

TRIBUTE TO TONY AGUIRRE

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a greatly respected and remembered man. Tony Aguirre, a captain and former fire chief with the Hollister fire department and community role-model, died this last July after a courageous battle with cancer at the age of 61.

Tony was a committed and professional firefighter who selflessly devoted himself to the welfare and safety of the members of the community for nearly half a century. Tony Aguirre was a long-time resident of Hollister who returned to the community after serving in the National guard and attending San Jose State University. He is remembered by many as one of the real heroes in the community.

Recently, Tony had been honored as the Man of the Year by the Mexican American Committee on Education and also served as the first president of the San Benito County League of United Latin American citizens.

We will always remember Tony Aguirre for his courage and compassion. My thoughts are with his family.

HONORING JOHN R. LINDAHL, SR.

HON. ED BRYANT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. BRYANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent and one of America's top entrepreneurs, John R. Lindahl, Sr., founder and recently-retired Chairman of State Industries, Inc. in Ashland City, Tennessee.

After flying 64 missions as a B-26 bomber pilot in World War II, John returned to Tennessee and went into business for himself making coal and wood-burning stoves out of a garage. By 1948, John took his small State Stove and Manufacturing Company in a new direction and began producing water heaters.

With some 150 competing water heater companies in the early fifties as his competition, John Lindahl let nothing stand in his way. He sold, delivered, and installed water heaters himself, running this small operation often from his car. With John's hard work, his dedication to free enterprise and commitment to quality, State Stove and Manufacturing became State Industries, one of the world's largest and leading manufacturers of residential and commercial water heaters and water system tanks.

Relocating in the early sixties to Ashland City, Tennessee in my district, State Industries boomed into one of the most modern and efficient plants in the industry. Occupying a 1.6 million square foot plant and employing more than 2,000 employees, State Industries now grosses sales in excess of \$400 million.

Well-known for his devotion to his employees, service and building strong relationships with customers, John Lindahl, Sr. is proof that the American dream is possible through commitment, loyalty and faith.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have this opportunity today to congratulate John Lindahl,

Sr. on his truly remarkable success and impressive legacy. Along with my colleagues in the House, I send my best wishes to him for a happy and healthy retirement.

TRIBUTE TO NORWAY

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and pay tribute to Norway for its numerous contributions to and dedicated support of the international affairs which have become significant factors in the development of a sound Balkan market economy and a strong foundation for democracy. In particular, I would like to specifically highlight Norway's exemplary commitment to recent international peacekeeping operations, military volunteer support and participation in various multilateral economic and humanitarian programs.

Since 1947, Norway has taken part in nearly 30 peacekeeping operations involving more than 55,000 military volunteers. With a total population of about 4.5 million, this is a significant contribution which greatly exceeds larger NATO ally countries. These Norwegian military volunteers have been stationed in the Balkans, the Middle East, Kashmir, Korea, the Congo, Guatemala, Angola, El Salvador, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia to name a few.

Since 1997, Norway has assisted with extremely delicate international situations by taking an active part in peace keeping operations such as supporting the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Stabilization Forces (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United Nations Truce Supervision (UNTS) in East Slovenia, and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP).

Norway is equally strong in the economic marketing and developing of democracy for three Baltic states; Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Through various multilateral cooperative programs and exercises, Norway has stimulated economic growth and collaboration between a number of western countries with the Baltic states. This unified effort has resulted in the establishment of a joint Baltic peace-keeping battalion, a joint Baltic Navy Squadron, and Baltic Security Assistance Group. Norway has also provided significant monetary aid to the Balkan area with 153 million dollars to aid Kosovars in Norway, 38 million dollars in military expenses and 29 million dollars to United Nations for humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Speaker, Norway is indeed a "keystone" to the foundation of international democracy and within the Balkan area. Its continued support of peacekeeping operations, humanitarian support and economic growth remains vital to world stability. For outstanding support of democracy, I congratulate and pay tribute to our good friend and ally, Norway.

