

From the local, district, and national levels, George J. Kourpias has served the working men and women of the Machinists for decades, but his legacy will stretch far beyond them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I honor George Kourpias for a lifetime of commitment to the men and women he served. I know the Machinists will find someone equally dedicated to succeed him, but in a larger sense, they will never be able to find someone to replace him. George Kourpias is that special kind of person who has devoted his life to the proposition that the men and women who work to make this country great deserve a fair reward for their labors.

Mr. Speaker, I wish George and his wife June all the best in retirement and thank him for the service he has provided to this Nation.

TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. BENNETT WALKER SMITH, SR.

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Rev. Dr. Bennett W. Smith, Sr., Pastor of St. John Baptist Church on his twenty-five years of dedicated and outstanding service to our community.

In addition to his duties with the St. John Baptist Church in Buffalo, Pastor Smith serves as president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., upon being elected to that high honor in August 1994. As president, Pastor Smith provides leadership and guidance to its 3 million members.

As Pastor, Bennett Smith leads the St. John Baptist Church, a 2,700 member congregation, and has emerged as world-renowned evangelist and author.

Pastor Smith has truly served our Western New York community through many charitable endeavors, including the construction of McCarley Gardens, housing for low-income families; the St. John Baptist Church Education wing; and a full-time Christian day school. Further, Pastor Smith's Leadership has brought to our community the Board of Christian Education, Senior Citizens Fellowship, Junior and Senior Youth Fellowship, Youth Church, Prison Outreach Ministry, Singles Ministry, a radio-television broadcast, and Project Gift, an after-school program for youth with special needs.

He has also served in numerous local and national organizations for the betterment of mankind, including a national board member and local chairman of the Virginia-Michigan Housing Development Fund, the Sheehan Memorial Hospital Board of Directors, Buffalo Metropolitan Ministries, the Council of Churches, and the NAACP and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

In recognition of that commitment to our community, Rev. Dr. Smith has received the Buffalo News Citizen of the Year award, and the prestigious Grammy Award for his famous sermon, "Watch them Dogs." He has also had the high honor of serving as an official election observer in the first free election in South Africa, and has published the widely acclaimed Handbook on Tithing.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring Rev. Dr. Smith's superlative achievements to

the attention of my colleagues in the House, and ask that they join me in expressing our heartfelt appreciation and enthusiastic congratulations to Pastor Bennett Walker Smith, Sr., as he celebrates his 25th year of outstanding service in Western New York and throughout the world.

THE NATIONAL RAILROAD HALL OF FAME—HONORING THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO BUILT THE RAILROAD

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the history and tradition of the Railroad Industry in America. On June 27 and 28, millions of Americans across the country will celebrate Railroad Day by recognizing the American Railroad Industry and its rich history in this country.

Today, I recognize the memory of the men and women who actively participated in the founding and development of the railroad industry—surveyors, mechanics, engineers, teachers, railroad leaders, miners, financiers, inventors, and government leaders. The railroad industry has had a tremendous influence on American society, impacting the economy, science and technology, national defense, and most important, the transportation of our Nation's citizens.

In order to preserve the memory of the efforts of these people, the community of Galesburg, Illinois is erecting a monument dedicated to the accomplishments and contribution of the railroad industry. I have introduced legislation, H. Res. 172 to express the support of this House for this important endeavor. The establishment of a National Railroad Hall of Fame in Galesburg, IL, is a fitting and just reward to a community that has made significant contributions to the railroad industry.

The National Railroad Hall of Fame will be a privately funded museum and research facility dedicated to promote and encourage a better understanding of the origins and growth of the railroad industry. It will recognize the contributions of the men and women who actively participated in the founding and development of the American railroads. A library and collection of materials that document and preserves the accomplishments and contributions of the railroad industry will also be housed at the proposed facility.

Please join me in recognizing the great value of the railroad industry and its workers have to this country. Please help me celebrate Railroad Days and the importance of the people who built the industry by cosponsoring H. Res. 172, the National Railroad Hall of Fame.

