

outstanding young woman, student, and community leader. Chosen for her exemplary academic successes and community involvement, Ms. Griest's determination, commitment, and hard work is exactly what we should attempt to encourage in all our students and in all our schools.

I would also like to acknowledge Stephanie's parents, Lloyd and Irene Griest. As a farther, I recognize the commitment parents make in raising their children, and I commend them for the job they have done in raising Stephanie.

I spend a great deal of time in my congressional district encouraging educational opportunities at every occasion possible. My message to young people is: education is the way out—and up. I tell them that education is their right, their responsibility, and their gateway to a better life. As 1 of only 20 students chosen nationwide, Stephanie is capitalizing on that right, focusing on her responsibility, and passing through the gateway to a better life.

I would also like to commend USA Today, for selecting and rewarding these 20 students, and offering them as examples of what our youth are capable of achieving. I encourage other elements of the private sector to take the time, and make the investment in our children, by promoting education and rewarding our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending this young lady. Stephanie, you have made us all very proud. Keep up the good work.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN: YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago in 1976, the month of February was officially set aside by Congress to pay tribute to, honor, and respect African-Americans who have made key contributions to the diversity and greatness of the United States. The purpose of Black History Month this year is to reflect upon some of the African-American women who have made extraordinary achievements in civil rights, politics, science, entertainment, literature, and athletics.

African-American women have proven themselves invaluable as leaders in the evolution of our great Nation. Their vigorous and passionate participation in the age-old struggle for freedom has resulted in a rich history of heroines. As the list of these women and their accomplishments is long, I regretfully must choose only a few examples.

In July 1849, the ex-slave abolitionist, Harriet Tubman, assisted in the underground railroad to free over 300 slaves. Her courage and selflessness demonstrated her character of integrity and honor while in the pursuit of freedom and right. She is known as the Moses of her people. Nearly a century later, this same courage and fight for equality was demonstrated by Rosa Parks in Montgomery, AL, when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white person when she was ordered to move by the bus driver. As a result of her unyielding character and strong belief in what

is right, a bus boycott occurred, after which segregation on buses was declared as a violation of guaranteed American rights.

Patricia Robert Harris, a lawyer and diplomat, became the first African-American woman Ambassador to be appointed to an overseas post. Three years later, in 1968, Shirley Chisholm was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Recently in 1992, Carol E. Moseley Brown was elected to the U.S. Senate. I applaud my past and current colleagues for their fine and distinguished leadership.

In 1873, Susan McKinney Steward overcame great obstacles to become the first African-American woman to be formally certified as a doctor. Her innovative and stalwart personality enabled her to create the Women's Loyal Union of New York and Brooklyn and to cofound a women's hospital in Brooklyn. The medical field, thanks to her pioneering example, has opened its doors to women. Today, women are entering the medical profession in increasing numbers, often representing a majority of the student body at our leading medical schools.

Additional accomplishments by African-American women in America are found in the space program. Mac C. Jemison was the first African-American woman in space in 1992. Another grand achievement is the work of Katherine Johnson, an aerospace technologist with NASA. She is a pioneer in new navigation procedures to track space missions.

African-American women have excelled in the entertainment world, covering the spectrum of music and dance to books and TV journalism. Due to her outstanding performance in "Gone With the Wind," actress Hattie McDaniel was the first African-American woman to win an Academy Award. Maya Angelou, the actress, dancer, writer, and poet, who is well known for her book "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," stands apart as a distinguished and invaluable asset to a greater understanding in this country. A few years back Toni Morrison was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in literature. News reporter Carole Simpson has made significant advancements in the media profession, moving from a Chicago TV reporter in 1970 to the anchor of ABC's "World News Saturday."

Athletically, African-American women have demonstrated outstanding strength, skill, and discipline in many sports. In 1951, Althea Gibson was the first African-American woman to play at Wimbledon, and later went on to win the singles and doubles title—with her partner, Darlene Hard—in 1957. In the Olympics, Jackie Joyner-Kersey is acclaimed internationally as the world record holder in the heptathlon.

Each of these extraordinary African-American women has set her sights high and tackled difficult challenges to reach her goals. In African-American communities and in all of America, these women provide valuable examples of success. Still, there are countless African-American women who have dedicated their lives to something they wholeheartedly believe in, but many never receive public recognition. I am delighted to invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing the outstanding African-American women of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

TRIBUTE TO THE LYONS, IL, FIRE DEPARTMENT ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an organization that has been protecting lives and property in a community for a century—the Lyons, IL, Fire Department.

The department was founded in December, 1895 by village ordinance. But as anyone who has ever had dreams of racing to the scene of a fire in a red engine will tell you, it did not really start until January 21, 1896, when the department's first vehicle, a nonmotorized, man-powered horse car, was purchased.

