

His superiors respect his loyalty, dedication, and commitment to fine workmanship. Anyone who has had the privilege of working with Mr. Hill knows that he will take on any task no matter how hard, and he will always get the job done.

After many years of tireless work and dedication, he has decided to hang up his hat and retire. His many friends and co-workers at Miami Dade Parks and Recreation will dearly miss him, but so will the thousands of Dade County residents who never met Mr. Hill, but who have enjoyed the parks that he helped maintain for so long. The Parks may never look quite the same without his magical touch. He is leaving behind a legacy in the parks system for his co-workers to continue with a high level of commitment to excellence and dedication to service.

Mr. Speaker, Isaiah Hill, Jr. is a good man who does things uncommonly well.

Congratulations, Mr. Hill, and enjoy your retirement.

IN TRIBUTE TO THOMAS SAAM

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 2, 2003

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Thomas Saam will long be remembered by local school children, union workers, Vietnam Veterans, family, friends and hundreds of children in Vietnam. Tom was a patriot who took great pride in America and his service in the U.S. Marine Corps. Always a strong voice for organized labor, Tom was a 26-year employee of General Motors Power Train in Toledo, OH. He was a proud United Auto Worker, UAW, and trustee who believed strongly in the quality of life for workers and their families who remained active as a member of the UAW Local No. 14 Retirees.

Seven years ago, in 1995, Tom Saam underwent a heart transplant. Following successful surgery, Tom became a spokesperson for transplants and a volunteer with the American Heart Association, receiving their prestigious Heart and Soul Award. He served with pride the American Red Cross, Life Connections of Ohio and the Mended Hearts Association. Upon his death on December 7, 2002, Tom Saam became a donor also. During the last 7 years as a proponent for organ and tissue donation, Tom Saam spent a great deal of time speaking to groups as an advocate for donation and educating children about the dangers of smoking. Tom's concern for our children and youth was always present in all that he did.

Tom Saam, a former U.S. Marine, served two tours in Vietnam. Tom Saam never forgot his veteran buddies as an active member of Veteran of Foreign Wars Post No. 3265, Toledo, OH, and VFW Department of Ohio P.O.W./M.I.A. Chairman 1992–1995. Tom served as Post No. 3265 Americanism Chairman from 1990–2002 and served as UAW Region 2B Veterans Representative 1995–2002.

On Veteran's Day in 1999, Tom Saam and several other Vietnam Veterans joined me in our District Congressional Office and placed a conference call to then U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Pete Peterson. From that conversation and meeting, Tom Saam and his core

group of veterans formed the D.O.V.E. Fund, a non-profit humanitarian organization dedicated to helping the children of Vietnam in the areas of health care, improving water quality and building schools. As a charter member and member of the D.O.V.E. Fund Board of Directors, Tom worked diligently to provide the extras such as writing tablets, pencils, toothbrushes, soap and other like items that the children of Vietnam need. Tom never hesitated to approach anyone he felt could provide assistance for a child. His dentist, his insurance agent, his union, his buddies and a variety of local veteran's groups were frequent donors of school supplies, ball caps, candy and anything else that kids needed to improve their quality of life.

In May of 2001 Tom traveled with other veterans on a return trip to Vietnam. Tom had arranged through a Vietnamese-American contact to obtain what was believed to be the remains of 2 American M.I.A.s' and return these remains to our government in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. As a result of his efforts, Tom was named the June 2001, Citizen of the Month by Toledo's Mayor and was awarded the UAW Walter P. Reuther Distinguished Service Award for his courageous efforts. The D.O.V.E. Board of Directors is planning to build a school in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam and dedicate it in Tom Saam's memory.

Tom is the father of Thomas, Jr., Jeremy, Laura and Jamie and the husband of Barbara. He will always be remembered as a loving husband and father, a veteran's advocate, a tough Marine and union member, a gentle spirit and mentor and a proud American. Mr. Oscar Bunch, President of Local No. 14 and long time friend of Tom said, "Everyone who had anything to do with Tom just loved him." Many of us in Northwest Ohio share Oscar's sentiment. Tom Saam will be missed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT OF 2003

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 2, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleague Congressman MARK UDALL in introducing the Environmental Justice Act and commend my colleague, Congressman MARK UDALL for his work on this issue.

The Environmental Justice Act will make permanent an environmental justice Executive Order 12898 issued by President Bill Clinton in 1994.

It attempts to address environmental injustice within existing federal laws and regulations by prohibiting discrimination in programs that receive federal funds.

This issue has been one of my priorities as a public servant because I have seen the damage—first hand—that environmental injustice can bring to poor and minority communities.

I grew up in the shadow of one of the largest landfills in the country. As the landfill grew, so did other regional pollution. Today, the area, which is 63 percent Latino and where 15 percent of families live in poverty, suffers from water pollution from Superfund sites and the gravel pit industry.

In the Los Angeles area, it is estimated that over 71 percent of African Americans and 50

percent of Latinos reside in areas with the most polluted air, while only 34 percent of whites live in highly polluted areas.

But we are not alone. Environmental injustices are happening nationwide.

Consider the plight of the people of South Omaha, Nebraska where descendants of immigrants who labored in the city's meatpacking plants are fighting to restore city parks and stop the health risks posed by unsanitary conditions at the plants.

Or consider the people who live in Livermore, California near one of the nation's principal nuclear weapons research labs, and who are fighting radioactive contamination that has caused many cancer cases.

In the past we might have accepted our fate but today we chose to fight back.

Hardly a day passes without the media informing us about a neighborhood that is fighting a landfill, incinerator, chemical plant or some other polluting industry.

This was not always the case. Just three decades ago, the concept of environmental justice had not registered on the radar screens of most environmental, civil rights or social justice groups.

In 1996, I had the honor of introducing the first piece of environmental justice legislation in the country. Since that time, 30 other States have adopted similar laws, policies or other statutes that protect and recognize the importance of environmental justice communities.

Today, we enjoy a greater ability to connect with the public through grassroots organization and the media but our laws still offer few protections to disadvantaged communities.

I am committed to changing this and look forward to working with Congressman UDALL and others to make sure that environmental protection starts with environmental equality.

This bill is one step in that fight.

HONORING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION TASK FORCE

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 2, 2003

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the African American Education Task Force for its clear record of success in encouraging and acknowledging academic achievement by African American youth in Oakland.

This June, the African American Education Task Force will hold its Second Annual Academic Awards Celebration at the ACTS Full Gospel Church in Oakland. At this celebration, more than 1200 African American students from 8th through 12th grades in the Oakland Unified School District will be honored for attaining grade point averages of 3.00 or above for the 2002–2003 school year.

These outstanding young people's accomplishments are especially remarkable in light of the dismal budgetary climate that now grips the State of California. I want to commend each of them for having an understanding of the importance of staying in school and the responsibility each individual has to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to him or her. By continuing to be the best students you can be and completing your education, you will have more opportunity to achieve your personal goals and our shared goal of world peace.