

In closing, let us all reflect for a moment that June 14, 1997, is Flag Day as well as the Army's birthday. Like our Army, the American flag grew out of revolution. And like our Army, the design of our flag—Old Glory—has evolved over the years since 1777. The liberty it stands for, however, remains constant. So does the Army's vigil to protect that liberty, because, in the words of General Eisenhower, "A soldier's pack is not so heavy a burden as a prisoner's chains."

Since 1775, more than 42 million Americans, in times of crisis as well as times of peace, have raised their right hands to take an oath, making America's Army what it is: the premier fighting force in the world and a values-based institution closely bound to the Nation and the Nation's people. They have taken that oath not to a king, and not to a flag alone, but to the ideals our flag represents.

Yesterday the Army was ready, from Lexington and Concord to Gettysburg, and from Normandy to Bosnia. Today they are ready to fight and win the Nation's wars, and to keep the peace or provide humanitarian relief around the globe. Tomorrow, too, they will be ready. Wherever the time, wherever the mission, whatever the challenge, American can count on its Army.

A TRIBUTE TO HELEN WHISTLER

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

Mr. SHERMAN Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor excellence in service to the Girl Scouts of America and recognize Helen Whistler as the San Fernando Valley Girl Scout Council Woman of the Year.

Girl Scouting is very important throughout our community and our Nation. The Girl Scout's basic promise "To serve God and my country, To help people at all times" is no simple task. But each day women like Helen Whistler go out into the community and spread the Girl Scout promise.

The San Fernando Valley Girl Scout Council Woman of the Year Award is given to honor outstanding efforts in providing Girl Scouting throughout the San Fernando Valley. Their mission "to serve girls in a diverse environment by inspiring them to reach their full potential" can only be realized if someone makes an effort to attract and organize these young women.

Fortunately, there are women like Helen Whistler who excel in promoting the Girl Scout mission. Helen has worked tirelessly to bring Girl Scouting to every girl of our community. She has gathered and analyzed enormous amounts of data that have enabled the council to develop plans which would better serve our women of tomorrow. Helen's research is pivotal to the success of the San Fernando Valley Girl Scout Council.

In addition to providing an extraordinary amount of time to this research, Helen serves as the 3d vice president and secretary of the Board of Directors and on the Executive Committee. Her dedication to the Girl Scout community is greatly appreciated.

I join Helen's family, friends, the San Fernando Girl Scout Council and the women in our community in honoring Helen Whistler as Woman of the Year.

EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to be among 150 of my colleagues in the House of Representatives who have joined to introduce the Employment Non-Discrimination Act [ENDA] of 1997. This legislation will extend to gay and lesbian Americans the same employment protections guaranteed to all other Americans without creating special rights or quotas.

It is intolerable that in 39 States hard working women and men can be fired or turned down for a job just because of their sexual orientation. No woman should have to worry about receiving a pink slip because she is gay. No man should be denied a position or a promotion simply because he is gay.

America is blessed with a diverse people and America works best when everyone is allowed to contribute to his or her fullest potential. As a nation, we take pride in our sense of fairness, and in fairness to all Americans it is time to put an end to all forms of employment discrimination. The time has come for the Congress of the United States to provide assurance to every American that his or her opportunity to get a job and to keep a job will be based on their abilities, not on their sexual orientation. Almost 70 percent of American voters believe that is the right thing to do and Congress should act accordingly.

Last year, ENDA supporters were heartened by the near passage of the bill in the Senate. That the Senate vote on ENDA was 49–50, coupled with the fact that today there are 150 original ENDA cosponsors in the House—compared to 139 cosponsors in the last Congress—is proof that progress is indeed being made.

Increasing support for and ultimately enacting ENDA will build upon our Nation's legacy of ensuring fairness in the workplace. We have outlawed employment discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, or disability. Let us now take the next important step. I urge my colleagues to lend their support to this legislation so we can make it law in the 105th Congress.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SOUTHERN EYE BANK

HON. JOHN COOKSEY

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 10, 1997

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Southern Eye Bank of New Orleans, LA, and to congratulate this eye-bank on its continued commitment to excellence.