From those humble beginnings, the department has grown into one of the finest in suburban Chicago.

The village and its fire department will commemorate 100 years of service with numerous ceremonies this year, including a dinner-dance this month, a muster with interdepartmental competition in May, and a picnic for past and present firefighters in June.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the department and its personnel on its century of success and wish them many more years of effectively protecting lives and property in their community.

ALEX WEDDINGTON HONORED BY MERIDIAN'S JUNIOR AUXILIARY AS 1996 HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR

HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend my friend, Alex Weddington, for being selected Humanitarian of the Year by the Junior Auxiliary in our hometown of Meridian, MS.

The Junior Auxiliary presents the award each year to a person, organization or business in recognition of their contribution to the betterment of the community. I can think of no one more deserving of this honor than Alex. He is making a positive difference in our community.

I want to share with my colleagues this article about Alex and his work with the Masonic Home for Boys and Girls. It was written by Ida Brown of the Meridian Star.

SPENDING TIME WITH THE KIDS—ALEX WEDDINGTON SHARES TIME WITH CHILDREN FROM MASONIC HOME FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

(By Ida Brown)

Although he looks forward to every day, Meridian businessman Alex Weddington probably enjoys Fridays even more. After a busy week at the office, he and his wife, Ann, usually spend the evening with the kids—all 23 of them.

For 15 years, Weddington's Friday evenings—and many other days of the week—have been shared with the residents of the Masonic Home for Boy and Girls.

"The kids are wonderful and you get so much more out of doing for them than you put in," Weddington said.

"Alex has accepted the responsibility of trying to improve the living conditions of the community," U.S. Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery said.

"He's always trying to help someone else . . . He's more concerned helping others than himself," added Noel Evans, executive director of the Choctaw Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. "Meridian is fortunate to have great community leaders such as Alex; they make Meridian a great place to live."

Today, Weddington will be presented the "Humanitarian of the Year Award" by the Meridian Junior Auxiliary. According to Kay Wedgeworth, chairman, the honoree was reluctant when informed that he'd been selected for the recognition.

" . . . He said, 'I'll make you a deal. Give it to the guy who come in second and I won't say a word,'" said Wedgeworth. The award is presented annually to a person, organization or business in recognition of the time, talent and effort which they have contributed to the betterment of the community, particularly youth.

A native of Meridian, Weddington first became associated with the Masonic home out of curiosity.

"I've always had a curious nature. I'd driven by the home hundreds of times and wondered what was up there. One day in 1981, I stopped by and asked Pete Griffis, who, at the time was grand secretary, what it (the home) was about. When he told me they needed help, I told him he had it."

He started out by taking the kids out on Fridays to the movies, skating, camping or to local events and activities. Over the years, this has extended to also include two vacations each year—an early summer one to various locales and one in late summer at his family's home on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Sometimes, he just invites the kids to his home, rents movies and orders pizza.

"Each one of these children come from unique circumstances. They're wonderful children and given a chance in life, which is what the masonic home does, they will make something of their lives," said Weddington. " . . . God has really blessed me for being able to help out with these children. A lot of people look at it that the children are blessed; I'm the one who is blessed."

He considers his deeds as "what I'm supposed to do. I think it's what God wants me to do," he said.

"Alex is always doing things for other folks and never wants any recognition," said Fred Bean, who currently serves as grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi and secretary of the board of managers at the masonic home. "He's taken the kids at the home water rafting, camping, on trips to Disney World, Six Flags, Liberty Land . . . He provides them opportunities they may not have otherwise."

His dedication to the kids is solid. He seldom cancels his Friday nights with them.

In fact, on his first date with his wife, the kids went along.

"I called her up and told her I wanted to know what kind of sport she was. I explained that I took the kids from the home out every Friday night and that our first date was going to be with 23 children. I didn't want to disappoint them. I picked her up with 23 kids, a dog and myself . . . She was a good sport."

Commenting on that first outing, Mrs. Weddington said, "It definitely was different from any other date I'd been on. But I knew then that he was special. Here he was a bachelor who had a lot going for him. And on a Friday night when most bachelors were out on a date, Alex was with all of these kids."

"He's a good role model in a time when strong models are needed. He's a good lis-

tener, intuitive . . . and can read those kids like a book. He tries to encourage them to study and that just because they were born under bad circumstances, it doesn't mean they don't have the power to change the course of their lives."

Scouting is one way Weddington has motivated the youth to taking responsibility for their lives. He especially encourages the boys to aim for the Eagle Scout Award.

"Scouting builds character. For the boys, achieving the Eagle Scout Award is one of the greatest accomplishments. This year, Anthony Watkins and Glen Burge both will receive the award; I'm really proud of them."

