

to successfully take the Caroline, Gilbert, Marianas, Marshall, and Philippine Islands, as well as Palau, New Guinea and Okinawa from the Japanese.

The distinguished service of the crew of the U.S.S. *Alabama* includes numerous proud honors and achievements.

During the Battle of the Philippine Sea, her radar was the first to detect the approach of enemy bombers, 476 of which were downed by the American fighters and fleet gunners. During her tenure in the American Fleet, the U.S.S. *Alabama* was directly responsible for the elimination of 22 Japanese airplanes.

By the time of the Japanese surrender, she had earned the American Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 9 Battle Stars, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Navy Occupation Service Medal.

Her crew had proven themselves among the most courageous of the Allied fighting men, having faced the most fearsome opposition that the Axis forces had to offer as they defended the world against both Asian and European tyranny. In honor of these heroic Americans, I introduced H. Res. 123, which would immortalize their gallant contribution to liberty in our nation and the world.

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) and the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association.

Whereas the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) was a South Dakota class battleship that served first in the North Atlantic and then in the Pacific Fleet during World War II;

Whereas in the course of World War II, the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA directly shot down 22 enemy aircraft;

Whereas the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA earned the American Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 9 Battle Stars, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Naval Occupation Service Medal;

Whereas the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA were a courageous group, braving both the Arctic chill and the Pacific heat to help defend the Nation against enemy oppression;

Whereas many former crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA belong to the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association;

Whereas each year the former crewmembers participate in an annual reunion to celebrate their shared service, memories, and friendship; and

Whereas more than 100 former crewmembers, along with family and friends, are expected to participate in the next reunion, which will be held from April 15 to 18, 1999, aboard the U.S.S. ALABAMA at the Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, Alabama; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes and honors the crewmembers of the U.S.S. ALABAMA (BB-60) and the U.S.S. ALABAMA Crewmen's Association for their valuable contributions to victory and peace in World War II and to the security and prosperity of the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the valuable contributions to victory and peace in World War II made by the crewmen of the U.S.S. *Alabama* are exemplary of the tenacity which has made the United States the proud world leader it is

today. I ask that you join me in honoring these brave Americans, and in thanking them for their sacrifices and dedication.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, In my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 24, 1999]

MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN LOUISIANA HATE CRIME

GRETN, LA.—A white man convicted of a hate crime for trying to torch two cars belonging to black motorists has been sentenced to the maximum of 20 years in prison.

Prosecutors said it was the first trial involving Louisiana's hate crime law.

Frank Palermo, 32, was convicted in December of two counts of a hate crime and of dousing the vehicles with gasoline. He was sentenced Monday by State District Judge Walter Rothschild, who told Palermo, "You were out to get these people because of their race."

One of the cars had a small child in it. The cars didn't burn because it was raining at the time of the incident last September.

Authorities said, Palermo and his younger brother, Patrick, encountered the blacks working on a stalled car along an expressway in Harvey, a New Orleans suburb. Witnesses testified the Palermos became involved in a shouting match with one driver, and then fistfights broke out. Racial slurs were used, authorities said.

Frank Palermo got a baseball bat and broke windows in one car, then grabbed a gas can and poured fuel on it and another car that had a crying child strapped inside, witnesses said. They said the brothers tried to ignite the gas but the rain kept it from burning, and the brothers then fled.

The younger brother received the minimum sentence of three years in prison. He had been acquitted of the hate crime count but convicted of helping put gasoline on the cars.

The hate crime law, passed in 1997, allows a judge to add up to five extra years to a felony sentence if it is found that the actions stemmed from hatred because of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or membership in an organization.

[From the New York Times, February 24, 1999]

JURY CONVICTS MAN OF CROSS-BURNING AT HOME OF INTERRACIAL COUPLE

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.—A teen-ager was convicted today of attempting to burn a cross on the lawn of an interracial couple but was acquitted of a conspiracy charge.

The Circuit Court jury deliberated about three hours over two days on the case against Richard J. Elliott, 19, who lives next door to the couple in a rural neighborhood near the North Carolina state line.

Elliott stood quietly as the verdict was read. He faces up to five years in prison and a \$2,500 fine on the charge of attempting to burn a cross with the intent to intimidate.

