

574,584 veterans in the 11-county Philadelphia region. The next decade will challenge the National Cemetery Administration to accommodate World War II and Korean War veterans, as well as veterans from the Vietnam era. Each of our veterans deserves the honor of burial in a national cemetery. In order to best be able to honor and remember their loved ones, families need to have access to those gravesites within a reasonable distance from their homes. The best opportunity to meet this need in the Philadelphia area is to dedicate existing federally owned property in the Valley Forge National Historical Park.

The Valley Forge National Historical Park is dedicated to the earliest American military veterans and the long winter of their suffering during the War of the American Revolution. Although no battle was fought on this land, it is nevertheless symbolic of our Nation's military valor and triumph over adversity. The bill will designate 100 acres of the 3,600 acre National Park for use as a national cemetery. The section of land north of the Schuylkill River would be the ideal location for the national cemetery. This area contains no historical markers and is separated from the rest of the park by the river. Dedication of this portion of the Historical Park as a national cemetery would thus add a solemn and appropriate place to honor and remember those who have served this country in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift consideration of this bill as an important and timely opportunity to honor our nations' military veterans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, because of official business in my District (27th Congressional District of Texas) I was absent for rollcall votes 147–154. If I had been present for these votes, I would have voted as indicated below.

Rollcall No.—Vote: 147—“yes”; 148—“yes”; 149—“yes”; 150—“yes”; 151—“Present”; 152—“no”; 153—“no”; and 154—“no”.

CONGRATULATING THE RIDGEWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce on its 75th anniversary as one of the leading business/civic organizations in New Jersey. The Ridgewood Chamber has played a leading role in making Ridgewood the first-rate place to live, work and raise a family that it is today. I know—I have lived most of my life in Ridgewood and raised my family there. From President Lawrence Keller through each and every business that is a member, these are people who truly care about their community.

The Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1898 as the Businessmen's Asso-

ciation of Ridgewood, changing its name in 1924. The mission of the organization has remained the same over the years—to “develop and advance the business, professional and civic interests of Ridgewood.”

Today's Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary organization of individuals, businesses, professionals and organizations dedicated to advancing the commercial, financial, civic and general interests of Ridgewood. The Chamber acts as a public relations counselor, representative to local government, a problem solver, information and resource center, and coordinator of business and professional programs and promotions. The Chamber promotes the maintenance of a dignified and successful business and professional district.

Membership represents almost every facet of our business/professional community, including merchants, doctors, lawyers, bankers, newspaper editors, business owners/managers, civic leaders and clergy. A 10-member Board of Directors sets goals and policy carried out by the five officers—President Lawrence Koller of Koller Financial Group, Vice President Joan Groome of the YWCA of Bergen County, Treasurer Kenneth Porkka of Kenneth Porkka & Co., Secretary Sally Jones of Valley Hospital and Past President Tom Hillmann of Hillmann Electric. Executive Director Angela Cautillo is responsible for day-to-day operations.

The Chamber of Commerce brings a sense of unity to our business community. Ridgewood is a regional business center, growing larger and stronger every day. The Chamber successfully pursues its mission to promote Ridgewood and its businesses through effective advertising, planned events, community service, networking and education of the public. The Chamber is true to the entrepreneurial spirit of our free enterprise system. That spirit has been and always will be at the heart of our American democracy.

The Chamber's activities go beyond just promoting the business interests of our community. The Chamber annually sponsors Easter in Ridgewood, the Ridgewood Car Show, the Santa Parade and the Downtown for the Holidays festival. These are all programs that enrich our community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce on a successful 75 years and wishing the Chamber and its members many more years of continued success and prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO THE KANKAKEE-IROQUOIS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HON. STEPHEN E. BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute to the Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission, which for the past 25 years has improved the economics, health, and well-being of the residents in North Central Indiana.

The Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission (KIRPC) has been an integral part in generating community and economic development opportunities for the citizens and local communities of Indiana since July 2,

1973. The KIRPC continues to be a positive influence upon the regional economic well-being by helping communities and residents in North Central Indiana maintain their economic viability.

