

largest producer of Shrine Circuses in the country.

George Carden was born on March 19, 1952 in Springfield, Missouri. It was in Springfield he was raised, staying with his grandparents as his parents traveled the country working in a circus. After a few years his parents bought a circus of their own, but this time George came along. It wasn't too long before George started his own circus company—George Carden Circus International—in 1981. Eventually, he bought out his father's circus, combined the two, and after years of hard work became one of the largest circus producers in North America. In fact, George and his father have produced the Abou Ben Adhem Shrine Circus for almost fifty years.

The circus is usually a family affair and the Cardens are no different. George's wife, Alexandra, is also involved with the circus, as are his two sons, Larry and Brett Carden. George also has a daughter, Michelle, and two grandsons, George Brett and Cash Carden. Working in the circus means a life on the road, but when it comes time to relax, George and his family spend their time on their 800-acre ranch in Hickory County, Missouri, enjoying deer hunting and fishing.

Giving back to the community is also important to George. He is a lifetime member of Abou Ben Adhem Shriners and is very active in the Shriner community, even financially supporting renovations to the Shrine Mosque. George also has a soft spot for children and has taken care of over 100,000 special and needy children over the past thirty years. For his service, George has become honorary member of many Shrine Temples.

Mr. Speaker, George is a great man and I am privileged to honor him on his 60th birthday.

HONORING BOLIVAR COUNTY  
HEAD START

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2012*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bolivar County Head Start Program (BCHSP) which began as an affiliate program under the umbrella of the Bolivar County Community Action Agency, Inc. The program was chartered on June 16, 1965 by the State of Mississippi under Governor Paul B. Johnson. Bolivar County Head Start Program is a non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of eliminating poverty and the causes thereof in Bolivar County, Mississippi.

The Association of Communities of Bolivar County began its operations the summer of 1965 and enrolled 1,308 children in seventeen centers. At its inception, the Bolivar County Head Start Program was housed in multiple buildings and churches. It began its operations the summer of 1966 with an enrollment of 1,550 children served in eight centers located throughout the county. Unfortunately, they have had to reduce the number of sites over the years due to inadequate funding.

Most recently, Bolivar County Head Start Program has made tremendous strides in its

development. After years of record growth the Bolivar County Head Start Program was able to transition out of make shift facilities such as churches and old homes to mobile units stationed throughout the county. Thanks to funding from several sources they were able to build three state of the art head start centers in the communities of Rosedale, Shaw and Mound Bayou. In 2012 they added the Early Head Start Program for children 0–3 years of age and expectant mothers, increasing their total enrollment to 890 children.

It has been through strong leadership that the agency has been recognized not only throughout the State of Mississippi, but also nationwide for its performance and service provided to children, families and communities. Mr. Amzie Moore was the first Head Start Director under the Association of Communities of Bolivar County; Mr. Dick Gurnie, the first Executive Director and later Mr. Billy J. McCain was both Head Start Director and Executive Director. After Mr. McCain's untimely departure in 2009, the charge was passed on to Mr. Adolph Hilliard to continue the agency legacy. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Hilliard retired, Mrs. Elnora Littleton was appointed the interim Executive Director. Mrs. Littleton is currently serving as the first African American female to head the Bolivar County Head Start Program.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Bolivar County Head Start for its outstanding commitment to improving the lives of children and families throughout Bolivar County, Mississippi.