

while at the same time rising to excellence within her chosen field as a TV anchor. Jennifer Valoppi conceived, created and founded "Women of Tomorrow" in 1997 and convinced her employer, NBC 6, to sponsor this very successful teen mentoring program.

"Women of Tomorrow" pairs professional women in the area with teenage girls of South Florida in order to improve their self-esteem as well as provide guidance and nurturing in their lives. The program is designed to show young women the endless possibilities ahead of them as they embark on the beginning of their adult lives.

Mentors meet with small groups, no larger than ten girls, to discuss their ambitions, motivations, positive attitudes and the achievement of their dreams in addition to sharing personal stories of triumph and temporary setbacks. Roads to success as well as potential roadblocks are also discussed.

In addition to launching this wonderful organization devoted to teenage girls, Jennifer is a multi-Emmy award winning journalist who has twice been named "Best TV News Anchor."

Mr. Speaker, Jennifer has certainly made a mark on our community and I applaud her example to the community. She inspires all of us with her dedication and drive to improve the world around us.

SKOKIE, ONE OF THE BEST TOWNS AROUND

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letter to be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Washington, DC, January 14, 1999.

MAYOR JACQUELINE B. GORELL,
Village of Skokie, Skokie IL.

DEAR MAYOR GORELL: What a wonderful job you have done in shaping Skokie into the remarkable place that it is! You should feel very proud and fulfilled as you leave elective office after 22 years of service, ten as Mayor. Now it is your turn to enjoy the wealth of opportunities that you have brought to Skokie.

You have more time to enjoy the world class library for which you were truly the driving force. You can walk the beautiful canal bank along with so many of your villagers who are appreciating the bike path, the sculpture park and the natural beauty which your vision and work made possible. You and Nate can attend even more excellent activities at the Performing Arts Center which is now your legacy. And you can rest assured at all times that you and yours are protected by a police and fire department that achieved a status that few other municipalities have reached while under your watch.

It is no wonder that Chicago Magazine rated Skokie as "one of the best towns around", and Worth Magazine said that "on Wall Street, it is a star." Those of us who have had the pleasure of working with you and observing your leadership are not surprised by these accolades.

Mayor Gorell, thank you for all that you have done for the community. I wish you happiness in your retirement. If I can ever be

of help to you, I would be honored if you would call on me.

Sincerely,

JAN SCHAKOWSKY,
Member of Congress.

TRIBUTE TO FLORA WALKER

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in rising today to recognize Flora Walker, past President of AFSCME Council 25, who retired on November 16, 1998. Her friends and colleagues will honor her with a reception on January 29, 1999.

Through the years, Flora Walker has been a fighter. Her tireless efforts have improved the lives of the working families throughout Southeastern Michigan. Flora is a woman who has dedicated her life to securing dignity and respect for all people. She has been a champion of civil rights and civil liberties, and has helped create a stronger, more united community. Her strong leadership and vision were recognized by her colleagues and she was chosen to serve in a distinguished list of elected positions.

Flora Walker began her career with the AFSCME Council 25 Executive Board that continued for twenty-four years. Her first elected position was as a representative. She went on to serve as delegate to one special and two regular Council 25 Conventions. Her tenure as president began in 1992 during a time of crisis for the Council. Under her guidance, it has become a strong, united, statewide council continuing the work begun by the Founding Convention in 1978.

During her six years as President, many new innovative programs were implemented. Flora was instrumental in overhauling the entire Council 25 legal operation, providing union members with an unprecedented level of service. The arbitration department was streamlined, initiating a process of audits and increasing the number of advocates. She has also served as an AFSCME International Vice President from Michigan. Flora had a demanding schedule, but she would never hesitate to go to the bargaining table with her members if needed.

Flora is not only an active union leader, but a community leader as well. She has received both the Champion of Hope Award from the National Kidney Foundation and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award. She was recognized by the University of Michigan during a Black Labor History Celebration. She has been honored for her active involvement in the community, in the political arena, and in service and charitable projects.

Few people have given to their community with the vision and commitment that Flora Walker has given to hers. She is a person who has inspired the admiration of many. I am sure her colleagues will miss the famous Walker hug. I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Flora on her very distinguished career and I wish her and her family all of the best.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GEORGE VERNON IRONS, SR.

