

Clifton Truman Daniel's visit to Oak Ridge and Y-12, part 2

President Harry S. Truman's grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel, after visiting Japan to attend an anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, recently visited Oak Ridge to learn the history of the place where the uranium 235 was separated for Little Boy, the world's first atomic bomb used in warfare, and the world's first uranium reactor to produce plutonium. He also wanted to understand the history of Oak Ridge since the Manhattan Project.

It was this uranium 235 and the plutonium from Hanford, WA, that resulted in President Truman's decision to use atomic bombs to end World War II. This momentous decision accepted as necessary to stop the horrible killing of World War II by Truman has been called the most controversial decision in history.

Clifton was six years old before he realized that his "grandpa" had actually been president of the United States and was only 15 years old when former President Harry S. Truman died. Yet, he has taken an active role in the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum as honorary Chair of the Board of Directors. It is an important function that he says he is proud to fulfill.

He has also written two books about his famous grandfather and now has accepted a grant to write another book that goes well beyond President Truman's life to the study of the long-term impact of his decision to use atomic bombs to end World War II. This project is what brought him to Oak Ridge and will take him to other Manhattan Project sites as well as other visits to Japan where he will seek survivors of the atomic bombs or their families and seek to understand their stories.

He tells of the manner in which he became connected with the family of a survivor of the atomic bomb when the brother of a young girl who died as a result of the bomb contacted him. The relationship the two of them developed has helped inspire Clifton to pursue the goal of a more comprehensive understanding of the results of his grandfather's decision.

There are victims of the bombs, of course, but both the victims and those who created the atomic bomb must find closure and work together to ensure nuclear weapons are never used again. They must also appreciate the many world-changing advances that have resulted from the nuclear age, such as nuclear medicine and nuclear power. Clifton seems to appreciate this and says he hopes to help convey these broader ideas in his forthcoming book.

Now come with Clifton on his Oak Ridge visit on Thursday, March 28, 2013, as he goes inside Y-12. By Thursday, he had already visited the East Tennessee Technology Park's K-25 building footprint and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's tremendous facilities and the Graphite Reactor. He was going to see inside the Y-12 National Security Complex and come to understand the history as well as the various missions of today.

On Thursday, in addition to Building 9204-3 (Beta 3), Clifton also toured Y-12's Building 9731 to see the world's only remaining Alpha Calutron magnets. He also was able to view Y-12 from atop Chestnut Ridge, the only way to truly appreciate the magnitude of the ½ mile wide and 2 ½ mile long site of the Y-12 National Security Complex.

He also was able to talk to Ken Bernander, a retired Y-12'er who actually started up three of the four Beta Calutron buildings during the Manhattan Project. Gordon Fee, former Y-12 Plant Manager and

President of Lockheed Martin Energy Systems, the Management and Operating contractor of Y-12 before BWXT Y-12 took over in November, 2000, also visited with him to help him understand the history of Y-12 in the Cold War years.

Finally, as a special guest of the Oak Ridge Heritage & Preservation Association, Clifton Truman Daniel spoke on Thursday, March 28, 2013, to approximately 150 members of Oak Ridge and surrounding communities in the New Hope Center's Zach Wamp Auditorium where he told us what it was like to be the grandson of President Harry S. Truman. He also mentioned his current efforts to write a book that takes the Manhattan Project and its atomic bombs to the next level of understanding.

He intends to use the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as the Manhattan Project history of Oak Ridge and other sites to create a broader understanding of the use of atomic weapons to end World War II and to prevent World War III. His visit to Oak Ridge helped him gain a more comprehensive perspective on his project.

Oak Ridge and our history now has a more substantial position in Clifton Truman Daniel's mind. His visit, along with being an excellent listener and experienced journalist, enabled him to comprehend the vital importance of Oak Ridge in his grandpa's most crucial decision to use the atomic bombs to end World War II.

Additionally, he understands the vital role played by Oak Ridge during the Cold War, and today, as we disassemble nuclear weapons and assist in the efforts to prevent terrorists getting their hands on nuclear materials that could be used to make a nuclear weapon.

I am pleased to have met Clifton and look forward to helping him further as he finishes his project to write a book that helps in the healing process of closure for the world's only use of atomic weapons in warfare. Hopefully, his book will also help lead readers toward a better understanding of the importance of never using nuclear weapons again.