.'s talk with Detroit Country Day high school students.

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— John Conyers Jr.
U.S. Congressman



Louella Dixon (left), and Tom Weber, editor-in-chief, Detroit Country Day's student newspaper. U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr. for the Day.

Veterans commemorate Pacific beach battle

By Jackie Klein
staff writer

On Feb. 23, 1945, the U.S. Marines of the 5th Division raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima.

Forty years later, Seymour "Sam" Kory of Southfield, who stood next to Maj. Gen. Keller E. Rock of the 5th Division on that memorable day in history, will recreate the flag raising scene at noon Saturday atop the Southfield Civic Center hill.

As in 1945 — when six Marines found a 20-foot length of Japanese pipe and raised a small American flag over the north rim of the Surabachi crater — six Marines on Saturday will raise the flag. But this one belongs to Kory who got it from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

The flag raisers and others at "Southfield's Salute to Veterans of Iwo Jima" are members of the Marine Corps at Brodhead Armory in Detroit.

Also planned for the event are an honor guard, band music and refreshments. Kory is presenting a small American flag to each child who attends.

"I've lived in Southfield for 20 years. I love my city and my country and I'm a flag waver," Kory said. "The Southfield Civic Center hill where you can see far into the distance will be our Surabachi. This has been my dream."

Kory joined the U.S. Navy when he was not quite 17 years old. He became Rocky, the mascot of the general said he was impressed with the way the young sailor saluted him when instructed to deliver a message to the command officer.

"WHEN THEY raised the flag on Iwo Jima I was standing next to Rocky on the ship Vestal," Kory recalled. "I didn't have any binoculars so the general gave me his and said, 'History is being made today.'"

"The Marines were cheering and the ships of the invasion fleet sounded their horns, whistles and bells to signal the flag raising."

Inside the crater, two Japanese rushed from a cave and threw grenades at the Marines. One of the grenades was aimed at Sgt. Louis Lowery as he was snapping a picture of the flag raising for Leatherneck magazine. Lowery jumped to safety.

A runner was sent to get a larger flag from the ship. As he was nearing the top of Suribachi, Joe Rosenthal, an associated press photographer, followed him.

The patrol that accompanied the new flag found a second length of Japanese pipe and fastened the larger flag to it. The four men trying to raise the flag were having difficulty planting the pipe firmly into the volcanic ash. Two others came to their aid.

As the six struggled to secure the flag in the ground, Rosenthal snapped his famous photograph which was used as the symbol of a war loan drive.



Iwo Jima

"The picture has been immortalized in the largest bronze statue in the world at Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia," Kory said. "But it wasn't until 30 years later, that Rosenberg's name was engraved on the statue."

"I remember when the flag was being raised, a boat hit the beach and Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal said, 'This means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years.'"

IWO JIMA is a small island less than five miles long and 2 1/2 miles wide. It broke Lt. Gen. Tadashichi Kuribayashi's heart when the Marines took the tiny island, Kory said.

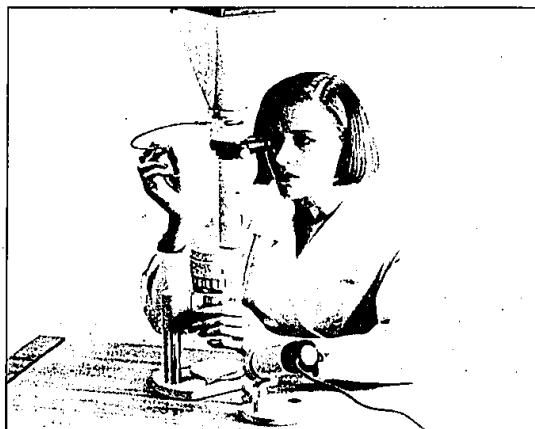
In 35 days of the fiercest battle of the war, three divisions of the U.S. Marine Corps captured Iwo Jima. In the process, more than 6,000 Marines and 22,000 Japanese were killed.

Kory has three American flags on the walls of his Detroit party store. Also on a wall is a drawing of the famous flag raising photograph which was done for Kory by Southfield artist Agnes Mesegian.

Kory is going to a reunion in Washington of Iwo Jima veterans. He wrote to President Ronald Reagan about the ceremonies and Reagan wrote back, commending Kory for his dedication.

"At the age of 15, I was a sergeant in the National Guard," Kory said. "I'm gung ho about every Navy Day. I'll never forget Iwo Jima and I thank God I was born in America."

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