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to eulogize and celebrate the life of Dr. George Vernon Irons, Sr., distinguished professor of history and political science at Samford University for 43 years, who passed away July 21, 1998. Dr. Irons taught 17 university presidents—more than any other known educator.

Dr. Irons was also a colonel in the United States Army for 33 years, active and reserve, and received full military honors. Dr. Irons was a member of the prestigious Alabama Sports Hall of Fame for 22 years—its oldest member. He was the only distance star ever inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame and a true great in Alabama's rich athletic history. As captain of the University of Alabama distance team, he broke the record for the Birmingham Road Race in 1923. His record was never broken or equaled. Dr. Irons also broke the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association, now the Southeastern Conference, record for two, three and three and one-half mile races.

Dr. Irons was listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the South and Southwest, Who's Who in American Education and Directory of American Scholars. Dr. Irons was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal from Freedom's Foundation, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1962.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that articles from the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame and Bama Magazine be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to share the achievements of this great Alabamian who served Samford University as distinguished educator 43 years, his country as colonel in the U.S. Army 33 years and his alma mater, the University of Alabama, as a record-breaking champion athlete and Phi Beta Kappa honor student.

[From the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame]
IRONS ACCUSTOMED TO SEEING FINISH LINE FIRST

(By Kyle Moaty)

While football was far from its 'king' stages the University of Alabama would enjoy in the future, Crimson Tide track star George Irons was keeping the athletic flame burning at the Capstone as its 'Knight of the Cinderpath.'

Former Alabama Sen. John Sparkman was a classmate of Irons at Alabama and later served in the Army together. And according to Sparkman, if it hadn't been for Irons, athletics would have been pretty boring during that time period at Alabama.

"George Irons was all we had to cheer about," said Sparkman.

Today, Dr. George Vernon Irons is catching another milestone, as he'll turn 91 on Aug. 7.

With the discipline, desire and skill he possessed, Irons would have probably been a standout distance runner anyway. But there were other reasons for perfecting the art of running.

"For the fear of being paddled," Irons said. "When I was a freshman at Alabama the sophomores were always getting after the freshmen. If they caught you, you could do one of two things . . . you could lie or you could run. Don't press me too much on which I did because I did both of them."

Irons also said that running was getting for catching up with the co-eds.

Born in Demopolis as a son of a Presbyterian minister, Irons moved to Fort Valley, Ga., shortly afterwards and eventually took a job as a paper boy. Strangely enough, it was perhaps that job was the start of something that led to him being inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame in 1978.

"I rode the bicycle a whole lot delivering those papers, so I had strong legs," Irons said.

Later, as a freshman at Alabama, Irons first realized he could run a long distance in a short period of time.

"From where I was living, when I would hear the whistle blow each morning I had about 10 minutes to make it to class," Irons recalled. "And it was a pretty good distance. But I always made it to class on time. I don't think I was ever late. I guess you could say I found out I could run fast by accident."

His trip to class would take him across an open field, a few acres of ground that now is the home of Bryant-Denny Stadium.

Irons also noticed the 'college boys' running around the university's campus having what seemed like good times. He laughs now at remembering thinking they were running around in their underwear, when actually it was the track team's shorts.

Irons joined the Alabama track team and would never lose a race to a teammate. In fact, from his sophomore year on, Irons never lost a race to another collegian. But the problem was not fellow collegians. The problems was pros.

The big running events often allowed older, professional runners to compete with the collegians. And one of the best of those that Irons would compete against in events ranging from the 880-yard run to the four-mile run would be a fellow by the name of Ellsworth Richter.

Richter was Irons' biggest nemesis in a Birmingham road race that was held annually for the SIAA (Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference) championship.

Irons recalls the race through Birmingham had about seven turns in all, and Richter knew the course well, which gave him an added advantage each year.

As a freshman at Alabama, Irons would place 10th in the event, but would come back and claim second-place finishes both as a sophomore and junior, as only the professional Richter was able to beat him.

Then came Irons' senior year at Alabama, and although Richter was busy having an appendectomy, Irons completely shattered the course record by 20 seconds. And he did so in the rain. It was a record that stood for the final 20 years of the race until its demise.

How could a record be broken by so much, and especially by an amateur, and in the rain? It must have been the shoes.

In fact, Irons wore kangaroo skin shoes. "They stuck to my feet very tight," said Irons. "While the others were sloshing along in their tennis shoes, mine felt just great."