The Commission has been instrumental in providing a means of communication between local, state, and federal government organizations and the citizens of North Central Indiana. The KIRPC monitors an Overall Economic Development Plan that helps to identify the needs of people and businesses within the community, while reducing government waste. In addition, it has been a valuable partner in helping the region's development through such programs and services as grants-in-aid; grants administration; comprehensive planning; and forums to address local issues. The KIRPC has also helped the people in the region with transportation needs by providing the Arrowhead County Public Transit Service which provides more than 150,000 routes annually.

The KIRPC was key in helping bring Head Start to the area in 1997. The Head Start program now provides services for 122 children and supplies necessary developmental services for the children; all within an education setting.

I commend the Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission for its unwavering support to the region by providing a wide range of services and programs. I wish the Commission continued success in its endeavor to make a difference in the lives of the citizens of Indiana.

TRIBUTE TO FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES F. MUELLER

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to First Lieutenant James F. Mueller of Houghton Lake, Michigan, who will retire from the Michigan State Police on May 29.

I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives and my constituents in the 4th Congressional District to First Lieutenant Mueller's distinguished career.

For three decades, First Lieutenant James F. Mueller has served his country and his community. Soon after graduating from Valparaiso University in Indiana, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and fought for his country in the fields of Vietnam, earning numerous service awards.

He returned home in 1971 and began his career with the Michigan State Police. In 1987, he was promoted to First Lieutenant at Houghton Lake Post #75. He soon became more than a state trooper to the residents of northern Michigan; he became a role model to young children and a key figure in the creation of the D.A.R.E. drug use prevention program in local schools.

In addition to his professional career, First Lieutenant James F. Mueller's extensive personal community service proves his dedication to his neighbors. He is a member of the Lions and Kiwanis, has served in the United Way and Houghton Lake Merchant's Association and has served on the board of directors for the St. John's Lutheran Church, the River House Shelter and Roscommon County 911.

On June 26, a banquet will be held for First Lieutenant Mueller at the Houghton Lake Elks' Club. He will be joined by his colleagues, who honor him for his career; many friends and neighbors who will wish him well; and his wife, Holly; son, Michael; and daughters Laura, Shannon and Kristen.

I join them in thanking him for his years of service and add my personal best wishes to him in his future endeavors.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, it is not often at this particularly troubled era in world affairs that we can take time to celebrate a major advance in freedom and democracy. However, on May 29th we may do just that, as Nigeria, the most populous state and largest economy in Africa, moves firmly back into the camp of democratic nations. On May 29th, President Olusegun Obasanjo will become President of Nigeria, having won a decisive victory in democratic elections in February. President Obasanjo assumes the leadership of more than 120 million Nigerians, and he will be assisted in this task by a democratically elected bicameral Assembly, elected state assemblies and elected state governors, in a political system which now mirrors the United States' own democratic process.

The new government in Abuja is determined to develop Nigeria as a democracy and a friend of the West. During his transition period, President Obasanjo visited many world capitals, including Washington, to begin the process of binding Nigeria into the global diplomatic framework. No other African state has introduced a new government with greater care and preparation, and President Obasanjo has been careful to learn the attitudes of the world's major trading states and to brief them in return on Nigeria's great challenge of rebuilding its economy and its state.

President Obasanjo comes to this position with a strong electoral mandate, and with many decades of experience as a statesman, diplomat, soldier and farmer. He was heavily involved in helping to negotiate the transition from apartheid to democratic government in South Africa some years ago. He was a political prisoner under the military government of General Sani Abacha, who died last year, paving the way for the restoration of Nigerian democracy. President Obasanjo is therefore highly conscious of Nigeria's need to play a leading role in African and international peacekeeping and diplomacy, and is, of course, thoroughly familiar with Nigeria's historic commitment to UN and OAU peacekeeping efforts. Furthermore, Nigeria is once again poised to become a major force for peace and stability in Africa.

