

TRIBUTE TO DAVID A. LATHERS

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David A. Lathers, a dedicated teacher, principal, and community activist on the occasion of his retirement after 45 years of service to the Utica community schools. Since the fall of 1973, and the opening of Henry Ford II High School in Sterling Heights, David Lathers has served as principal.

During his 24 year stewardship of Henry Ford II High School, David Lathers has been an advocate of strong professional standards and high student expectations. His efforts and encouragement have resulted in a number of academic success stories and innovative pilot programs at Ford II. The Far Eastern Institute, a Japanese language, history, and culture course was developed, piloted and resulted in a sister school program with Japan. The first commercial food program and commercial art programs in the district were developed at Ford II. In 1985, Henry Ford II High School was awarded the State Exemplary School Award, the first school in Macomb County to receive this award. And more recently, in 1996, the Ford II marching band was selected to perform in the Rose Bowl Parade.

His commitment to the community has been equally impressive. David Lathers was instrumental in organizing a Kiwanis Club in Sterling Heights, establishing KEY Clubs at Ford II and Eisenhower High Schools and serving as a board member and vice-president of the West Macomb Y.M.C.A.

In 1993, colleagues from the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals recognized David's tremendous contributions by naming him the outstanding principal of the year.

And so, Mr. Speaker, while we reflect on the passing of an era for Henry Ford II High, we commend David Lathers for his lifetime commitment to the community, school district, and thousands of students upon whose lives he has made an impact. I extend my sincerest wishes for a healthful, rewarding, and productive retirement.

THE PTA: A CENTURY OF SERVICE
TO OUR CHILDREN

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to recognize one of the most time-honored and revered organizations in our Nation today. February 17, 1997 will mark the 100th birthday of the Parents and Teachers Association, known more widely as the PTA.

Formed on February 17, 1897, PTA was initially known as the National Congress of Mothers. Credit for the initial concept of this world-renowned organization has been ascribed to Alice McLellan Birney, a mother of three children whose husband practiced law in Washington, DC. Joining Ms. Birney in this historic undertaking was Phoebe Apperson Hearst, widow of the late U.S. Senator George Hearst.

Ms. Hearst always reminded her audiences that "there could be no lasting improvement in human welfare other than through education."

Another name synonymous with the early formation of the PTA is that of Selena Sloan Butler. Ms. Butler founded the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in Atlanta, GA, in 1926. The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers merged with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1970 and formed what is now our present day PTA. The enormous contribution of Ms. Butler is equally notable this month as we also celebrate Black History Month across our Nation. Mr. Speaker, today we honor an organization that supports and speaks on behalf of our children.

PTA assists parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect our children. It encourages parent and public involvement in the public schools of this Nation.

On February 17, 1997, PTA chapters across this land will celebrate Founders Day, which honors the legacy of PTA.

I therefore ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to rise and salute the PTA, the leading child advocacy organization in our Nation.

COMMENDING THOSE WHO
VOLUNTEERED FOR MASSNET DAY

HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the 4,000 volunteers (including labor union members and tradesmen) and over 100 businesses who donated their time and energy to wire the schools in my district and across Massachusetts to the internet.

On October 26, 1996 the first in a series of MassNet Days was held. I am proud to say that it was an enormous success involving over 400 schools in Massachusetts.

MassNetworks was initiated because, despite a wealth of high-tech companies, Massachusetts ranked 49th among the 50 states in networked classrooms and 45th in modem lines installed.

MassNetworks has a component of which I am especially proud. Teacher training and development has been recognized as being as important as the wiring or hardware. Educating teachers, improving their skills, and showing them how to utilize the internet as part of the curriculum is vital to the success of putting all of our schools on the information highway.

Imagine a history class in Watertown that is able to take a tour of the battlefields of the Civil War, or a science class in Boston seeing photographs of Jupiter. This can help make learning come alive.

The future of our country rests on the shoulders of our youth. If they are well educated and able to continue to learn throughout their lives, then the United States will continue to be the world leader.

Again, I want to thank all the people in Massachusetts who donated time, energy, and materials to make our schools a better place for our kids.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the gentlelady from Texas for organizing this spe-

cial order and for all her hard work on behalf of the children of our Nation.

