

Joe Sestak Wins Congressional Seat

On November 7th, former Vice Admiral Joe Sestak became Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District's next Congressman. Twenty-three points behind in the polls in June, Joe went on to win by twelve points against a twenty-year incumbent. The margin of victory is significant because it reflects how thoroughly the voters responded to Joe's message (and because John Brown had eight points and 'the over'). The message that resonated with so many people across the district was Joe's emphasis on solving tough problems and the lessons he learned at USNA and from his father, Captain Joseph Sestak, '43, as the foundation of his life and candidacy.

The key to Joe's success was the participation and inspiration of his extraordinary wife Susan and daughter Alexandra. His brother and six sisters along with every brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, and many cousins all pitched in, as did thousands of volunteers in the district, thousands more online, along with friends and Shipmates the world over. Joe was also aided by the hardest working staff to ever man a campaign – they were all USNA caliber. I know, because I had the honor of working them, as Joe's Campaign Manager.

Joe and I came to USNA in '70 from the 7th Congressional District. We grew up just miles from one another as hard core Eagles fans, delivered the Evening Bulletin and attended rival high schools. Joe was the smartest student, best athlete, and the most popular guy at Cardinal O'Hara High School, and I had a (near) perfect attendance record at Monsignor Bonner. When he gave me an opportunity to join his campaign team, I leapt at the chance with the full support of my beautiful wife, Nancy, and our great sons BJ and Ryan. Previously, I had had the pleasure of serving with Joe in the GEORGE WASHINGTON Battle Group. He commanded that extraordinary force flawlessly while I had USS MONTEREY (CG-61). I knew his campaign would be led with the same passion, dedication, and winning results.

In February, political experts gave Joe's 'friends and family' grassroots campaign little to no chance – they just did not know Joe Sestak or his friends and family. Nine months later, '74 is going to congress. The victory was not assured until the arrival, the weekend before Election Day, of classmates Chris Perrien, Mark Petersen, and John Odegaard. They traveled from as far away as San Francisco, and within an hour of arrival, they were engaged in solving tough logistical and legal issues. Unfortunately, John missed the photo op. Still a SWO at heart, after three 18 hour work days, he had to miss the post-election party to go back to work! Despite all that, he promised to be back in 2008.

Throughout the campaign, Joe received the support of numerous other members of the Class of '74, and for that, over 147,000 voters in the 7th Congressional District in PA are grateful. Morgan Ames, TJ Andersen, Dave Antanitus, John Brown, Mike Campbell, Doug Dupouy, Ken Dunn, John Dunn, Steve Gilmore,

Jeff Liggio, Bill Mason, Steve Middleton, Doug Rau, Charlie Robinson, Hank Sanford (Honorary Member), Ted Serfass, Dan'l Steward, Hugh Story, Bill Wilde, and Rusty Yeiser all epitomized the concept of Shipmate and Classmate.

Other USNA Shipmates whose support was invaluable included: Scott Jenkins '76, former Secretary of the Navy John Dalton ('64), Admiral Chuck Larson ('58), Admiral William Owens ('62), Rear Admiral Tom Marfiak ('66), Rear Admiral Dave Oliver ('63), Vice Admiral Dan Murphy (70), Colonel George Brock (76), Mark Rogers ('70), Tom Gallagher ('73), Jay MacKercher ('75), Michael Newman ('70), Phil Bozelli ('66), Andrea (Lewis) D'Ambra ('93), Mark D'Ambra ('92), Andy Shelter ('82), Joe Herlihy (90), Dave Bowers (78), Mark Anderson ('77), Chuck Kuzma ('79), Dave Smith ('84), Jimmy Jackson (75), Mark Clemente ('79), Ted Kramer ('57), Dean Brown ('73), Greg Pusch ('89), Ted Kramer ('57), Craig Faller ('83), Michael L. Jones ('84), and many, many more. Thanks to each and every one of you. It truly was a 'best ever' team and effort.

Finally, some Plebe gouge -- according to the House historian, Joe Sestak is the highest-ranking former member of the military ever to serve in the US House of Representatives.

John, thanks for all you and Trav are doing for '74.

Beat Army,

Bill Walsh



Joe, wife Susan, and daughter Alexandra



From left to right are Class of '74 Grads Mark Petersen, Chris Perrien, Joe Sestak and Bill Walsh on Election Night (John Odegaard left before the picture)



From left to right: Ken Dunn '74 (wearing 'Sestak for Congress' t-shirt), Jim Jackson '75 and Charlie Robinson showing their support for Joe at the Navy-UMass game in September.