SACRED HEART CHURCH IN SYRACUSE TO BE DEDICATED AS A MINOR BASILICA

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues today a significant honor for many of my Central New York neighbors and constituents who are parishioners at the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Syracuse.

My wife and I attend mass at Sacred Heart quite often and so we were happy and proud, as are so many others who worship in this neighborhood church on the west side of the city, to hear the recent news from the Vatican that the church will be designated, by order of Pope John Paul II, a Minor Basilica during a mass to be celebrated on October 3.

To many in the parish, this important designation represents years of prayers and hard work by Father Peter W. Gleba, the rector and pastor, who put together the papers of application (all in Latin, I might add), and the long-time leadership of Monsignor Adolph Kantor, Msgr. Kantor is now retired, but he will be on hand at the Oct. 3 mass to present the homily.

This designation, aside from the magnificent honor paid to the church and the parish, has a practical effect. A Basilica Chair will sit in the vicinity of the altar and should the Holy Father ever come to Central New York, he would say mass at Sacred Heart and use this very special chair.

The designation also means that our Bishop from the Diocese of Syracuse will say mass at Sacred Heart at least once a year, in addition to regular liturgical events such as administering the sacrament of Confirmation.

Significantly, there are only two other Basiliacs in New York State, one in Tonawanda near Buffalo, and one in Brooklyn. This is the first such designation in the history of the Syracuse diocese.

We who are so proud of and thankful for this designation also give thanks to Bishop James Moynihan and former Bishop O'Keefe for their encouragement and support.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute also to former pastors, Father Rusin and Monsignor Piejda, both of whom formed a very close bond with the parishioners, many of whom over the years have been of Polish and Eastern European descent.

This is a tremendous honor for Sacred Heart Church, and I would ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing their great joy and thanksgiving.

ARTSAKH INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the brave people of Artsakh—the traditional Armenian name of what is presently known as the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh—on their independence day—September 2nd. Eight years after their unilateral declaration of independence as the Soviet

Union was collapsing and hostile militant forces were rising in the Caucasus, the predominantly Armenian population of Artsakh is still far from being safe and secure. Shunned by the world at large and increasingly threatened by the rise of militant Islamism in the Caucasus, the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh sets an example of perseverance and commitment to freedom and independence.

The current plight of the people of Nagorno Karabakh is a sorry situation since the Armenians of Artsakh are among the oldest distinct population groupings on earth. Armenian settlements and a distinct political entity have existed in Artsakh since the 2nd century B.C. Armenian independence prevailed there until the collapse and partition of the first Armenian state in the 5th Century A.D. At that time, between 480 and 483, Mvoses Khorenatsi wrote the monumental "History of Armenia" under the auspices of Prince Sahak Bagratuni—a manifestation of the centrality of Artsakh in Armenian civilization. In the late Middle Ages, the Armenian principalities retained their independence under Persia's nominal rule.

The Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh were among the first in the region to embrace Christianity back in 301 A.D. in the aftermath of the missionary activities of St. Gregory the Illuminator. In this context, the repeated destruction and rebuilding of the Monastery in Amaras symbolizes the resilience and determination of the Armenians of Artsakh. First built around 330 A.D. by St. Gregory the Illuminator, it has been repeatedly damaged and destroyed by countless invaders—such as the Arabs, the Persians, the Mongols and the Turks—only to be rebuilt again and again by the local population. The Monastery in Amaras was last damaged by the Azerbaijani forces in 1992, during Nagorno Karabakh's bitter war for independence. It has since been rebuilt and its centrality in Armenian religious life restored.

The Armenians' quest for independence has long historical roots. In the late 1980s, as the population of the then Soviet Union was awakened to rediscover nationalist roots, as well as cultural and religious heritage, so did Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh. By then, they had a history of quest for independence despite Soviet oppression. Significantly, since 1923, Nagorno Karabakh was a distinct Autonomous Region within Azerbaijan—a status that reflected the population's distinction. The Armenian population was restive since the thaw of the early 1960s, including riots in the late 1960s demanding self-determination within the confines of the USSR.

