Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Gardner Grade School Chorus of Gardner, IL, on their recent performance at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL.

At the direction of Patti Johnson, the Gardner Grade School Chorus had a dream back in 1996, that it would someday have a chance to perform at Walt Disney’s Magic Kingdom. After a year of research, planning, rehearsals, and raising the funds that were needed to make the trip to Orlando, the Gardner Grade School Chorus realized their dream on June 9, 1997.

The journey to Orlando by the 40 member chorus and 10 chaperones began on June 7, 1997. After saying their goodbyes to family and friends, the chorus was escorted through Gardner by the local police and fire departments as they began their 23-hour bus ride to the Magic Kingdom. In short Mr. Speaker, this was not a dream come true just for the chorus, it was a dream come true for an entire town.

On June 9, 1997 the long-awaited dream was finally fulfilled. Outlasting the Florida rain, the chorus was thrilled to perform to an audience as they performed on the Tomorrorland Stage in the Magic Kingdom. The chorus performed several selections in their 25-minute performance including, “Dance, Dance, Dance”, “Sea of the Cowboy”, and “Footloose”. On June 10 the chorus participated in a 3-hour music education workshop at the Epcot Center, where chorus members received first hand knowledge on how Disney prepares its shows for the Disney cast.

Now as you might suspect Mr. Speaker, this trip was not all work and no play. On the final 2 days of their trip, chorus members explored the theme parks and took part in many of the activities in the Orlando area, taking advantage of a much deserved rest before returning home to Illinois.

Mr. Speaker, the Gardner Grade School Chorus had a dream that they would perform at Walt Disney World someday, and they did. Thanks to the hard work of its members, directors and chaperones, the Gardner Grade School Chorus not only realized their dream, but, they shared their dream with their parents, schoolmates, town, and the people in the audience at the Magic Kingdom. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the Gardner Grade School Chorus.

Mr. Speaker, this group of students, schoolmates, town, and the people in the audience at the Magic Kingdom and to the SBA. Now it is our turn to thank Jack for all of the energy and dedication he brought to the Chicago Small Business Development District and after just 2 years, Jack was appointed SBA Chicago District Director. He has been a major supporter of private sector development through his dedicated service. During his tenure, Jack oversaw several billion dollars in loans and Federal contracts to Illinois small businesses.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the House Small Business Committee which oversees the SBA, and the retirement of one of the best directors from Illinois will certainly be a loss to the Chicago business community and to the state. Jack’s experience and enthusiasm for his work will be missed greatly by business owners and public officials involved in private sector development. I wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, Jack dedicated his life to the community and to the SBA. Now it is our turn to thank Jack for all of the energy and dedication he expended for so many years to make Illinois a better place.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL GIRLS AND WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK of MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 1998

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to state my strong support for the 12th Annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day. I have long been an ardent supporter of women athletes who use grace, strength, and discipline to break down barriers. Sports instill confidence in girls and women and equip them with important life skills such as teamwork, goal-setting, the pursuit of excellence in performance, and other achievement-oriented behaviors.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day was established in 1987 in memory of the late Flo Hyman, the Olympic volleyball champion who died suddenly in 1986.

In 1995, this celebration included Tajama Abraham, Sacramento Monarchs center; Lillian Greene-Chamberlain, PhD, national track and field champion; Nancy Hogheadd, three-time Olympic swimming gold medalist, Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, Olympic track and field champion; Nancy Hogshead, Olympic gymnastics champion; Robin Campbell, track and field Olympian; Dominique Dawes, Olympic gymnastics gold medalist; Camille Duvall-Hero, world champion water-skier; Kelly Dyer, world-champion ice hockey player; Wendy Hilliard, national rhythmic gymnastics champion; Rusty Kanokogi, highest ranking woman in judo; Nikki McCray, 1996 Olympic gold medalist and member of the newly formed WNBA Washington Mystics; Aimee Mullins, national track and field champion; Donna Richardson, fitness star, national aerobic champion; Chanda Rubin, tennis champion; Lyn St. James, champion auto racer.

At a luncheon today in the Senate Hart Building, Nadia Comaneci was given the Women’s Sports Foundation’s 1998 Flo Hyman Award. Every year on National Girls and Women in Sports Day, the award is given to women who exemplify the dignity, spirit, and commitment to excellence of Ms. Hyman, captain of the 1984 U.S. Olympic volleyball team.

Ms. Comaneci is the most celebrated gymnast in the history of the sport. She was the star of the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, where she won three gold medals, two silver medals, and a bronze, and became the first woman ever to score a perfect 10.

I congratulate Ms. Comaneci for her awe-inspiring achievements, and I applaud the Women’s Sports Foundation for its recognition of the importance of sports for women and girls.