

Franciscan Order. Father Dols' achievement will be recognized at a concelebrated Mass of thanksgiving on April 13 at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Elizabeth to be followed by a reception and dinner in the Main Parish Hall.

Father Francis Dols seemed destined to serve his fellow man from an early age. He was born in the small Spanish town of Santa Maria Del Cami—"St. Mary of the Road". This beautiful island community set Francis Dols on the path that has led to his being with us today. At the age of 12, Francis Dols entered the Franciscan seminary of the Third Regular Order [T.O.R.] of St. Francis. When he was 16, Father Dols was accepted at a novice, and one year later he was professed as a fully committed member of the religious Order of St. Francis. Another year hence, Francis Dols left Spain for Rome to enroll in the Angelicum Catholic University to pursue the academic credentials required for admittance to the priesthood. However, the war in Europe resulted in the temporary closing of the university, thereby forcing Father Dols to return home.

Upon returning to Spain, Father Dols spent the next 4 years at the Franciscan Seminary. On April 13, 1947, Father Francis Dols was ordained a priest and began a new chapter in his spiritual journey. Father Dols' first assignment was to a large parish in the southwestern part of Spain, approximately 150 miles from the capital city of Madrid, where he spent the next 5 years in pastoral ministry. This extraordinary experience provided Father Dols with many gratifying moments caring for the spiritual needs of his parishioners. A highly positive experience aroused Father Dols' interest in spreading the word of God to those in the Americas. His arrival in the northwestern region of Brazil saw Father Dols working with the native Americans in the vast Amazon Forest. Father Dols' 4 years in South America afforded him many good times participating in the lives of this eager flock.

After leaving his adopted home, Father Dols' road of spiritual enlightenment led him to the United States. The people of Elizabeth were extremely fortunate to have Father Dols accept the position of pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary. His spiritual leadership has enriched the congregation; bringing them closer to God. And, he has been a source of guidance and solace to all who have sought his counsel.

It is an honor to recognize Fr. Francis Dols on the anniversary of his ordination. He has committed his life to God's service; and, over the past half century, has dedicated himself to his fellow man. I am certain that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to this remarkable priest.

VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support for H.R. 240, the Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act of 1997. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important leg-

islation and ask all my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join me in voting overwhelmingly for quick passage.

In 1944, Congress enacted the Veterans Preference Act to address the readjustment needs of the men and women who served their country during a time of war. The law was designed to assist veterans in regaining the lost ground their civilian careers had suffered as a result of military service. In the beginning, the Federal Government gladly complied with the provisions of the new veterans preference law. Unfortunately, as time passed and the memory of war faded, so did America's concern for fulfilling its obligation to its citizen-soldiers. Today, the original legislation and its amendments are easily circumvented.

Currently, veterans' preference laws give certain veterans preference in appointment to civilian employment with the Federal Government based upon their military service. Congress has long recognized that this is an earned benefit, not a gift. H.R. 240 strengthens veterans' preference and increases employment opportunities for veterans. It provides veterans an effective, efficient, and user-friendly redress mechanism for veterans whose rights have been violated under veterans' preference laws. In short, H.R. 240 will end circumvention of veterans' preference laws.

Additionally, H.R. 240 provides veterans with increased protections during reductions in force and extends veterans' preference to certain positions at the White House and in the legislative and judicial branches. This legislation is long overdue. If Federal agencies and Federal managers were fulfilling their obligation to enforce current law, this legislation would not be necessary.

In closing, I again ask that all of my colleagues join me in support of our Nation's veterans by voting for H.R. 240.

HONORING EUGENE CLARK

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to bring to the attention of the House of Representatives and the American public the distinguished record of service to Michigan's disabled veterans by Michigan State Commander of the Disabled American Veterans, Eugene Clark, of St. Ignace, MI. Mr. Clark is a friend and a constituent of mine from the First Congressional District. As he concludes his term as State Commander this June, I wish to call the Nation's attention to this dedicated veteran.

Entering the U.S. Army in 1966, Mr. Clark served in Vietnam with the 25th Infantry Division and its 2/14th Infantry. He was involved in several major conflicts, including the Tet Offensive, Manhattan, and Junction City. Mr. Clark's love of country and dedication to the military earned him 2 separate Purple Hearts, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Vietnam Service Medal with 3 bronze service stars, and 4 Presidential Unit Citations during the 24 months he served in Southeast Asia.