In the late 1980s, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh were alarmed by the rise of Turkic militancy in Azerbaijan. The legacy of the 1918–1920 slaughter of Armenians by Turkish and Azerbaijani forces—especially the March 1920 destruction of Shushi, an Armenian cultural center that lost its Armenian population and character until recaptured in May 1992—was revived by pogroms in Baku and "ethnic cleansing" of Armenian population throughout the region since 1988. No less alarming was the Azerbaijani blockade aimed to starve the Armenian population into surrender and self-imposed exile. Hence, once the Armenians' quest for self-determination was rejected by the Soviet and subsequently Azerbaijani authorities, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh embarked on their quest for independence as the sole guarantor for their self-survival.

On September 22, 1991, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh declared their independence and vowed to defend the Armenian character of their land. They then withstood a three-year long brutal war in which the vastly superior Azerbaijani forces strove to destroy them completely. Presently, the population of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh is a mixture of the local population and Armenian refugees from parts of Nagorno-Karabakh still held by Azerbaijani forces, as well as ethnically cleansed Armenian communities in other parts of Azerbaijan, most notably Baku. They are trying to rebuild their country. A mere 150,000–200,000 people surrounded by a sea of hate with only a corridor to Armenia as a life-line of sustenance.

Therefore, we should recognize the determination of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh to preserve and revise their heritage and take control of their lives. In an era where the United States has stood up to the rights of endangered minorities to self-determination, stability, and betterment of life, we should not neglect the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Armenian people of Artsakh. They have already fought and sacrificed enormously in order to attain these rights. On their independence day, they deserve not only our congratulations, but our recognition and help, so that they can continue to grow and develop free of existential threats.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD J. LIEN

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a few words expressing the profound gratitude and esteem I have for a very special public servant in my congressional district. Richard J. Lien has served the public as a Social Security Field Representative for the last 25 years. He has also been one of Social Security's special congressional liaisons for more than a decade. We will lose Dick to retirement on September 24.

My staff and I have worked with literally dozens of congressional liaisons, and it is no exaggeration to say that Dick is the best of the best. Dick has worked with nearly every member of my staff and helped thousands of my constituents with problems ranging from the easily fixable to the nearly impossible. Dick tackled problems big and small with his characteristic persistence and compassion for those he was trying to help.

There was the time he got a woman her lost Social Security check just in time to prevent her home from being foreclosed. The time he got a young American girl living in Jerusalem a replacement Social Security Card in a week, so she could complete important State Department paperwork. The time he forwarded a young man—on Christmas Eve—more than \$20,000 owed him in back disability pay.

I could go on and on until I had filled several volumes. My constituents have called him a savior, a godsend, and even Santa Claus. And I haven't even touched on the work he has done for the other members of Oregon's Congressional Delegation and our predecessors.

Through his years of service to the public and the Congress, Dick has been unfailingly professional, courteous, and persistent. He never gave up on a tough problem or complained, though he often bore more than his share of work. Dick will be sorely missed—by Oregon's members of Congress, by the Social Security Administration, and by the countless Oregonians he helped, many of whom probably never knew he was the one making sure they got their Social Security checks every month.

Dick, today I salute you, my staff salutes you, and Oregon salutes you. May you have a peaceful and well-deserved retirement.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2488, TAXPAYER REFUND AND RELIEF ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. CASS BALLENGER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer my support for the compromise version of the Taxpayer Refund and Relief Act of 1999, a tax relief package which is a consequence of our strong economy and the successful 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement. The commitment to tax relief demonstrated by Chairman BILL ARCHER and the

For over three decades, Ernie Dillon contributed to the community through a lifetime of civic accomplishments in the areas of education and health care in Santa Cruz county. Ernie worked tirelessly to raise monies for Dominican Hospital and was also instrumental in acquiring the funding for constructing Cabrillo Community College.

As an avid global adventurer and for his devoted service to promoting the welfare of the people in Santa Cruz county, Ernie Dillon will be sorely missed and always remembered for his great contributions spanning an entire lifetime. My thoughts remain with his family.