

be denied forever. There is general agreement, however, that without Mr. de Klerk the transition to democracy would have been a much longer, much more painful, and certainly a much bloodier process.

It is exceedingly rare that a political leader helps dismantle the system within which he has risen to power. And yet that is exactly what F.W. de Klerk did. He grew up in the world of apartheid, and he was tremendously successful in that world. But in spite of all the connections linking him to the status quo, he came to the realization that apartheid had to end. For a man so steeped in the old system and its ways of thinking, that realization represented an extraordinary conceptual leap. And, I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that leap occurred at least in part because of experiences and insights gathered by Mr. de Klerk during a trip to the United States. What he saw here helped him envisage a new and better path for South Africa.

Mr. de Klerk and his wife visited our country in 1976 thanks to the U.S. Information Agency's International Visitor Program. That program—in place since 1940—gives carefully selected individuals from foreign countries a chance to come to the United States and confer with professional counterparts and experience firsthand our institutions and society. Participants in the program are up-and-coming figures in key fields such as government, politics, the media, and education. More than 130 of them—including Mr. de Klerk—have eventually achieved positions of chief of state or head of government, and some 600 have been named to cabinet-level jobs. Margaret Thatcher, Anwar Sadat, and Willy Brandt were all participants in the program before they rose to leadership positions. The same is true of the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair.

In many cases, participants may think they already know our country based on the flood of images they have received from the mass media and popular culture. But in almost every instance, they discover that those images provide an incomplete or even distorted sense of who we are. The 3- to 4-week tours of the United States provided by the International Visitor Program—a carefully structured blend of briefings, meetings, discussion sessions, and hands-on experience—give participants a much richer and more nuanced view of our Nation.

This experience makes an indelible impression on most participants. That certainly was the case with Mr. de Klerk. In 1991—15 years after his trip—he stated:

[My wife and I] toured the United States in 1976 on an International Visitor Exchange Program. We saw the vibrant magnificence of New York City, nature's artistry in the majestic formations of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, the cultural diversity of New Orleans, Louisiana; Miami, Florida; the excitement of Las Vegas, Nevada; the serene beauty of San Francisco, California; but most of all, we experienced the vitality and warmth of the American people.

The International Visitor Program not only affected Mr. de Klerk's view of the United States, it also had a profound impact on the way he regarded his own country and its future. A profile of Mr. de Klerk published in the New York Times Sunday Magazine of November 19, 1989, includes the following statement: "As de Klerk tells it, a 1976 visit to the United States as a guest of the United States Infor-

mation Agency convinced him that race relations could not be left to run their course."

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, that was a vitally important moment in the development of Mr. de Klerk's thinking—and we as Americans can be proud that we helped make it possible. It is no exaggeration to say that the insights that F.W. de Klerk achieved while visiting the United States as a participant in the International Visitor Program were an important factor in his decision to break with the past and help his nation in its movement toward justice and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that our country's exchange programs may be just as important a weapon in the fight to encourage democratic development as other more traditional diplomatic weapons that we use. The International Visitors Program may have been as important in bringing about the transformation of South Africa as the economic sanctions that were imposed by the Congress, over the veto and strenuous objections of then-President Ronald Reagan.

I invite my colleagues in the Congress to join me in paying tribute to the former President of South Africa F.W. de Klerk, and at the same time also to join me in paying tribute to the critically important programs of the U.S. Information Agency which have also played a key role in influencing positively Mr. de Klerk's thinking about race relations, and thus affecting the course of history.

TRIBUTE TO DON "THE BEAR" HASKINS

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a man of great talent and rare humanity; a man who has challenged young people to excel and reach beyond their dreams; a man whose steady guidance has influenced the lives of many over the course of a long and distinguished career. I am speaking of Don "The Bear" Haskins who has been the head basketball coach for the University of Texas at El Paso for more than 36 years.

Don's teams have won 691 games, a historic national championship, 7 WAC titles, and made 14 NCAA tournament appearances. In 1987, Don was inducted into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame. Don Haskins ranks ninth among the all-time winningest coaches.

But beyond his obvious success on the court, Don Haskins is most proud of the fact that he opened doors for minority players. Don Haskins won the 1966 National Championship over heavily favored Kentucky with an all black starting five, an NCAA first.

Later this month, Don Haskins will be inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, joining other sports legends—former Princeton coach Pete Carril, former NBA stars Alex English and Bailey Howell, women stars Denise Curry and Joan Crawford and Spain's Antonio Diaz-Miguel.