Upon his discharge, Mr. Clark joined Local 324 of the Operating Engineers where his outstanding work was always acknowledged and

appreciated. He was employed as a superintendent of the American Dredging and Construction before retiring.

In his role as DAV State Commander, Eugene Clark has led the 42,000 Michigan DAV members with dignity, compassion, and decisiveness. While motivating the DAV membership, Mr. Clark has confidently and respectfully promoted the goals and ideals of the DAV throughout his tenure.

Mr. Clark has dedicated his life to veterans and their families and his service as State Commander will serve as an example for his successors. I know I speak for all veterans in thanking Eugene Clark for his work on behalf of veterans, especially Michigan veterans, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

HELEN JACKSON CLAYTOR CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you and my colleagues to join me in extending birthday greetings to a very special woman from my hometown of Grand Rapids, MI. Mrs. Helen Jackson Claytor will celebrate her 90th birthday on April 12. I am honored to know Helen and I greatly respect the time and energy she has put forth in making our community a better place to live through her work with race relations. Her tireless leadership and ability to get results should serve as an inspiration for all of us.

Born and raised in Minneapolis, MN, Helen graduated from John Marshall High School at the top of her class in 1925. After high school she attended the University of Minnesota, where she graduated cum laude in just 3 years while studying to become a teacher. While at the University of Minnesota she was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Following her graduation Helen found that opportunities for African-American teachers were extremely limited. The lack of available teaching jobs led her to the YWCA in Trenton, NJ where she worked as a Girl Reserves secretary. She also served a similar stint at the YWCA in Kansas City, MO in late 1930. These jobs marked the beginning of her long association with the YWCA.

Helen serves as a true ambassador for the YWCA, having traveled all over the country to speak on the topic of race relations at YWCA's that were segregated before the civil rights movement. As an elected member of the YWCA's World Council she traveled to such places as China, Switzerland, and Africa. Her drive and determination led her to the position of an active board member of the YWCA in Grand Rapids and later in her career she made history by becoming the first black woman ever to be elected president of a community YWCA. In the late 1940's she was elected to the National Board of Directors of the YWCA and served as the president from 1967 until her retirement in 1976. As president, Helen played a key role in helping the organization draft the YWCA Purpose in 1967, an honor she regards as a major accomplishment of her career. She still holds the title of Honorary Member of the Board.

In addition to her numerous roles with the YWCA, Helen has been actively involved in

countless community organizations and has been recognized for her efforts with numerous awards and commendations. Among her more recent honors are an honorary degree from Aquinas College, the Giant's Award from the Coalition of Grand Rapids Organizations, the Grand Rapids Y.W.C.A.'s Tribute to Women Award, and the Grand Rapids NAACP Role Model Award; she has also been inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

Widowed twice, Helen was married to journalist Earl Wilkens, who died of tuberculosis at an early age. She later married Dr. Robert Claytor, the first black physician in Grand Rapids. Throughout her years, Helen has been blessed with the support of a very loving and caring family that includes her three children, Roger Wilkens, Judith Claytor, and Sharon Claytor Peters.

Mr. Speaker, there is not enough time in the day to thoroughly highlight the many contributions that Helen had made to our society. Celebrating 90 years of life is truly a blessing. I want to again personally extend my heartfelt wishes to Helen for a joyous day of celebration with her family and many friends that will gather to honor her on April 17 at the Grand Rapids YWCA. Thank you, Helen, for being the outstanding citizen that you are.

HONORING ANNA-MARIE STRANGE FOR GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce Anna-Marie Strange, daughter of Beth and Sam Strange of Kasilof, as the latest Kenai Peninsula recipient of the Girl Scout Gold Award. Anna-Marie, a fifth generation Alaskan, is the granddaughter of Barbara and Ed Meier and Tom and Ned Strange, Anchorage.

Anna-Marie a member of Senior Troop 994, has been active in Girl Scouting for 11 years and recently received a Lifetime Membership in Girl Scouting as a gift from her long time Girl Scout mentor. For several years she served as an A.C.E. (junior counselor), at the Rainbow Trails Girl Scout Day Camp, and was a unit leader at the Nikiski Day Camp in 1994. She also completed the leader in training and counselor in training programs. In 1994, she traveled to Hokkaido, Japan with Susitna Council's Japanese Exchange Program. During the 1995-96 school year Anna-Marie served as a leader for Daisy Girl Scout Troop 32, Tustumena School. She has also worked as junior core-staff for the 1993 and 1995 Susitna Council encampments.