HONORING DAVID A. FORD

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I speak today of David Ford, a man I am happy to call a friend and a confidant—a man I am proud to know. He has served his community faithfully and well and it is with no little sorrow that I note his retirement as leader of the Democratic Party of Mount Vernon.

When he came to Mount Vernon the Democratic Party was virtually nonexistent. He is leaving us with a vibrant and dominant party that has elected the first African-American mayor of a New York State city and the first African-American assemblyman from Westchester County. I went to Mount Vernon in 1992 when it was made part of my congressional district and I have never been sorry. It is rare to find someone who can be such a good friend and still give such wonderful advice.

David is married to the former Eula Gadson and they have four children and four grandchildren. For the past two decades he has served as commissioner of Mount Vernon's board of water supply, a position which does not begin to tell the breadth of his involvement in his city and community. Among his honors are being named YMCA Man of the Year and a life member of the Mount Vernon NAACP. His abilities have attracted people from throughout Westchester County and the State seeking his guidance and counsel.

David has made not only his city better but the time we live in. His wisdom and leadership have made us better than we would have been. Even with his retirement as leader of the Democratic Party, I look forward to sharing in that wisdom of many years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF FRELINGHUYSEN
TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Frelinghuysen Township Elementary School in Warren County, NJ, for its innovative and creative techniques of teaching young people about our Nation's history and culture.

On January 25, students at Frelinghuysen Elementary staged an inaugural ball with the theme "Presidents Past and Present." This formal evening of music, dance, and food included fifth- and sixth-grade students dressed as each of our 42 Presidents and their wives. The students presented mini-museums and speeches depicting the lives of the Presidents they portrayed. Period-appropriate dance music ranged from the Minuet for Presidents Washington and Jefferson to the Macarena for President Clinton. Approximately 250 parents, teachers, veterans, students, and VIP's attended.

This event was more than just a one-time affair. It was the culmination of the school's thematic enrichment program—an 80-minute weekly class for the fifth and sixth grades that uses hands-on techniques to make history and culture exciting and students eager to learn.

"The goal of our political enrichment theme this year is to not only provide a strong education in government and politics but to inspire the students to develop an interest and appreciation in our country," school officials said in the invitation to the inaugural ball. "We are developing the educated voters of the future."

The class is run by fifth-grade teacher Sue Hocking and sixth-grade teacher Patricia Meyers under the supervision of Chief School Administrator Eugene Cioffi. About two dozen parents were actively involved in this year's event, organized by volunteer parent coordinator Rene Jensen, mother of a sixth-grader.

The class began 3 years ago with World War II as its theme, prompted by the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. Students worked with the World War II Commemorative Society of the Department of Defense to put on a Flag Day celebration with local veterans and elected officials. They planted a victory garden, learned dances and music of the era, and ended the class with a USO dance.

Last year, medieval history was the theme as students studied knights and castles. A medieval fair complete with jousting and a banquet marked the end of the class. Students played human chess with children as chess pieces on the school gym floor, redone with huge black and white square to make a chess board. Mr. Cioffi was dubbed "King Eugene III" and his freedom ransomed when kidnaped by an opposing kingdom.

In preparation for this year's inaugural ball, students staged a mock election between President Clinton and former Senator Bob Dole. (Dole won 79-73.) In other preparation and research, local Lincoln expert Joseph Garrera organized a display to help students understand the Civil War President.

For the remainder of this year, the class will study archeology. The school's victory garden has been seeded with objects and will be the site of an archaeological dig in the spring.

The thematic enrichment class is not the only innovative program at Frelinghuysen Elementary.

In the Families Read Every Day program run by first-grade teacher Linda Banta, students take home a book each night to read with their parents, then receive scrip-like awards in class the next day that can be saved up to buy prizes from a classroom store.

At a Valentine's Day tea, fifth- and sixth-graders will be visited by senior citizens who will discuss their favorite Presidents in an interactive, intergenerational learning process.

The school has begun a Native American Cultural Center by building an authentic teepee in the schoolyard and teaching classes about native American culture inside. A second teepee and a bark lodge are planned for the future.

Frelinghuysen Elementary was one of several schools in Warren County that recently joined together to purchase "Star Lab," an inflatable, portable planetarium that allows students to learn about astronomy at their own school from their own teachers.