Richter would never beat Irons on other courses such as Atlanta. The two would later become friends before he passed away many years down the road. His son, Ellsworth Richter, Jr., would later be an SEC champion distance runner for Auburn University in the 1980's.

Irons had other ways of getting the edge. While he had no state of the art weight set to work out with, he would simply lift an old shotgun repeatedly for upper body strength. "That improved my endurance, my wind and strength," Irons said.

During the early '20s, college football games had all the excitement a game may have today . . . or at least while the game was actually going on. But halftimes were more of a dead period.

Irons explained, "There were no bands, or girls to watch at halftime. There was not much entertainment. So they'd bring us runners in to run before these big crowds. We'd run for 10 or 15 minutes during the half. We'd start inside the stadium and run a couple of laps, then go outside and run a road race. It was usually a three-mile run and we'd finish in front of the grandstand.

"The big game back then was Georgia Tech and Auburn and I guess there would be fifty or sixty thousand at those games even back then at Grant Field. They would bring in 75 runners, and of course the crowd would be really pulling for their school."

Once again, the rules were pretty loose as pros were allowed to compete once again.

"Richter was there, but I would always beat him in Atlanta because he didn't know the course," said Irons.

Irons added that Alabama's big rival in track was Mississippi A&M, which is now known as Mississippi State University.

Irons worked his way through school. Despite his success, he ran for three years on no scholarship. But as a senior he became aggressive off the track, too.

"Yeah, my last year I suggested to them that I could use a scholarship," laughed Irons about something that was certainly no laughing matter at the time.

Irons' coach at Alabama was the late Hank Crisp, who was more widely known for his football and basketball duties. He served as an assistant for five Alabama football coaches, and was the head basketball coach from 1924-42 in Tuscaloosa, but he actually came to Alabama to be the head track coach.

The NCAA rule book was nowhere near as thick as it is today. And with Crisp being what Irons called "a very kind man," his players would never have to worry if they got in a serious bind financially.

"He (Crisp) would loan you money on the side if you really needed it," said Irons.

Irons, like everyone else that came into contact with Crisp, had great respect for the coach.

"He was a four-year letterman at VPI (Virginia Tech) despite having his right arm cut off," said Irons.

Crisp lost his arm when he was 13 cutting corn to fill a silo.

"But man was he tough," said Irons. "And he ran the hurdles, and if you've ever run hurdles before you know how important balance is, but he did it with just one arm. He also played football, basketball and baseball. They said he played outfield and after he would catch the ball, he'd throw the glove up in the air and catch the ball coming out and throw it back to the infield."

Crisp died the night he was inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame on Jan. 23, 1970.

Irons wouldn't let the university or Crisp down for awarding him the scholarship for his senior season. He finished undefeated in dual matches. And the biggest race in the south during that period was an AAU event run in Atlanta where some of the top eastern runners were also in the field. Irons won that race two years in a row.

Irons path in life took a turn during World War II. He had finished at the university just after World War I, but through his ROTC classes he had made 2nd Lt. He would become a Captain in WWII and eventually a Lt. Col. for four and a half years.

"I had various experiences in the Army," said Irons. "I was in a swamp about 30 miles north of Wilmington, NC. They put us there so when the shrapnel fell it wouldn't hurt nothing but the rattlesnakes."

He would also be stationed in Texas, Mexico and New Jersey before returning home.

He would enter the educational field once back in Alabama at Howard College (known today as Samford University) in 1933.

"Howard was really struggling to keep its head above water at that time," Irons said. "I was lucky to be hired. Jobs were scarce during the Depression. We were accepting a side of beef and 12 dozen eggs for tuition. Those were hard times. Nobody had cash, so we took produce instead."

But Irons knew a banker in Woodlawn, and he feels even today that may have helped him get hired at Howard College.

"Yeah, one of my first jobs was to go down to First National Bank and try to get them to extend the loan for the college. I knew the banker so they thought I'd be a good one to send."

He didn't say whether he got the extension or not, but he got the job, and stayed for 43 years.

During his tenure at Howard College, Irons taught future sports legends Bobby Bowden and Shorty Cooper in the classroom. But he also remembers a young man from Rattlesnake Gulch, Montana named Homestead. "He was a big fella that talked big, but he wasn't too brave at heart," recalled Irons. "But everybody just assumed he was tough because he came from Rattlesnake Gulch, Montana."

