

Swaine & Moore in 1968, was elected partner in 1975 and is presently head of the Corporate Law Department.

Despite a challenging career and a rigorous workload, Tom has always managed to find time to give service to the community of Ridgewood and other causes.

Tom is in his third year as president of the Ridgewood Public Education Foundation, with the mission of broadening our children's education experience and helping our school system deliver a world-class competitive education. He has helped establish a successful partnership with the Paterson Education Foundation and a number of districts have looked to Ridgewood as a prototype.

In November 1994, Tom became president of the New York Legal Aid Society Board of Directors, an agency with which he has served since law school. As president, Tom had the task of negotiating contracts and restructuring Legal Aid's staff following an attorneys' strike and New York City's termination of Legal Aid contracts.

He is also co-chair of Weinfeld Associates, a fund-raising arm of NYU Law School, a former president and trustee of the Ridgewood Board of Education, and a former vestryman and warden at St. Elizabeth's Church in Ridgewood.

Tom and I go way back—back further than either of us would care to admit. He was my student at George Washington Junior High School in Ridgewood. From those days a long time ago, I could see Tom was destined for great things. He was sharp, disciplined, handled himself very well, displayed great character and his classmates turned to him for answers. In short, he was a leader among leaders even then.

It is Tom's propensity for hard work, his facile mind and his wonderful ability to deal with people that have allowed him to balance a truly Herculean schedule. Everything he does, he does with full effort and with grace and sensitivity. Perhaps it is the dignity with which Tom treats every individual that truly inspires people to do their best. Ridgewood is truly blessed to have Tom as a resident and I am truly blessed to be able to call him my friend.

CONGRATULATING MICHAEL
KENNY, FLORIDA VOICE OF DEMOCRACY WINNER

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, each year the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its ladies auxiliary conduct the Voice of Democracy Broadcast Scriptwriting Contest. This year, more than 116,000 secondary school students participated in the contest, competing for the 54 national scholarships totaling more than \$118,000. The contest theme for this year was "Answering America's Call."

I am proud to announce that one of my constituents, Michael Kenny, won first place in the state and a \$1,000 scholarship in the Voice of Democracy Contest. Michael is a senior at Tarpon Springs High School and hopes to pursue a career in theater.

In his speech, Michael reminds us all of what can be accomplished when we answer

America's call and undertake individual acts to improve the world around us. I would like to share Michael's speech with you.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

(By Michael Kenny)

Around the first of December 1995, due to the efforts of people in Helena, Montana banding together to protect and care for certain ailing and threatened birds, the American Bald Eagle was taken off the endangered species list.

Murder, poverty, homelessness, hunger, discrimination***when we watch the evening news, or read the paper, we seldom see good news like the story about the Bald Eagle. We are often disgusted and shocked at what transpires in the world around us. Many are pointing out our problems without offering any solutions. They see America's flaws and say we are a society destined to failure. America is endangered, but her critics are not listening. They do not hear the soft voice of America as she whispers. America is calling out to us. She asks for our love and respect for her and for her precious needy citizens. She is the voice of the twenty million children living in poverty and the 12 million children hoping for a hot meal so they won't go to bed hungry***again***"help us," America calls, "help them", "help each other."

Let's not waste time criticizing, let's answer. Let's work together and repair what is wrong with this country. She asks us to come together, to stand united in our communities and help those who need food, clothing and shelter. As a letter to the editor in my local newspaper recently put it, "The truth is that no sense of community can survive unless we the people demand political respect and economic support for the values of human dignity." A while back, I was like the many who just complained and put America down. I was angry at the world around me for all of its problems because I felt helpless to make right what was wrong. I am only one person, I thought, what can I do? Recently, desiring to at least do something, I went down to a local soup kitchen to offer some help. I noticed there a young girl in what appeared to have once been a pink dress, but was now only soiled rags. She was cold and clutched tightly an old doll with the stuffing coming out and she was desperately trying to keep warm. My heart sank as she timidly approached the counter. I wanted so much to help her. As I handed her a cup of chicken soup and saw the smile cross that dirt-stained little face as she took her first sip, I knew I had begun to answer her call. She received the nourishment she needed to get through the day. We helped make her life, and others, a little easier, at least for the moment. I realized then that I could make a difference. Finally, I was beginning to hear and answer the call of America.