A buddy program pairs kindergartners with fifth-graders as mentors and lunch partners.

All of this is even more impressive when you consider that Frelinghuysen is one of the smallest school systems in our State. With 171 students in kindergarten through sixth grade, it is a single-school school district. Beyond sixth grade, students go to North Warren Regional Middle School and North Warren Regional High School. Chief School Administrator Cioffi wears the dual hats of principal and superintendent, guiding a staff of 13 full-time and three part-time students, plus a nurse and librarian.

These accomplishments clearly show that adults who care—teachers and parents alike—count far more than money in delivering a quality education. These teachers and parents are the heroes, mentors, and role models who hold up the historic value of public education in America. They are an excellent example of a community working together to develop and educate our citizens of tomorrow. Citizen involvement has made America the leader in democracy around the world and their work will keep us in the forefront.

DALLAS AREA STUDENTS RECEIVE AWARDS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate students from my district for their outstanding accomplishments.

Ten students were awarded 4-year scholarships which range from \$4,000 to \$25,000 by Texas A&M University as part of its incoming class. The scholarship winners are Richard D. Weaver, Jr., of Carter High School; Julie A. Contreras of Irving High School; Tatiana Alexander of Kimball High School; Edward N. Brown, Jr., and Crystal D. Caldwell of South Oak Cliff High School; Paul L. Andres, John P. Broadnax, and Elizabeth A. Flotte of Talented and Gifted Magnet High School; Kaushawn P. Hicks of Townview Magnet Center; and Martha R. Wilson of Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

In addition, Leaksha Dunn, a senior at James Madison High School in Dallas, took top honors in the Dallas County Historical Commission's Heritage Education Essay Contest for her treatise on "James Thibodeaux, a Living Legend in South Dallas." Leaksha won \$50 from the commission and \$500 from the high school's history department.

The hard work and dedication of these students is admirable. Congratulations students, and good luck in all your pursuits.

PROVIDING PORTABILITY FOR MEDIGAP ENROLLEES

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, in the last session of Congress, we passed important legislation giving Americans access to portable insurance coverage regardless of their health status. We did it by enacting the

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

This new law, however, did not extend these same protections to our senior and disabled constituents who are on Medicare. No senior should be forced to live in fear that unexpected medical bills will deprive them of financial independence.

That is why I am introducing, along with 30 of my colleagues, a portability bill for the millions of senior citizens who supplement their Medicare coverage with private insurance. An estimated 10 million senior citizens, one-third of the total number of seniors on Medicare, rely on medigap coverage to meet important health needs. Medigap insurance typically pays for prescription drugs, skilled nursing care, and out-of-pocket deductibles. Without medigap, seniors can face tough choices between paying their medical bills and meeting daily critical needs. And that is a choice they should not be asked to make.

My legislation provides four important protections for seniors and the disabled. First, it will protect seniors with medigap insurance who move out of their plan's service area or whose plan goes out of business. This bill guarantees that those seniors will be able to purchase another plan with comparable coverage even if they have a history of severe illness. This means that seniors who relocate to other States can do so without the fear that they will not be able to secure comparable insurance coverage.

In addition, my bill provides Medicare beneficiaries who choose to enroll in a Medicare HMO the security that they will be able to return to their medigap plan if they are not satisfied. They can utilize this option anytime within the first year of their enrollment.

Third, my bill will help provide security for seniors who lose their employer-provided retiree health benefits. In this era of high bankruptcies and more and more companies withdrawing or reducing health coverage for retirees, this legislation will guarantee that retirees will always have access to insurance coverage beyond Medicare, even if they have had serious health problems.

Finally, this bill will extend to disabled Medicare beneficiaries equal access to all medigap plans. This is an important assurance considering the high medical bills that people with disabilities face.

We took significant steps last Congress with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Let us not forget those who did not benefit from those vital safeguards. Let us protect the millions of senior citizens who rely on medigap policies.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO RELINK BLIND TO EARNINGS TEST

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to restore fairness to the Social Security earnings test for blind individuals. Since 1977, the linking of the blind to senior citizens for the purposes of the earnings test has assisted in helping many blind individuals become self-