TRIBUTE TO THE COLUMBIA GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today to a place that is un-

paralleled in its beauty and wonder, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in the Pacific Northwest. With its abundant natural beauty, unique economic development opportunities, and cultural significance, the Columbia River Gorge is a national treasure.

The Gorge stretches 85 miles along the Columbia River from the dry eastern region to the dense conifer forests and surging creeks of the west, dazzling wildflower displays, including species found nowhere else on Earth, cover hillsides and plateaus along the river. Diverse ecosystems within the scenic area range from temperate rain forests to arid, pine-oak woodlands.

The scenic beauty of this area offers high-value, low-impact recreational opportunities for biking, hiking, windsurfing, and sightseeing to entertain residents and tourists. Multnomah Falls, the single most visited attraction in the National Forest system, is one of the region's many notable sites. These attractions, combined with the region's role as a source of the Northwest's renowned apples, pears, and cherries, allow unique opportunities to balance this valuable ecosystem with the pressures of economic development.

The region also has a rich cultural heritage dating back to tribal life of 10,000 years ago. Ancient petroglyphs and village sites bear witness to thousands of years of Indian life and commerce. The Gorge figured prominently in the journals of Lewis and Clark, and later, travelers on the Oregon Trail navigated the area.

The unparalleled beauty and geologic wonder of this area inspired Congress to pass the National Scenic Area Act in 1986. It was designed to protect the unique natural resources of the Gorge, while at the same time developing a sustainable economy for an area that had been economically depressed. The act promotes shared responsibility by Federal and local entities for land-use and natural resource management and regional economic development. Since the signing of the act, positive progress has been made toward that goal. Gorge economic development projects have spawned new jobs and increased diversification of the region's economy. The scope of public recreation has been increased through new trails and parks in the Gorge. Over 28,000 acres of wildlife and plant habitat and scenic vistas are now publicly owned. Conferences and workshops have been held to encourage and provide citizens and residents of the Gorge with the skills to take action in their own communities. Thanks to the commitment and effort of Northwesterners, the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of the Gorge will continue to be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.

Oregonians recently honored the Columbia Gorge during Gorge Appreciation Week in May organized by Friends of the Gorge, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of this incredible natural resource. This tradition was begun last year in honor of the 10-year anniversary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. Oregonians showed their appreciation of and commitment to the Gorge by participating in a series of restoration and cleanup projects. This year, over 200 volunteers undertook the job of repairing the damage done to the region by last winter's ice storms. In addition, they worked to restore native plants, re-establish wetlands, clean up the historic Columbia River

Highway, and maintain hiking trails. Gorge Appreciation Week is an excellent way of involving citizens in the guardianship of the natural value of their community.

None of this would be possible without the 2,000 members of Friends of the Columbia Gorge from across the country. Through the dedication of these individuals to the preservation of the area, the Gorge continues to be a wonderful place to live and work, as well as a unique place for visitors.

The Gorge holds a special place in both our heritage and our future on a national, regional, and local level. I want to be a strong voice for those, such as the Friends, who support continuing the mission of protecting and enhancing this area. It is a national recreation destination and source of enjoyment and scenic beauty to the many who live, work, and vacation there.

TRIBUTE TO THE STUDENTS OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MIDDLE SCHOOL

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the students of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Madera, CA for their awareness and concern for the importance of soil for America's farmers. These students exemplify a care for the community and a dedication to hard work.

The students of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School promoted awareness of soil in 1993 through student research and letters to soil scientists in all 50 States. The students received a tremendous response from all over the country about many diverse soils, including information and samples. The students began to initiate conversations with—and enlisted the help of—a number of soil scientists as they looked at the possibilities of writing a solution to the problem of soil awareness.

The title of the interdisciplinary project that was created is "Proposing an Official State Soil—Preserving a Legacy to Future Generations." The program focuses on California soil and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School student body, which studied the processes of promoting legislation, the historical events that have taken place on and the practical uses of California soil.

Students researched the history and origin of soil, worked on statistics utilizing various soil characteristics, and wrote a resolution known as Senate Bill Number 389, which proposed an adoption of the San Joaquin Series Soil as the Official State Soil. On April 17, 1997, the Senate passed SB-389.