The Southern Eye Bank was incorporated on June 7, 1947 and opened its doors on July 30, 1947. It was founded under the auspices of the Eye Bank For Sight Restoration in New York City, which was the first eye bank in the United States being founded in 1944 by Dr. Townley Paton. Subsequently other eye banks were located in Boston and Chicago. The Southern Eye Bank was the first in the South.

The initial executive committee included Mr. Charles E. Fenner, as chairman of the board of trustees; Mr. John Reilly, as treasurer; Mr. John Sims, as secretary; Drs. George M. Haik and William B. Clark, as chairmen of the Medical Advisory Committee, and Mrs. Orville Ewing, as the volunteer executive director.

In the ensuing middle years Mr. Robert Simpson served as chairman of the board of trustees. He and Dr. Clark are credited with being the driving force that guided the Southern Eye Bank during its formative period.

This first office was located in the Hutchinson Memorial Building of the Tulane Medical School at 1430 Tulane Avenue. Eventually, in 1948 it moved to the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital. The Southern Eye Bank functioned with the cooperation of LSU School of Medicine; the Tulane Medical Center, and various local hospitals—Charity, Hotel, Dieu, Flint Goodrich, Baptist and Lakeshore.

The original purposes of Southern Eye Bank were twofold: to secure corneas for transplant, and to establish a laboratory in which young eye surgeons could be trained to perform corneal grafts. Within the first four months of its opening, the Southern Eye Bank had a list of 3,000 donors. The public was instructed on how to become a donor as follows: Sign the donor card and return it to the Eye Bank Office; the signature must be witnessed, but need not be notarized; the family of the donor must be notified of these intentions; the gift should not be part of a will, since the eye must be used immediately before a will can be probated.

The first corneal transplant, performed under its auspices, was at the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital. The patient was a 69-year-old female who had been blind for 7 years. The procedure was deemed a success, that is permanent vision was restored.

Today, the Southern Eye Bank provides approximately 800 corneas for transplantation a year.

Today, over 95 percent of corneal transplants are successful. This success rate reflects significant advances in the way donor corneas are processed.

In 1947 the eye had to be removed within 3 hours of time of death; the transplant had to be performed within 24 hours of recovery; only 50 percent of surgeries were deemed successful.

In 1997 the eye can be removed within 8 hours of the time of death; the transplant can be performed up to 14 days after recovery; about 95 percent of surgeries are successful.

One of the reasons for the increased rate of success was the ability to store corneal tissue in a liquid media so that it could be later used under optimal conditions. In the early days of corneal transplantation (i.e., in 1947), the patient had to wait (sometimes for a long time), for a telephone call to come to the hospital when tissue had become available. Then the transplantation was done as an emergency at a time when conditions in the operating room might not be optimal. A major breakthrough was the development of the M-K media by Drs. Bernard E. McCarey, Ph.D. and Herbert E. Kaufman, MD in 1974. Thereafter, corneal tissue could be stored for up to 3 days and still be viable. This meant that surgery could be done under ideal conditions. Beyond that, it was now possible for individual eye banks to be clearinghouses for distributing tissue to other eye banks throughout the country. This

was a major breakthrough. Newer storage media have been developed, but the introduction of the M-K media made it possible for the concept of eye banking to attain the next level.

THE NEED FOR EYE BANKS

Over forty thousand Americans, and hundreds of thousands of others around the world suffer from corneal blindness each year. This visual loss which compromises their quality of life may result from congenital corneal disease, infection, trauma, chemical burns, or corneal swelling.

Fortunately, through the medical miracle of corneal transplantation, sight restoration is possible. Since there is no substitute for human tissue, the transplant process depends on the priceless gift of corneal donation from one human to the next. The mission of Southern Eye Bank is to safely transfer corneas from the donor to the recipient.

Transplants bring light into the eyes of an infant only a few days old, and the great-grandfather in his eighties, and all those in between.

Donor ocular tissue is used for corneal transplant surgery and reconstructive ophthal-

mic surgery, and for research to find cures to diseases which cause blindness or visual deterioration. The Southern Eye Bank first meets the needs of those in the local community waiting for a corneal donor, and then provides other eye banks across the country with donor corneas for transplantation.

Today, the Southern Eye Bank provides safe, quality corneas for transplantation, research, and education. This New Orleans medical landmark has been saving vision for the last 50 years, and will continue to do so.