Our country also calls out for us to be proud. We live in a nation where men and women have traditionally joined in a fight for freedom. So many lives were lost to gain what this country stands for; justice, liberty and community. When you hear the national anthem at a ball game, rise***rise as America calls you to your feet, and when you place your right hand over your heart, be proud of your country. When we answer America's call, we will have come together as a community; white, black, native America, Asian, Hispanic and have erased prejudice and racism. We will have helped our fellow human beings and hopefully, defeated hate and violence. And America will finally hear the praise she so desperately deserves.

So let's listen to our country because all our criticism is drowning out her voice. But she still calls for us to go out and do some-

thing. No, You or I alone can't change a whole country, but when people in our community see what we are doing, it will inspire them to do the same, and will create a chain from one community to the next until all of America is answering the call. And then, who knows, maybe this country, like its national symbol, the Bald Eagle, will no longer be endangered.

TRIBUTE TO GIRL SCOUT GOLD
AWARD RECIPIENT

HON. DAVID R. OBEY

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to salute an outstanding young woman, Laura Hahn, who has been honored with the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. Gold Award by the Indian Waters Girl Scout Council in Eau Claire, WI.

She is being honored for earning the highest achievement award in Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Gold Award symbolizes outstanding accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service, career planning and personal development.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.6 million girls, has awarded more than 20,000 Girl Scout Gold Awards to Senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the program in 1980. To receive the award, a Girl Scout must fulfill five requirements: earn four interest project patches, earn the Career Exploration pin, earn the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award project, earn the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, and design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling the requirements of the award is created by the Senior Girl Scout and is carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout volunteer.

For the Girl Scout Gold Award project, Laura developed a plan to prepare and distribute holiday meals to people who could not leave their homes. Laura worked to secure the funding for the meals and organized volunteers to help prepare and deliver the meals. Through her project, Laura was able to bring together different groups to address the needs of individuals in her community.

The earning of the Girl Scout Gold Award is a major accomplishment for Laura Hahn and I believe she should receive the public recognition due her for this significant service to her community and her country.

TRIBUTE TO NORA W. BRANDT:
SPEAKING OUT FOR PEACE

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Nora W. Brandt, the principal of W.J. Bryan Elementary School in north Miami. Mrs. Brandt will be honored here in Washington tonight at a ceremony recognizing her efforts to teach young people peaceful means of resolving conflict.

Too often in our society, conflicts are resolved through violent rather than through

peaceful means. Mrs. Brandt's efforts to teach a new generation about ways to settle disagreements without fighting are very much needed today.

To advance the cause of peace, Mrs. Brandt, in 1992 initiated a schoolwide peace campaign at W.J. Bryan Elementary. In subsequent years the school sponsored the Annual W.J. Bryan Peace Summit which has become a model for other area schools. Earlier this year, more than 2,000 students and parents participated in a multicultural peace march organized by Mrs. Brandt and the students of W.J. Bryan.

Mrs. Brandt has also coordinated the schoolwide training of all teachers in "Creative Conflict Solving for Kids" and established a Peer Mediation Program.

In 1994 Mrs. Brandt was recognized as Peace Administrator of the Year by the Peace Education Foundation. Under her leadership, W.J. Bryan was named the 1995 Exemplary Peace School by Dade County Public Schools Multicultural Task Force.

Mr. Speaker, I join with all of our community in honoring Nora W. Brandt, educator and peacemaker.

DEDICATION OF THE GENE R. ALEXANDER LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Gene R. Alexander of Benton, IL. For over 30 years he was a devoted teacher and principal, and on April 25 he will be honored for his service when the library at Benton Elementary School is renamed the "Gene R. Alexander Learning Resource Center." I would like to thank "Mr. A," he is fondly referred to, for his relentless promotion of education and his efforts on behalf of the children of Franklin County.

As an educator and administrator I understand the commitment and hard work it takes to make a profound impact on the lives of your students. This task is even harder today, for it seems all school employees are asked to make a case for the benefits of education; students crave entertainment and engagement as much as they desire fundamental knowledge. Mr. A. understood that if he gave enough of himself to the children, they would respond. Even in retirement, he still can be found reading to students, cleaning and painting area schools, spreading the word to say no to drugs, even contributing his own money to purchase school resources. Mr. A. has been the difference for many kids between enjoying school and appreciating the value of education instead of just getting by. And, as so often is the case with community leaders, Mr. A's civic participation has not been confined to his chosen profession. He has taught Sunday School at the First Christian Church for 37 years and been an active member and past president of the Benton Kiwanis. His life is a testimonial to selflessness, and we the recipients of his kindness have been truly blessed.

