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## Obituary

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# In Memory of a Fighter: William P. Robinson

by Stuart Rosenblatt

Longtime Norfolk lawyer and member of the Virginia House of Delegates William P. “Billy” Robinson, Jr. passed away on Dec. 19, 2006. Robinson had been battling cancer, but succumbed at the age of 64. Ever the fighter, Robinson was at court only days earlier, winning a dismissal in a murder case.

Robinson was a longtime friend and ally of the LaRouche political movement in Virginia and nationally. He authored an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief in the appeal of the 1988 Federal trial of Lyndon LaRouche, and represented several of LaRouche’s associates in cases in Virginia that stemmed from the same Federal-state task force that ran the witchhunt against LaRouche. This action on behalf of justice for someone who was politically persecuted, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where the media-hyped lynch-mob atmosphere against LaRouche was the most rabid, says volumes about Robinson’s character as a man of principle.

As well, Billy helped advance many political initiatives with LaRouche’s allies, signing statements on legal exoneration and other topics. He held press conferences defending the right of LaRouche delegates to participate in Democratic Party precinct caucuses, and spoke at public events in the Tidewater area on various initiatives with friends of LaRouche, including a national effort to halt the fraudulent impeachment of President Bill Clinton. He also participated in national conferences sponsored by the LaRouche political movement, and joined in plotting strategy to stop the actions of the Bush Administration and its allies.

### Strong Impact on Virginia

In Virginia, Robinson was a trailblazer, who provoked the ire of the state’s oligarchical establishment. The first black Commonwealth’s Attorney in Norfolk, Robinson went on to be-

come a 20-year member of the Virginia House of Delegates, chair of the House Transportation Committee, chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, chair of the Virginia Association of Black Elected Officials, and board member of numerous other organizations.

He was also a trial attorney second to none, who would routinely win the most difficult criminal cases in the Tidewater community. Clients lined up outside the door to retain the flamboyant and talented counsellor, who was also known as a true friend of the African-American community.

However, his numerous enemies, invoking various chicaneries, continuously attacked Robinson until they succeeded in stripping him of his law license, although he would eventually win it back. A mentally out-of-control former judge, who envied Robinson, nearly pistol-whipped him to death, but Robinson survived the attack, after which he was more resilient than ever. Allies of Dick Cheney, “Diamond” Pat Robertson, and the right-wing establishment worked hand-in-glove with the media to drive Robinson out of his Delegate seat, and succeeded, when he was on the verge of being elected the Minority Leader in Richmond. He was the very last person they could ever tolerate representing the Democratic Party in the legislature.

Despite what it cost him politically and legally, Billy Robinson always stood up for the truth, whether it was publicly defending “my friend Lyndon,” or battling injustice in the communities of Tidewater. He never flinched, and never backed down. And for those many who had the privilege of knowing him, they also know that the effervescent Robinson passed away with that trademark smile on his face.



EIRNS/Chris Schmid

*Longtime LaRouche ally and Virginia Delegate William Robinson passed away last December. Robinson, shown here addressing a LaRouche movement meeting in Norfolk, Va., Oct. 18, 2001, was a courageous fighter for justice.*