

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) spoke on the House Floor today to honor University of Maryland Coaches Gary Williams and Ralph Friedgen for their dedication to the University of Maryland community. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“As a proud alumnus of the University of Maryland, the recent months have brought some bittersweet news. An era is coming to an end in the Terrapin athletic program, as our successful coaches of basketball and football have left the school. I want to take this opportunity to honor Coaches Gary Williams and Ralph Friedgen for all they have meant to the University of Maryland community, both on and off the court and field.

“Gary Williams retired as Maryland’s basketball coach after 22 hardworking years in College Park, and 33 years in the college coaching ranks. At his retirement, Coach Williams ranked as the 5th winningest college basketball coach in America, with 668 wins stretching over his remarkable career. He is also the third-winningest coach in Atlantic Coast Conference history, behind Dean Smith and Mike Krzyzewski. Gary Williams inherited a struggling program and turned it into a perennial national contender. Under his guidance, the Terrapins reached the NCAA tournament 14 times (11 times consecutively), won three ACC regular season titles and one ACC tournament championship, made seven Sweet Sixteens, two Elite Eights, and two Final Fours—and, in a memory that all Terrapins still treasure, won the national championship in 2002. Coach Williams was honored as national Coach of the Year in 2002 and as ACC Coach of the Year in 2002 and 2010.

“But numbers alone do not capture his impact on the lives of his players—or on the life of our Maryland community, where he stood out as a leader and a philanthropist alike. Maryland’s athletic director, Kevin Anderson, summed it up best: ‘Gary Williams is a legend.’

“Terrapins will also miss our football coach, Ralph Friedgen, who coached his last game with the program on December 29th. Fittingly, it was a decisive win: a 51-20 victory in the Military Bowl in Washington, D.C. ‘The Fridge,’ as he is affectionately known, also took over a struggling program and led it to notable success. He guided Maryland to the ACC championship in his very first year as coach, in 2001. And of the ten years in his tenure, seven of them ended with postseason appearances. In both his first year as Maryland football coach and his last, he was named ACC Coach of the Year. Coach Friedgen won 74 games for the University of Maryland, brought new energy to our football program, and left a lasting mark in College Park. He, too, will be missed by the Terrapin faithful.

“Both Gary Williams and Ralph Friedgen are good men and outstanding leaders. And while I know that the Maryland’s athletic program will build on the proud foundation they laid, their shoes will be very difficult to fill.”

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