As the only University of Alabama track man in the Alabama Sports Hall of Frame, Irons is extremely proud. But perhaps no more than his son, Birmingham attorney Bill Irons.

"Dad is the most disciplined person I've ever known," said Bill Irons. "He goes beyond the doctor's wishes. And he also has a very high threshold of pain."

Bill calls the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame "a galaxy of stars and assembly of greats."

Dr. George Irons is certainly a great star in the Hall of Fame.

"Being inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame was the most important event of my life," said Irons. "Everybody wants to get to heaven. Well, this may be the nearest I come."

"I've read about all of these guys in the Hall and now I'm in it."

Just a couple of months away from his 91st birthday, Irons still gets in a couple of miles a day, although they're most accomplished by walking. He does jog on occasion.

"It's good to get a little sweat out of you and spend a little time in the sunshine each day," said Irons.

Asked how he's made it, Irons said simply, "All my life I've been doing what seemed the best thing to do at the time."

One of his favorite quotes comes from another Hall of Famer. "Satchel Paige used to say, 'Don't look back, they may be gaining on you.'"

Gain on George Irons? Hardly.

[From the Bama Magazine, May 1984]

HISTORY OF ALABAMA ATHLETICS—IRONS: A TIDE TRACK IRON MAN
(By Tommy Deas)

George Irons had never run in a race before his freshman year at Alabama in 1921. But afterward he was without equal in his four years of running track and cross-country for the Crimson Tide.

Not once did Irons finish behind a teammate in a race, beginning with his first effort as a freshman. And not often did he finish behind an opponent. George Irons was simply a natural.

It wasn't a background in track that led Irons to start running for Alabama—he had no such family ties to the sport. It wasn't the promise of medals and recognition, or the thrill of victory or the roar of the crowds. All that was still unknown to Irons when he began running.

Irons had more practical concerns that led to the discovery of his talents. After building

his legs up by delivering newspapers on bicycle, Irons found his leg strength could come in handy.

"I lived in Tuscaloosa on Queen City Avenue," he said. "They blew a whistle in those days to start class. They would take roll 10 minutes after the whistle. I found I could eat my pancakes in time and still get to class for roll call after they blew the whistle."

"Also in those days, the upperclassmen would haze the freshmen. They would wait around Woods Hall—that was the center of campus because that's where the Post Office was—and grab a freshman and carry him upstairs for a paddling. There were two things a freshman could do—lie or run."

"I'd rather not comment on the lying, but that's where I started my running. I found that running was a fun thing to do. I just gradually worked my way up to cross-country."

By the end of his four years at Alabama, Irons had made his name as one of the best, some said the very best, distance runners of his day. Known as "Alabama's Shining Knight of the Cinderpath" (track events were then run on cinder courses), Irons competed all over the South against the best amateur and, occasionally, professional runners around.

"I mostly ran the mile, two miles and three miles. I ran cross-country over hill and dale and streams and meadows. Sometimes they would even throw me in the half-mile to pick up a point in a meet," he said.

After his freshman year, Irons won every cross-country and road race while competing for the Tide. That led to his being named captain of the track and cross-country teams his junior and senior year. In addition, in Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association competition after his freshman year, Irons never finished worse than second in any race, including shorter-distance races that he ran to help the team score points.

As naturally as the slight 6-footer took to the sport, he did not begin running without some skepticism. "That first race I didn't know that I'd be running so much," he said, "and I asked myself, 'What am I doing this for? This hurts!' So I decided to pick it up and start passing people to get it over with, and I came in first."

And running around town in a track suit in those days attracted more attention than it does today.

"When we'd run down Greensboro Avenue, some of the sweet old ladies would call the police to come arrest these men running down the street in their underwear. The police were understanding, and they asked us to run back another way and not let the ladies see us again," Irons said.

One race that stands out in Irons' memory is his final run in the Birmingham Athletic Club Road Race in 1923. In that race Irons broke the course record by over 20 seconds, and his record has never been broken. And as the three-mile event is no longer run, his record may stand forever.

"I'd been running that race all along," he said, "and I believe I'd won it twice, but for this race I'd bought a pair of kangaroo leather running shoes. All the other runners were wearing tennis shoes, but I had brought these that wrapped around your feet."

"It was raining very hard, and it was a big handicap for them to be wearing tennis shoes, because they kept slipping. It ruined my shoes, and I was never able to wear them again, but I won that race, and the record still stands."