Mr. Speaker, all too often we fail to recognize the contributions that the teachers of our children make to their lives. On this very floor,

we hear about how our education system is letting down our students and how overall standards have decreased. Thankfully, Gene R. Alexander has made sure this is not the case in Benton and the surrounding area. I would again like to thank Mr. A for his tireless efforts on behalf of the children of the 19th District. It is an honor to represent him in the U.S. Congress.

TRIBUTE TO LEO NELSON

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding civic leader of Illinois' 14th Congressional District, Leo Nelson, on his forthcoming receipt of the Elgin Cosmopolitan Club's Annual Distinguished Service Award.

Leo Nelson has served the community of Elgin with great distinction over the years, serving as a member of city government for over a decade and participating in a number of community activities. The list of accomplishments during his long career are many, and there are several States across this Nation that are better for his service there. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, he graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor's degree in political science in 1957. He then served his country for several years in the U.S. Army, retiring and returning to college at Boston University where he received his Master's degree in 1964. He began his professional career as administrative assistant to the city manager of Rock Island, IL in 1964, and followed that position with city management positions in Wyoming, Michigan and Sidney, OH before settling in Elgin, IL, in late 1972.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nelson has been a highly valued member of the Elgin community for nearly 25 years, and his list of civic activities is quite lengthy. He is a former director and current chairman of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce Board, the president-elect of the United Way of Elgin Board, member of the Elgin Community College Foundation Board and current chairman of the Robotics and High Technology Academy of School District U-46 in Elgin. His past activities have included time as chairman of the Jayne Shover Easter Seal Center, as chairman of the Greater Elgin Area YMCA Corporate Board, and as a member of the Neighborhood Housing Services Board, the Well Child Conference and the Elgin affiliate of the Literacy Volunteers of America.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in honoring this dedicated man, for his commitment to the Elgin community and to improving this Nation. I wish him well as they years's recipient of the Elgin Cosmopolitan Club's Annual Distinguished Service Award, an honor that is richly deserved.

RECOGNITION OF CIVIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF ERVIN HIGGS

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, for the past 60 years in Monroe County, one man has been at the forefront of fighting for the needs of the Florida Keys. Ervin Higgs has taken a leading role in finding solutions to our communities' problems. In recognition of all of his civic achievements, I would like to take this time to outline all that he has done for south Florida.

The Ervin Higgs story began on April 30, 1936 in Key West, Florida. On that day, Ervin Higgs was born into a family of "conchs" who trace their heritage to Spanish Wells in the Bahamas.

In an attempt to contribute his energy to the community, Ervin sought out public service as a profession. He was first appointed by Governor Askew in 1976 as the tax assessor for Monroe County, FL and has served in that position ever since.

When the local government was mandated to adopt a comprehensive plan in compliance with certain state mandates, Ervin was acutely aware of the higher taxes paid under the school funding formula. Even at the early stages, he foresaw that the funding formula could, and probably in the near future, reach a point where local taxpayers would be required to pay more into the state school fund than would be allowed to be expended by the local school board. In order to ensure that all properties were properly reflected on the tax roll when the country adopted the initial comprehensive plan, he realized that the mapping of the environmental features of properties was inadequate. He hired his own consultant and eventually produced maps that were adopted by the county.

Through the years Ervin has been in office, he has defended the equity of the tax roll and even fought in the courts to ensure that everyone paid their fair share. He has cost-effectively modernized the Property Appraiser's Office, passing cost-savings back to the taxpayers.

As he grew older, Ervin developed into one of those endangered species that is currently being threatened in south Florida as a result of an attempt of almost every level of government to influence and control the future of the Florida Keys. As a "conch", he has always been acutely aware of the need to preserve the existing natural beauty of the Florida Keys while at the same time attempting to keep the local economic base viable. For all of his work, I would like to take this time to honor his achievements.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for the final vote on Tuesday, April 16. I would have voted "yes" on roll-call vote 120.