

syndicated, rock 'n' roll dance show *Upbeat*. Don Webster hosted the show—the second-longest running show of its kind in history—for seven years. He got to meet just about every rock 'n' roll legend along the way. In fact, *Upbeat* photos of Webster with Jerry Lee Lewis and the *Outsiders* were included in the "My Town" exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland.

In his 35 years with Channel 5, Don Webster did a little bit of everything—from hosting *It's Academic* and *The Ohio Lottery Show* to working in management as station manager. But most people know his true love was delivering weather forecasts, which he's done for more than two decades.

We will miss Don Webster and his familiar presence in our lives, but wish the best for him and his lovely wife, Candace, in their new life in Hilton Head.

TRIBUTE TO BRANDI NICHOLE GASKEY

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, one of the best students in my district, Brandi Nichole Gaskey, has just graduated from Farragut High School.

She has had an amazing four years in high school. She was a member of the National Honor Society all four years, and she was also President of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes her junior and senior year.

Brandi was also involved in sports at Farragut and was voted most athletic, as well.

Mr. Speaker, recently Brandi Gaskey was asked to give the commencement address at Farragut High School. I have attached a copy of her remarks that I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

HOPE THROUGH CHARACTER 1999 GRADUATION ADDRESS

(By Brandi Nichole Gaskey)

Mr. Superintendent, friends, family, distinguished guests, faculty, and fellow graduates of the last class of the century. I stand before you tonight filled with excitement as I welcome you to the 1999 Farragut High School Graduation Ceremony. As we have come to the end of our formal education, to for some of us a miraculous occasion, the question was asked "Does character count?" Although I could not think of one word to define character, I respond with an enthusiastic YES, character does count. I counts for you and me and every person we will ever come in contact with. It counts in a big way through the small things we do or say every day. Character is who you are in the dark, when no one is looking. It's what's on the inside, the gutsy stuff you're made of that no one knows about, but one day every one will see. My pastor, Doug Sager, once said, "your character is your set of values that are non-negotiable. It's the quality of life given to you by God to say what is right and to stand up for it." For you see, your character can either make you or break you because everyone has character, it's just a matter of how you choose to develop it. For example, two students at Columbine High School had the character to kill their fellow classmates, while other students at Columbine High School had the character to stand up for their faith no matter what the cost. So I'd

like to share with you today how to develop your character, and exactly why it does count. Moris Mandel tells a story of how the forming of our character is like the forming of an icicle. He concludes that an icicle forms one drop at a time until it is about one foot or two long. If the water was clear, the icicle remains clear and sparkles like diamonds. If the water was muddy, the icicle looks foul and its beauty is spoiled. Just so, our characters are forming one little thought at a time, one little action at a time. In the Bible, in Romans 5:3-4, it states, "Trials make perseverance, perseverance our character, and that character produces hope." Helen Keller also stated, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet, it is only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved." Your character is seen and developed through the hard times of life. So I'd like for you to think of an experience that has helped shape your character. I thought about my basketball team, and how Romans 5:3-4 applied to us in so many ways. We had faced so many trials, from a freshman, sophomore, and junior season all with losing records. I thought of countless hours of practice and endless preseason track workouts and sitting in the teamroom after a loss and doing nothing but crying. But those trials taught us perseverance, and we produced character, and that character gave us hope. Hope for this year in which we proudly finished with a winning record of 16-12. Or think of someone you know who has an extreme amount of character. It may be someone who loses their wife and daughter, but still lives life in the best way he can, or someone who works so hard and only makes enough money to feed his/her family. Or someone who fails so many times but keeps on trying and trying again and no one knows how bad they've hurt or hard they've worked. It's studying so hard for an AP Latin test, a math final, or an English exam to realize you make a D, so the next time you study so much harder and finally make the A. Character is all these things. It is formed when you realize you're at your lowest, but hey, you gotta keep on going. So I'd like to challenge you class of 1999 to see each trial you will face as an opportunity to produce and reveal your character. All of these things will "strengthen your soul, clear your vision, inspire your ambition, and you will achieve success" (Helen Keller). Just like the Bible says, your character produces hope. Hope through God that we will make a difference, hope that we are going to be the best future leaders, parents, teachers, ministers, and merchants in the history of our nation, hope that what we do matters, and hope that our character will count informing a better tomorrow. So be the people of character you are called to be and work daily on strengthening your soul and developing your inner spirit. Margot Isobel once said something that reveals the importance of your true heart and true character. She said, "I think t'would be lovely to live and do good, to grow up to be the girl that I should. A heart full of sunshine and a life full of grace are beauty far better than beauty of face. I think t'would be lovely to make people glad, to cheer up the lonely, discouraged, and sad. What matter if homely or pleasant to see, if lovely in spirit I'm striving to be." So you see your character can make a difference in the lives of others. It's what's on the inside, your inner spirit, it's what you've developed these last 17 or 18 years, what you've persevered through at home and at school, it's your character that counts, and yes, character is essential. So let God guide you through your trials you will face in college, your career, your marriage,