A native of Enid, OK, Don is married to the former Mary Gorman of Bartlesville, OK. The couple has three sons, Brent, Steve, and David, and two grandchildren. I want to congratulate Don not only for being inducted into the Hall of Fame but for the contributions he

has made to UTEP and the community of El Paso, and indeed, for the advancement of race relations in this country. He has inspired us all and I am proud to honor him today before my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives as a man of great integrity, courage, and honor.

IN HONOR OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Our Lady of Mercy Church for 75 years of service to its dedicated and faithful parishioners.

Over the past 75 years, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church has grown and flourished from a small, isolated Slovak community, to a modern thriving parish. The original name of the church was St. John the Baptist. Early parishioners converted a store into a frame church, and remodeled nearby houses into a two-room schoolhouse and a rectory. After going heavily into debt and being abandoned by the Polish National Church, these parishioners were finally received into the Roman Catholic Church by a public Act of Faith in 1921. The church was blessed and renamed Our Lady of Mercy.

In 1948, construction on a much needed, larger, and more modern building began. The new building is built in the Slovakian Church Architecture style and boasts a 56-foot bell tower and unique artwork. The church used to host an annual Slovak Cultural Day to celebrate its rich traditional history. It still offers parishioners a Catholic Parish Credit Union, the second in the Cleveland Diocese; a weekly bulletin, "Our Lady of Mercy News," and is highly involved in the Cleveland community.

This summer, after 24 dormant years, the school building at Our Lady of Mercy Church was renovated and is once again in full use. The new Hope Academy, a private noncatholic school, serves students in the greater Cleveland area and is the crown jewel of the recent accomplishments of Our Lady of Mercy Church.

Our Lady of Mercy Church has served its community well for 75 years. My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring this exceptional parish as its dedicated members and other prominent dignitaries of the community celebrate this landmark anniversary on September 14, 1997. I wish them continued success.

INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACT OF 1997

HON. HELEN CHENOWETH

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Community Protection and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Act of 1997. Last year, wildfires burned over 6 million acres

and cost nearly \$1 billion to fight. Although not the biggest fire season ever, that was 1930 when over 52 million acres were scorched, the 1996 fire season is regarded by many fire experts as the most severe. The reason is population growth and distribution, and the intensity of many of the fires occurring throughout the United States.

These intense fires are now frequently occurring in America's back yards. In the early part of the century, a clear delineation existed between the urban center and what was considered rural America. This no longer exists. Over time, cities have grown into suburbs, and suburbs have blended in to what was once considered rural. The complex landscape has come to be known as the wildland-urban interface. Forests and grasslands are intermixed with housing, businesses, farms, and other developments, posing new challenges for fire management and suppression.

The intensity of many of the wildfires witnessed in recent years are of a magnitude seldom seen before. These intense fires are the result of unnaturally high fuel loads, caused from years of aggressive suppression, forest disease, and grossly overstocked stands. This is an unhealthy condition that must be properly dealt with now.

Wildfires resulting from these unnatural fuel buildup not only threaten the destruction of communities, putting human life and property at risk, they also damage water supplies, destroy fish and wildlife habitat, and damage ambient air quality. The damage to the soil also substantially reduces the ability of the land to support future stands of trees and greatly increases the potential for massive soil erosion.

Regarding the importance of protecting our forests, President Teddy Roosevelt, one of our greatest conservationists said this, "If there is any one duty which more than any other we owe it to our children and our children's children to perform at once, it is to save the forests of this country, for they constitute the first and most important element in the conservation of the natural resources of this country."

The costs levied on society from wildfire are enormous. Loss of life is the ultimate price that we pay, but the human price paid does not end there. A lifetime of memories and cherished possessions can be incinerated in a matter of minutes. Over 25,000 Californians alone were left homeless before the fire season of 1993 had calmed. And in my own district, the 8th Street fire burned the foothills of Boise last year, causing devastation to human life and property.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Forest and Forest Health, I have had the opportunity to tour many of our Nation's forests. Several weeks ago, Speaker GINGRICH, Majority Leader ARMEY and Majority Whip DELAY had the opportunity to witness the devastation that these intense wildfires cause due to unnatural levels of fuel.

I rise today to introduce the Community Protection and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Act of 1997 to help mitigate these problems. This bill will allow the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management [BLM] to issue timber sale contracts in the urban-wildland interface to reduce hazardous wildfire fuel buildup. It will also provide the Forest Service and BLM with the ability to use revenue generated from these sales to reduce noncommercial fuels buildup and conduct other forest management projects in the sale area to improve forest

health, wildlife and fish habitat, riparian areas, streams and water quality, or achieve other forest objectives.