The US is going to benefit from a democratic and prosperous Nigeria. After all, Nigeria is the largest single supplier of foreign oil to the United States, and is, as a result, integrally linked into our economy. It is potentially a large export customer for the US, as well. Therefore, I believe the United States should

cooperate with Nigeria to the fullest extent possible in order to ensure that its democratic, economic and governmental structures flourish to the fullest degree possible.

Mr. Speaker, we need to send our congratulations today to President Obasanjo, and all of the officials elected to the two houses of Nigeria's Federal Assembly, and to the newly elected State Assemblymen, and State Governors, and to the elected municipal officials. This is a great watershed for Nigeria, a great day for Africa, and a great opportunity for us to participate in helping to make Africa a vibrant, democratic and self-sustaining continent and a healthy part of the world trading system.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on May 20, 1999, I missed the vote on the motion to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 4, the National Missile Defense Act of 1999, because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO CHANCELLOR HILDA RICHARDS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with the greatest pleasure that I pay tribute to an exceptionally dedicated, compassionate, and distinguished member of Indiana's First Congressional District, Chancellor Hilda Richards of Gary, Indiana. After serving as Chancellor of Indiana University Northwest for six years, Hilda Richards will be retiring next month. On June 5, 1999, Chancellor Richards will be honored with a final, formal salute for her service, effort, and dedication, at Innsbrook Country Club in Merrillville, Indiana.

Born in St. Joseph, Missouri, Chancellor Hilda Richards received her Diploma in Nursing from St. John's School of Nursing in 1956 and continued her education in New York City, New York, where she graduated cum laude from Hunter College with her Bachelor of Science degree in 1961. Chancellor Richards continued her education at Columbia University, where she received her Masters in Education in 1965, Masters of Public Administration in 1971, and her Doctorate of Education in 1976. Chancellor Richards understands that a solid educational foundation will challenge one's mind, empower one's sense of well-being, and rekindle one's heart, with a commitment to values and beliefs essential to becoming and being a whole individual. In the words of Chancellor Hilda Richards herself, "I knew I wanted to make a difference—and I needed a good education to do that. My personality would not allow it to be any other way." Chancellor Richards has continued to challenge herself by doing post-doctoral work at Harvard University.

Chancellor Hilda Richards began her professional life as a staff nurse at Payne Whitney

Clinic of New York Hospital in 1956. Four years later she became an instructor of nursing in the Department of Psychiatry at City Hospital in New York, where she also rose to the position of head nurse in the Department of Psychiatry. From 1971 to 1976 she served as the Director of Nursing Programs and Chair of the Health Science Division at Medgar Evers College in New York City, and from 1976–1979 she served as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for Medgar Evers College. Chancellor Richards continued her professional career as Dean of the College of Health and Human Services at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Before coming to Indiana University Northwest to serve as Chancellor, she served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Indiana University of Pennsylvania from 1986–1993.

Though extremely dedicated to her academic work, Chancellor Hilda Richards selflessly gives her free time and energy to her community. Chancellor Richards is a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a member of the American Nurses Association. She also serves as a board member for several organizations in Northwest Indiana, including: The Gary Education Development Foundation, Inc.; Tradewinds Rehabilitation Center, Inc.; Boys and Girls Club of Northwest Indiana; WYIN-Channel 56; and the Northwest Indiana Forum. Additionally, Hilda Richards has volunteered countless hours of service to the Times Newspaper Editorial Advisory Board, the Indiana Youth Institute, and The Methodist Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in commending Chancellor Hilda Richards for her dedication, service, and leadership to the students and faculty of Indiana University Northwest, as well as the people of the First Congressional District. Northwest Indiana's community has certainly been rewarded by the true service and uncompromising dedication displayed by Chancellor Hilda Richards.

A TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to America's servicemen and women for their heroic sacrifices made to preserve freedom. With the upcoming observance of Memorial Day, the United States recalls once again how freedom is not free. This hallowed national holiday is followed on June 6 by the 55th anniversary of D-Day, the date of the 1944 Invasion of Normandy by the Allied Forces to liberate the European continent from the darkness of Nazi tyranny.

It is the spirit that compels Americans to defend freedom at all costs that we honor at this solemn Memorial Day holiday. Senator Robert Kennedy once wrote: "Every time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."