and as a parent, and let those "trials make perseverance, perseverance your character, and let character produce in you hope" (Romans 5:3-4). So I'd like to congratulate you class of 1999. We made it and we finished the ride successfully, but I'd like to leave you with the words of Abraham Lincoln. He said, "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures forever and that is your character." Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS DISASTER ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the purpose of introducing the Small Business Disaster Assistance Act.

This is a two-part proposal that seeks to provide both immediate assistance to viable small businesses and agricultural enterprises when first dealing with the damage wrought by a disaster, and more long-term assistance which seeks to provide them with the needed lift as they continue to work towards normalcy.

My bill creates a program whereby viable small businesses and agricultural enterprises would be eligible for a grant of up to \$30,000 in order to provide them with the immediate assistance they need when dealing with a disaster. Additionally, the bill creates a loan program that acknowledges the great difficulties small business owners and farmers encounter during the first year following a disaster by allowing for a one-year deferral on any repayments toward the loan, and, furthermore, allows the recipient to pay back the principal of that loan before the interest.

This is a compassionate, reasonable proposal that seeks to provide small businesses and farmers with assistance during a time when they need it most. I'd like to thank my colleague from New Jersey, Congressman BOB FRANKS, for his important contribution in drafting this legislation, and I hope that our colleagues will join us in this effort to assist small business owners and farmers whose lives have been fundamentally diminished by natural disaster.

ROMANIA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, as Co-Chair of the Romanian Caucus, I rise today to enter into the record remarks in support of Romania. Mr. Speaker, the Heads of State and Government participating in the Istanbul Summit will designate the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for the year 2001.

Romania has been fostering support for its candidacy since 1996, when President Emil Constantinescu announced his country's bid for the OSCE Chair in 2001. Romania enjoys U.S. support and has succeeded to build consensus around its candidacy among full OSCE

members. Romania will be entrusted to chair the OSCE in 2001, and it will join Austria and Norway in the OSCE Troika, starting January 2000.

The United States and Romania in 1997, established a strategic partnership resulting in close cooperation and consultations on all issues of common interest, particularly: NATO policies; promoting stability and security in Southeastern Europe, combating non-traditional threats; military and economic reforms in Romania and its region. Romania has also been a key supporter of U.S. and NATO policy in the Kosovo crisis, assisting the U.S. and NATO in actions meant to bring stability to the Balkans.

Romania's government and Parliament approved without reservation overflight rights for NATO aircraft at the height of the Kosovo conflict. Romania is among the regional countries which observes the embargo against Former Republic Yugoslavia, despite significant costs. Romania has proven to be a reliable partner of the U.S. and NATO and is consistent in improving its credentials for future integration with NATO. All Romanian political forces, as well as a large majority of the people, support the goals of integration with NATO and the EU. In December 1999, Romania will host the Southeast European Defense Ministerial (SEDM), in which the United States participates.

Within this framework, Romania takes part in efforts to operationalize the Southeast European Multinational Peace Force, the first ever attempt at peaceful military cooperation in the region. Romania is the Chairman in Office of the Southeast European Cooperation Process and, as such, has been instrumental in promoting joint positions and actions of countries neighboring Serbia.

Active participants in the U.S.-supported Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), Romania has lead the efforts to conclude a regional Agreement for the fight against transborder crime and corruption which was signed in Bucharest, on 26 May 1999. Romania hosts the SECI Regional Center for the fight against transborder crime and corruption. The Center was inaugurated on 16 November 1999 and acts as a critical instrument for promoting a healthy business climate in Southeastern Europe, combating non-traditional threats and transborder crime.

Therefore, it is suggested that: The United States Congress expresses support for Romania's nomination as OSCE Chair in 2001 and readiness to cooperate with Romania in the exercise of the resulting responsibilities. The United States Congress looks forward to sending a large delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Romania, in July 2000. The United States Congress acknowledges and highlights Romania's relevance as a regional role-model for inter-ethnic cooperation, steady evolution towards mature democracy as well as decisive efforts towards a functioning market economy, against the background of difficult challenges of the reform process.