To deal with special problems associated with grass buildup around communities, the legislation provides authority so that a country or unit of local government can work with the Secretary of Interior or Agriculture to properly deal with the potential fire danger from excessive levels of grasses and forbs in the wildland-urban interface.

This bill helps protect forests, fish and wildlife habitat, air quality, water quality, as well as its main objective of human life and property. In addition to taking care of the fire danger around communities, the bill also improves forest health and water quality by allowing the use of revenue generated from the authorized sales to be used for projects to achieve their objectives.

I urge my colleague's support for this measure that I am introducing today. In light of last year's severe fire season, now is the time to properly deal with the unnaturally high fuel loads that lead to fires that create most of the environmental damage and expenditures each year as well as the loss of human life and property.

JACK WARD: LABOR LEADER OF THE YEAR SAN DIEGO BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jack Ward, a labor leader, community activist, humanitarian, sportsman, and patriot. Mr. Ward is being recognized by the San Diego Building and Trades Council as Labor Leader of the Year.

His more-than-full-time job is secretary-treasurer and principal executive officer of Teamsters Local 36. Before he was elected to this top position in his local union, Mr. Ward was president, vice president, trustee, and shop steward while employed by Bechtel Construction Co. He has also been on staff as a business representative since 1984.

He has served in several capacities with the Teamsters—as delegate to Joint Council 42 and the Southwest Building Material and Construction Council. He has also been a delegate and committee member at conventions of the Teamsters International Union. In addition, he is delegate and officer of the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council and an executive board member of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

His activities in the wider community include volunteering in political campaigns, serving on the board of the United Way, helping collect and distribute food for needy families with the letter carriers, giving of his time at Children's Hospital and at the Polinsky Center. He has been president of Pop Warner and Little League.

As a Member of the House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I would like to especially acknowledge his service as a marine veteran of Vietnam. I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ward for his hard work, dedication, and contributions to the San

Diego region. I am also pleased to recognize his selection as Labor Leader of the Year by the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council. My sincere congratulations go to him, his wife, Janet, and their two sons, Jack Jr. and Jeff.

SISTER MARGHERITA MARCHIONE: HONORED AS ACADEMIAN AND HUMANITARIAN

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 11, 1997

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Sister Margherita Marchione on being the 1997 recipient of the Religious Teachers Filippini Humanitarian Award at the Villa Walsh Academy Gala this Saturday evening hosted by comedian Joe Piscopo. I have spoken before the House floor about the work of Sister Margherita, she is one of New Jersey's great academic and humanitarian treasures. Although academia is her calling, her special talent is building bridges between different peoples through greater understanding and knowledge.

Born in the town of Little Ferry, NJ, in 1922, Sister Margherita became a member of the Filippini Sisters teaching order in 1941. A Fulbright Scholar, she received her own schooling at Georgian Court College in Lakewood, where she earned a B.A. and continued her education at Columbia University where she gained her M.A. and a Ph.D. Aside from the numerous books she has authored, including the acclaimed "L'immagine testa" and the 1986 biography of Lucy Filippini, "From the Land of the Etruscans," Sister Margherita serves as treasurer of the Villa Walsh Academy in Morris Township and is professor emerita of Italian Language and Literature at Farleigh Dickinson University in Madison. She also lectures throughout the United States and abroad, including numerous radio and television appearances.

During the past few years, Sister Margherita has devoted much of her time to illuminating the efforts of Pope Pius XII and thousands of Italian Catholics to save Italian Jews and other persecuted peoples from Nazi concentration camps during World War II. In 1995, she organized an event to mark Holocaust Rescuers in Italy Day, held at Villa Walsh, which debuted the documentary film "Debt of Honor" narrated by New Jersey resident Alan Alda. Sister Margherita assisted "Debt of Honor" producer Sy Rotter in collecting the memories of Italy's Jewish survivors.

Her latest literary effort, "Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in Wartime Italy," recognizes the extraordinary acts of courage exhibited by ordinary people during the Second World War. It is a little known fact that, although 67 percent of European Jews were killed by the Axis Powers during the war, more than 80 percent of Italy's Jews were saved. As the New World Press wrote, "Yours Is a Precious Witness" is helping to promote "better understanding and deeper relations between Catholics and Jews." In addition, the editors of the Association of Jewish Libraries Newsletter praised her book for reversing their previously derogatory view of Pope Pius XII.