

ELLCOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Calvin Ball has ordered the Howard County Flag to be lowered to half-staff, from sunrise, Friday, November 21st, to sundown Saturday, November 22nd, in memory and honor of former Howard County Executive Dr. Edward L. Cochran. Dr. Cochran passed peacefully on November 16th in Ellicott City at the age of 96.

MEDIA CONTACTS:
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AUDIENCE:
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Visitors

“ We were all deeply saddened to hear of Dr. Cochran’s passing. His legacy of civic leadership, his stewardship to Howard County – especially to our local government during its most transformative years, and his devotion to public education, have left an indelible imprint on our great county. Thank you, Dr. Cochran, for your life of service, as we are a better community and county because of it. ”

— Calvin Ball Howard County Executive

Born in 1929, Dr. Cochran and his wife Joan – who he met while in graduate school at the University of Notre Dame and she at St. Mary’s College in Indiana, moved to Howard County in 1956, where he began working for Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. There, he specialized in chemical kinetics, magnetic resonance, radiation chemistry, and photochemistry, publishing 35 scientific papers with colleagues in the field.

In 1964, Dr. Cochran was appointed to the Howard County Board of Education (BOE) and immediately issued a position paper calling for the complete and immediate desegregation of Howard County public schools. Within a year, and with the strong support from the community and local churches, he persuaded the BOE to adopt full integration. During his tenure, Dr. Cochran also helped found Howard Community College, serving as the community college’s first Chairman of its Board of Trustees in 1967 and later returning as trustee from 1989 to 1991.

In 1968, he ran for Howard County Council, winning by a landslide, and was reelected in 1970. At that time, he sponsored legislation that modernized Howard County Government, including the creation of the Human Relations Commission in 1969, financial disclosure requirements for elected officials, consumer protection laws, zoning reforms, strict sign regulations, and Howard County’s first no-smoking law. Four years later, he was elected Howard County’s second County Executive.

In his first 18 months as County Executive, Dr. Cochran laid the groundwork for further revolutionizing Howard County Government, including:

- Forming the then Citizen Services Department, Office of Human Rights, Office of Aging, and Office of Consumer Affairs;
- Professionalizing corrections;
- Establishing subsidized housing for seniors; and
- Implementing program budgeting for fiscal accountability.

As County Executive, Dr. Cochran also secured the County’s first AA bond ratings from Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s.

Over the years, Dr. Cochran was recognized with numerous awards and honors, including the: Howard County Human Rights Award in 2004; Distinguished Serviced to Mankind Award from the First Baptist Church of Guilford in 1976; the James Clark Junior Medal from Howard Community College in 2022; Paul Harris Fellow Rotary International; and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Howard County Center for African American Culture Award of Appreciation in 2004.

He leaves behind six children, 23 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

A Funeral Mass for Dr. Cochran will take place on Friday, November 21st at 2:00 p.m. at the Shrine of St. Anthony at 12290 Folly Quarter Road in Ellicott City and a Celebration of Life on Saturday, November 22nd from noon to 2:00 p.m. at the LakeHouse Hotel at 102012 Wincopin Circle in Columbia.

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