For her Girl Scout Gold Award project, Anna-Marie cross-referenced the Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, programs as well as the films and activities available at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge with the various levels of the Girl Scout program. She then compiled a book for local leaders to use when incorporating outdoor activities in their troop programming. To culminate and test out her completed project, Anna-Marie hosted a Wide-Game for local Girl Scouts at the refuge in late August.

In addition to Girl Scouting, Anna-Marie has been active in many outside activities. She

participated in swim team and cross-country skiing at Skyview, played the bassoon in both the Kenai Peninsula Community Band and Orchestra, and is active in Soldotna Methodist Church. She was salutatorian of Skyview High School, Band Student of the Year, and a member of the All State Honor Band and Borough Honor Band. She received the John Philip Sousa Award and Marine Corps Semper Paratus Award in 1996. She is a member of the National Honor Society and Japanese Club, and received a Student of the Year scholarship from the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce. Anna-Marie is a certified life guard and swimming instructor, and worked at the Skyview pool for the past year. She also volunteered as assistant waterfront director for the local Cub Scout day camp in 1995 and in 1996 at the exhibits department of the Palmer State Fair.

Anna-Marie is now a freshman at Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota, majoring in music education.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, because I was unavoidably detained in the 15th Congressional District of Michigan, I was not present at rollcall vote No. 72 and rollcall vote No. 73. Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted "aye" for rollcall vote No. 72 and "aye" for rollcall vote No. 73.

ON BRIAN BLANKENBURG'S ATTAINMENT OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Brian Blankenburg of North Olmsted, OH, who will be honored this month for his recent attainment of Eagle Scout.

The attainment of Eagle Scout is a high and rare honor requiring years of dedication to self-improvement, hard work, and the community. Each Eagle Scout must earn 21 merit badges, 12 of which are required, including badges in: lifesaving; first aid; citizenship in the community; citizenship in the Nation; citizenship in the world; personal management of time and money; family life; environmental science; and camping.

In addition to acquiring and proving proficiency in those and other skills, an Eagle Scout must hold leadership positions within the troop where he learns to earn the respect and hear the criticism of those he leads.

The Eagle Scout must live by the Scouting Law, which holds that he must be: trustworthy, loyal, brave, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, clean, and reverent.

And the Eagle Scout must complete an Eagle project, which he must plan, finance, and evaluate on his own. It is no wonder that only 2 percent of all boys entering scouting achieve this rank.

Brian's Eagle project was the repair, refurbishing, and repainting of ticket booths and

parking lot lampposts at North Olmsted High School.

My fellow colleagues, let us join Boy Scouts of America Troop 53 in recognizing and praising Brian for his achievement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS' NURSING CARE AVAILABILITY ACT OF 1997

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Veterans' Nursing Care Availability Act of 1997. This important legislation will help correct a flaw that exists in the way that the Department of Veterans Affairs ranks applications for its State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program.

The State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program provides Federal funding for up to 65 percent of the total cost for the construction of State veterans nursing homes. Many States have been desperately trying to get a grant under this program to assist in the construction of State veterans nursing homes. However, despite documented need, they have been unable to get the Federal funding necessary to move forward.

Because of the overall inequity of the system that the VA uses to rank State applications, I have decided to introduce legislation that will ensure that States with the greatest veteran need receive priority funding.

The current system that the VA uses to rank State applications gives priority to States that have never received a similar grant in the past. While on the surface this may seem logical, the practical effect is that States with the highest veteran's need are often neglected because they received a grant sometime in the past. As a matter of fairness, I believe applications should be ranked solely on the needs of veterans.

The legislation I am introducing will correct this inequity by ensuring that States with the highest need receive priority. The Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that there should be 4 nursing home beds for every 1,000 veterans in a State. Using this determination, my bill would have applications based on a formula where veteran need is defined as a number of veterans in the State multiplied by 4 and divided by 1,000 (need = vet. population * 4/1,000).

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation for our Nation's veterans. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in working for its enactment.

HONORING TISBE FALCONE DIMEO

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to praise a woman whose contributions are the kind which go unnoticed by society at large but which mean so much to the people who are directly affected. Tisbe Falcone DiMeo is such a person. For more than 20