The United States Congress encourages an enhancement of U.S.-Romanian Strategic Partnership, in order to enable Romania to perform as Chairman in Office of the OSCE and to exercise effectively its OSCE area, which includes the Euro-Atlantic as well as Eurasian space. The United States Congress expresses openness to expand inter-parliamentary links with the Romanian legislature,

in order to help promote the achievement of common goals and interest.

A TRIBUTE TO MARTIN STEIN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of Lieutenant Martin Stein, a member of the New York City Police Department.

At a time, when police departments around this nation are under attack because of accusations of brutality, wrongful deaths and generally poor community relations, Lt. Stein continues to demonstrate a sense of professionalism and commitment which has made him a credit to law enforcement. He joined the police force in 1981 and has held a variety of positions of increasing responsibility during this time period. With a career that has covered various precincts in Manhattan and Brooklyn, Lieutenant Stein is currently the Special Operations Lieutenant for the 81st precinct. In this capacity, he is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the precincts specialized units: Anti-Crime; Street Narcotics; Warrants; Field Training and Community Policing Unit. He also ensures that these units work with the patrol force to respond to the calls and needs of the community.

Under Lieutenant Stein's leadership, the 81st Precinct has seen an overall 53% reduction in crime. It is particularly significant that homicides have been reduced by 37% and shootings by 70%. These statistics indicate a real quality of life improvement for my constituents who reside in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn which is served by the 81st precinct.

Lieutenant Stein was recently married to his wife, Mary, and has a 14 year old son Peter from a previous marriage. After three years at York College in Queens, he is currently pursuing his Bachelor's degree in the New York State Regents Degree Program. I commend his fine work to the attention of my colleagues.

THANKSGIVING

HON. BOB SCHAFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 1999

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, three hundred and seventy-eight years ago, Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford "sent four men fowling, so they might in a special manner rejoice together after they had gathered the fruit of their labor." This event marked the first official Thanksgiving celebration in the New World.

Indeed, the colonists had much to be thankful for that winter of 1621. Following a long and treacherous journey across the Atlantic, they landed on a bleak New England coast and endured a year marked by hardship and hunger in which half of the 101 original Mayflower passengers died. Finally blessed with bountiful harvest and warm shelter how-

ever, the Pilgrims paused to give thanks to God for their divine good fortune and salvation.

The idea of developing a special day to give thanks for one's prosperity did not originate with the Pilgrims—in fact such practices date back to Greek and Roman times. But that first Thanksgiving, in what would later become America, marked the beginning of a new nation, and new form of government, that would forever change the world.

Americans in 1999 have much to be thankful for too. Prepared to begin a promising new Millennium, our great nation is the strongest, freest, and most prosperous in history. Though we have plenty of hard work ahead of us, Americans also have much for which to be thankful and proud.

We should be thankful for the strength and security of our nation. After years of woeful neglect and dangerous budgetary cuts, Congress is once again committed to properly and adequately funding a military structure and national security strategy worthy of our great nation. Only through demonstrated military strength—and the unequivocal to employ it, if necessary—will we have ability to ensure lasting peace and the protection of liberty at home and abroad, well into the next Millennium.

We should be thankful too for our prosperous and growing economy. Currently boasting the longest peacetime expansion in our nation's history, and by far the strongest of any nation in the world, our economy seems unstoppable. Consumer spending is up, while unemployment rates are down. Small business and corporate sector productivity, personal income, and sales of new homes are all on the rise. The stock market, and the percentage of Americans investing in it, have both grown exponentially over just the past five years.

This success is owing mostly to the sound and responsible fiscal policies of the Republican-led Congress. After four decades of wasteful government spending, rising taxes, and mounting federal debt, Congress reversed the cycle of unaccountable big government and balanced the budget, cut taxes, paid down the debt, and created budget surpluses as far as the eye can see—all while protecting the Social Security Trust Fund. Our commitment to continued fiscal responsibility will ensure our ability to foster such economic prosperity well into the next century.

Families this year can be thankful for an unprecedented level of personal freedom, security, and opportunity in their lives. Historic welfare reform legislation passed in 1996 has liberated millions of parents previously trapped in a devastating cycle of government dependence, allowing them to better care for themselves and their families. Americans now have better access to affordable, high quality health care than anytime in history. And legislation recently passed will help to strengthen Medicare, increase health care access for seniors and children, and give more flexibility to the providers who care for them.

This year on Thanksgiving, as our nation prepares to enter a promising new Millennium, stronger and more prosperous than ever in history, we would do well to say a special word of thanks this Thanksgiving—to God and to the courageous immigrants at Plymouth who made it all possible.