Irons likes to recall the big races that were part of the halftime shows of big football games. The biggest was the one held at halftime of the Auburn-Georgia Tech game every year in Atlanta.

"They'd have the big race over there between the halves," he said. "This was before

they had the bands and the 'honey-watching' that they have now, so we were the only halftime entertainment. We'd leave before the half and finish at the middle of the field with everyone standing and cheering us on. I ran three of those, and won two of them."

After coaching at two high schools and earning his doctorate at Duke, Irons went into the teaching profession. Now 82 years old, he retired a few years ago after teaching history for 43 years at Samford (formerly Howard) University in Birmingham.

In 1978, Irons was recognized as one of the state's outstanding athletes by being inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. The drive was spearheaded by his son, William Lee Irons, a Birmingham lawyer (George Irons, Jr., Irons' other son, is a doctor in North Carolina).

"It means a great deal to me," Irons said of the induction. "I never expected to get that. In 1978, I never expected to be heard from again as a track man. There's only one track man in the Hall of Fame from Alabama, myself, and I think there will be a great many more in there, because they've got world-class people competing in the state now. I hope maybe I've opened up the door for some of them."

HONORING SYLVIA MARTINEZ

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary young person who has recently been named the Junior Carpenterian of the Year: Sylvia Martinez.

As a student attending Carpinteria High School, Sylvia has had many successes. In addition to her class ranking and impressive 3.8 grade-point average, she was the recipient of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Scholastic Achievement Award last year, and a recipient of the Golden State Exams Awards in 1995 and again in 1998.

At school, Sylvia is a leader in the Interact Club, the Director of Elections in the Student Body Association, a varsity player in Track and Field, and was voted Most Valuable Player in Basketball last year. She is a strong role model to other Latina students and an inspiration to many.

Most impressive however, is Sylvia's commitment to her community. Before she was ten, Sylvia was a volunteer at Main and Aliso Schools as a teachers aide and was active in numerous summer Migrant Education programs.

One of her advisors has described Sylvia as a "bright, inquisitive, compassionate person who has dedicated her young life to fulfilling a dream of becoming a successful humanitarian." I believe that someday she will be.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Sylvia Martinez for her hard work, vision, and commitment to her community and world.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNE WYNNE

HON. JIM TURNER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the dedicated public service and accom-

plishments of a good friend and great Texan, Ms. Anne Wynne, as she completes her term as a member of the Texas Transportation Commission. As the first woman on the Commission, she has served our state in one of the most demanding of all appointed positions in our state's government. Anne tackled her tasks with more common sense than East Texas has pine trees and a compassionate heart bigger than Big Bend National Park. Her sense of humor became her trademark throughout the Texas Department of Transportation as she visited with employees throughout the state.

During her term, Anne was instrumental in developing a spirit of partnership between the Texas Department of Transportation and the contractors who do much of the actual highway work throughout the state. She encouraged the department to move toward a diversified workforce and she worked with the legislature to create innovative ways to respond to the ever increasing costs of transportation projects. She also continually challenged the department's managers to operate the government agency like they would their own private business.

Those of us fortunate enough to be close to Anne Wynne know that at the core of her philosophy regarding her responsibilities on the Commission has been her great love for the State of Texas. The Commission and TxDOT will miss her deep commitment and dedication to the Texas Department of Transportation's mission.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all of my fellow Texans join me in this expression of thanks to Anne Wynne for her exemplary performance of duty. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating her and wishing her all the best in her future endeavors.

IN HONOR OF LECH WALESA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Lech Walesa, 1983 Nobel Peace Prize winner, former President of Solidarity Union and the former President of Poland, on his visit to Cleveland.

Mr. Walesa has been fighting for Democracy in Poland since he assumed the leadership of the independent trade union Solidarity in 1980. His rousing speech to striking workers from the top of a bulldozer began a social revolution and prompted talks with the government which resulted in legal recognition of Solidarity. After a military crackdown eighteen months later, which resulted in his spending a year in prison, Mr. Walesa continued his leadership of Solidarity underground. After his release, he returned to his mission of a Democratic Poland. He was awarded the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. Mr. Walesa was also named Man Of The Year by Time magazine, The Financial Times, and The London Observer.

In 1990, Mr. Walesa became the first democratically elected President of Poland. His leadership planted the seeds of freedom and democracy in Poland and ended Communist rule. After a term in office in which he set a path to secure Poland's commitment to a free