Scholastic achievement is another source of inspiration. Each year, Weddington takes the three children with the best grades at the end of the semester on a skiing trip in Colorado.

"I try to make sure they really study hard; I've found this trip to be a great motivating factor. Most of these kids have never been in an airplane; it's really exciting for them," he said. "These kids have gone from making 'Cs' and 'Ds' to 'As' and 'Bs.'"

Other ways he has helped the home is by securing funds "for the little extras." In 1985, he enlisted Montgomery's support in sponsoring a golf tournament. Now in its 11th year, the "Sonny" Montgomery-Masonic Home Benefit Golf Tournament has netted more than \$100,000.

Funds are used for outings, trips and other necessities.

But more than anything, it gives them another opportunity to spend time with one of their favorite people. Without a doubt, the kids love Weddington, but not just because he "takes them places."

"He's a great man," said Joseph Walker, 12. " . . . He's very nice but if you mess up, he'll make sure you don't do it again; and you won't."

Sisters Felicia Kern, 12, and Christine, 13, enjoy being around Weddington because "he's fun and has a nice personality."

Glen Burge, 17, describes Weddington as a great person with a big heart.

"He puts in a lot of time with us and cares about us a lot. I really appreciate all that he has done for us and the only way I can pay him back is to say, 'Thank-you.' He's truly a blessing to my heart."

As the Meridian Junior Auxiliary's Humanitarian of the Year, Weddington will receive a plaque and \$500 will be donated in his name to the charity of his choice.

TRIBUTE TO FOOD-PATCH

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time to acknowledge the extraordinary work being done by Food-PATCH, an organization in my congressional district.

Food-PATCH, which stands for People Allied to Combat Hunger, is dedicated to alleviating hunger while minimizing food waste in Westchester County, NY.

This 7-year-old organization was formed as a nonprofit emergency food distribution center. With financial support of Kraft Foods and Diversified Investment Advisors, Food-PATCH began its work in a 13,000-square-foot warehouse in Millwood, NY. With the help of 10 full-time, 6 part-time employees, and more than 8,000 volunteer hours, Food-PATCH distributed more than 3 million pounds of food to

more than 140 emergency food providers last year. This translates to more than 8 tons of food a day to soup kitchens, food pantries, Head Start programs, shelters, senior programs, AIDS programs, and many others that provide meals for 220,000 individuals.

In short, Food-PATCH has been dedicated to ensuring that no one in Westchester County goes to bed hungry. Food-PATCH's T-shirts bear this motto and I and hundreds of others from Westchester County proudly wear ours in tribute to this wonderful organization.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when we must be especially mindful of the needs of others, I ask you to join with me in honoring the men and women at Food-PATCH who keep the true spirit of this season all year long.

TRIBUTE TO MANUEL MIJARES

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 1996

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend and pay tribute to Mr. Manuel Mijares, the newly selected Mr. Amigo.

Every year members of the Mr. Amigo Association, who represent the city of Brownsville TX, travel to Mexico City to select a new Mr. Amigo to serve as the honored guest of the Mr. Amigo festivities in Brownsville. The Mr. Amigo festivity is a 4-day international event which invites the United States and Mexico to join together in celebration of the distinct cultures of these neighboring countries. During the Mr. Amigo celebration, which originated as a pre-Lenten festival, Brownsville citizens participate in a series of parades, dances, and parties to demonstrate the goodwill of both countries. It is a major function which is eagerly anticipated by many South Texans as well as our winter visitors.

We are honored to recognize Mr. Manuel Mijares as the 32d Mexican citizen chosen by the Mr. Amigo Association. He began his career as a backup singer for the well-known Mexican pop star Emanuel. But this was just the beginning. In 1986 he released his first album entitled "Mijares" which quickly earned silver and gold status. His international acclaim is evident in the many awards he has received throughout Latin America, the United States, and Japan. Some of his awards include: the Golden Award Medallion in Japan, the Latin Music Award in the Dominican Republic; Revelation in Mexico; Ovacion for outstanding artist in Chicago; Antorcha de Plata award from Chile; Premio AC; History of Spectacles in New York; Aplauso 92 in Miami, and Galardon a los Grandes in Mexico.

In addition to his musical talent, Mijares has also been praised internationally for his presence in the theater. He is a regular guest on "Siempre en Domingo," "En Vivo," and "Eco"; popular international television shows. Disney has also recognized and selected this talented and versatile artist to sing the Spanish themes for "Oliver and Company" and "Beauty and the Beast." It is not only this type of talent which transcends cultural lines that we recognize today, but it is also his compassion for the well-being of his audience. Despite the numerous awards for his artistic talents, Mijares has also demonstrated a concern for development of teens in the United States. One example of his community involvement is his participation in a fundraiser the Los Angeles Police