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M. C. Liest — Agrarian, Educator, And Lawmaker

By Imogene Barger

M. C. Leist with his mother, Myra.



M. C. Liest became a politician in Eastern Oklahoma, but he grew up and was educated in Western Oklahoma; therefore, we claim him as our own. He comes from a family that has an active and pioneering history. He had three great-uncles who fought in the Civil War, and one of them became a state legislator in St. Louis, Missouri. His great grandfather and one uncle were buffalo hunters from Dodge City, Kansas in 1873 who hunted buffalo down almost as far as Ft. Supply, Oklahoma. These men were friends, neighbors, and fellow buffalo hunters with Bat Masterson.

Liest's grandmother came to Oklahoma in 1912 after the death of her mother. She made her home with her brother, who had bought a relinquishment in Beaver County. She married a native panhandler and then reared and educated her children there.

World War II interrupted college — education plans for

Liest's parents, M. C. Sr. and Myra. His father spent four years in the U. S. Navy and participated in the Normandy Invasion. After the war, he worked for a time for Phillips Petroleum, but he and Myra decided to finish college and become teachers. So they moved back to Alva, to Kollege Kamp, a prisoner-of-war camp during the war years, which became their home until graduation. There followed thirty years of teaching and administration jobs, and the young M. C. was much impressed by his dad's ability to handle problems and his interest in both students and adults.

M. C. was born October 17, 1942 while his dad was in the Navy and started to school at the college training center while his parents worked on their degrees. He graduated from the Lookeba-Sickles High School in Caddo County in 1961 as Valedictorian of his class. He married a classmate, Glenda Tucker. They moved to Stillwater where he attended OSU for a year before transferring to Panhandle State, where he received his degree in 1965.

He taught, coached, and served as principal at the Liberty-Morris School from 1966 - 1968 and then on to the Mounds, Oklahoma school for a year. He then took a job at Tulsa with the Office of Economic Opportunity for four years before being transferred to Muskogee for several years. He then decided to become a teacher and coach once again and took a job with the Boynton School System for four years. By 1986, Liest was getting interested in politics; he entered the District 16 Representative race as a Democrat against four opponents and won.

Some of M. C.'s accomplishments through the years have been the planning and arranging of funding for Senior Citizen Centers, nutrition projects, transportation programs, and also grant applications for funding of parks, playgrounds, water, sewer, and rural developments. He directed the Tulsa Headstart program for a time. In addition to all those activities, he has a farm where he raises cattle and horses as well as crops such as soybeans.

He has been author or co-author of several bills while a

representative. Some of them are House Bill 1223, which amends an act relating to crimes and punishment and relates to penalties for offenses relating to prostitution — requiring certain tests after conviction, providing penalties and an effective date; House bill 1212, which provides for a standard screening test for antibodies to the human T-Lymphotropic Virus Type III besides the regular screening test before acquiring a marriage license — providing rules and controls for screening; House Bill 1819, which relates to public health and safety restricting the transportation of solid waste except with certain approval; and House Bill 430, which concerns certain motor vehicle titles and registrations, their fees, and penalties.

M. C. and Glenda are very proud of their three children — Benita, a medical technologist; Donna, a teacher; and Brion, who works for Ocean Petroleum. They also have three grandchildren — Tiffany Liest and Jessica Renee and James Matthew Casselman. ■



M. C. Leist's swearing-in ceremony at the Capital, 1986.

IMOGENE BARGER lives on the family farm near Lookeba. She is mother of four children, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. In addition to her writing for WESTVIEW, she writes an occasional human-interest story for the HINTON RECORD. She spends most of her spare time researching local and family history.