The support and guidance of Ron Williams, principal of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, and Alex Lehman, were instrumental in the success of the program. Additional support was provided by additional faculty at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, including: Nadia Samarin; Mike Dawson; Teresa Varlas; and Bill Lutjens.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I pay tribute to the students of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. Their commitment to raising soil awareness is commendable to say the least. I ask my colleagues to join me in wish-

ing the students of Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School best wishes for future success.

A TRIBUTE TO MARIO DE LOS COBOS

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mario de los Cobos for his dedicated service to the Ventura County Economic Development Association [VCEDA] and for his personal and civic leadership in our community.

VCEDA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a link between the private and public sector. They serve our community by focusing on any and all issues which may affect our region from education to the environment. As president of VCEDA, Mario's main contribution was his work with the Economic Development Collaborative, where he was instrumental in assuring that the private sector would have a voice in the use of defense conversion grants and earthquake disaster relief. His dedication to building bridges between the private and public sectors is extraordinary.

Mario has also served as a reserve police officer for 7 years. His desire and work toward making the community a better and safer place to live is greatly appreciated. But most outstanding is Mario's commitment to the leadership of our people. He has served on the board of directors for the Ventura County Community Foundation, as chairman of the board of the United Way and as a member of the Governor's task force for Camarillo State Hospital. He has done this all in the name of making life better for as many people as possible in our community. It is for this extraordinary dedication to our community that we honor him here today.

Henry David Thoreau once said that doing good was the only full profession. Mario believes that doing good is not only a profession but a way of life. I join Mario's family, friends, colleagues and the citizens of our community in recognizing Mario de los Cobos for his leadership and community service. It is an honor to represent him and I wish him luck on all future endeavors.

HONORING JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF SOUTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA ON THEIR 35TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Junior Achievement of south central Pennsylvania on their 35th anniversary. This evening many business leaders, educators, students and families will gather for the 35th Anniversary Celebration of Excellence and Hall of Fame.

Junior Achievement has provided great opportunity to students by helping them learn the basic principles of business and competition,

thereby creating the most skilled and competitive work force ensuring America continues as a leader in the world marketplace. They have fostered partnerships in the community and provided a real link between the classroom and the business community by giving students hands-on experience and the chance to work with professionals.

I am also pleased to honor a close friend, Jacqueline Summers, who has been instrumental in making Junior Achievement the quality organization it is. Jackie is a special person whose hard work and determination ensures excellence in everything she does.

I would like to recognize the chairman of the board, Robert Herzberger. Mr. Herzberger is the executive vice president of York Federal Savings and Loan. His knowledge and expertise has fostered the great success Junior Achievement has had in developing partnerships between business and education.

Mr. Speaker, this year two business and community leaders from Pennsylvania's 19th Congressional District will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I am pleased to announce that Phillip H. Gladfelter II and Henry D. Schmidt will be the very first inductees. These gentlemen were the founders of Junior Achievement of south central Pennsylvania. Their vision and dedication has enabled thousands of young people to have access to the American dream.

What started out with 300 students in 1961 has grown to serve nearly 9,000 students from grades kindergarten through 12 in south central Pennsylvania. As chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I am extremely proud to honor and celebrate this example of excellence. Junior Achievement has been a tremendous success and is well deserving of special recognition.

THE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ACT OF 1997

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, since 1985, 1,478 people have died in school bus-related crashes—an average of 134 fatalities per year. Although school bus related travel is the safest mode of transportation on America's roads today, more can, and should, be done to ensure the safety of this country's most cherished resources—our children. That is why I have introduced legislation that improves on existing technologies and maximizes safety for the 24 million children who ride buses to and from school each day.

My bill directs the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to set national proficiency standards for school bus drivers. It directs the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to develop guidelines on the safe transportation in school buses of children under the age of five. It also applies Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations to interstate school bus operations. The bill also requires: a decrease in the flammability of materials used in the construction of the interiors of school buses; the establishment of construction, design, and securement standards for wheelchairs used in the transportation of students in school buses; and that buses be equipped with bumper sensors, wheel guards