Elliott was one of three white teen-agers arrested in the burning of a cross last May on the law of James and Susan Jubilee.

Jonathan S. O'Mara, 19, of Virginia Beach, pleaded guilty Monday to felony charges of conspiracy and attempting to burn a cross

with the intent to intimidate. Under a plea agreement, O'Mara has the right to appeal.

A 17-year-old boy has agreed to plead guilty to the same charges in juvenile court and testified against Elliott. In exchange, he will not be sentenced as an adult.

Jubilee, who is black, said he moved from Los Angeles back to Virginia to get away from big-city crime and raise his sons in a more peaceful environment.

About four months after moving into his new house, Jubilee awoke to find a wooden cross in his front yard with a burned spot in the middle.

Jubilee testified that as he pulled out of his driveway the morning of May 3, he saw a cross about 20 feet from his home.

"I took a double take, because I couldn't believe what I really saw," Jubilee said.

Enraged, he broke the 4-by-2-foot cross over his knee. He said his anger then turned to fear that the cross might be a warning of violence to come.

The 17-year-old testified that O'Mara and Elliott attended a party at his home the night of May 2 and that all three drank a lot of beer. There, Elliott allegedly expressed anger at Jubilee for complaining about a shooting range that Elliott and his father had in their back yard.

"He wanted to get back at them," the boy said.

Elliott suggested they burn a cross, so the three of them built a cross in the boy's garage, the boy said.

O'Mara is to be sentenced April 26. He faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Kevin Martingayle, O'Mara's attorney, said outside the courtroom that his client is not a racist.

"He's ignorant and he was drunk but he's not a racist," he said.

ABA POLL SAYS 47 PERCENT OF AMERICANS DOUBT RACIAL FAIRNESS OF COURTS (By Richard Carelli)

WASHINGTON (AP).—Too many Americans believe the nation's courts do not provide equal justice for racial minorities, the American Bar Association's president said, as the group released a poll showing nearly half of Americans feel that way.

"This is a very serious problem we . . . cannot afford to ignore," Little Rock, Ark., lawyer Philip Anderson said Tuesday. "We are concerned that the current perception of bias will eventually erode confidence in our system of justice."

Of 1,000 people surveyed by telephone in August, 47 percent said they strongly disagreed with a statement that "the courts treat all ethnic and racial groups the same." Only 39 percent agreed with the statement, and 14 percent voiced no view.

Asked whether courts treat men and women alike, 55 percent said yes, 30 percent said no, and 15 percent expressed no view.

Anderson noted that another recent ABA poll indicated great disagreement between white and black lawyers over the justice system's racial fairness.

"This raises the obvious question that if people believe the justice system is tainted with bias, how long can they expect the courts to remedy bias elsewhere in our society?" Anderson said. "Right now, the high degree of confidence in the courts exists side by side with the perception of bias in the courts. As the minority populations increase in America, will the perception of bias increase?"

He said the 350,000-member ABA "will intensify our efforts to eradicate gender and racial bias in our courts."

The poll released Tuesday contains some seemingly inconsistent findings. For example, most people—51 percent—believe the justice system "needs a complete overhaul,"

but 80 percent also believe America's system is the world's best.

A large majority of Americans, 78 percent, also voiced confidence in the jury system.

"Those numbers are high, and we can feel good about them," Anderson said.

Among the poll's other findings: 90 percent believe wealthy people and companies often wear down their opponents by dragging out legal proceedings; 77 percent say it costs too much to go to court; 27 percent believe the best lawyers are selected to serve as judges.

Anderson said the poll indicates most Americans need and want to know more about the justice system. One tool, he said, could be increasing public access to the nation's courtrooms by televising more proceedings.

"I cannot think of a better civics lesson than . . . to be able to see and hear every argument before the Supreme Court of the United States," Anderson said. "One television camera in the Supreme Court will educate more people more effectively in one morning than the traditional methods can reach in one year."

All federal court proceedings currently are closed to radio and television coverage.

The poll has margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

[From the Dallas Morning News]

PROGRAM HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE SHED
TATTOOS AND THE LIFE THEY REPRESENT
(By Veronica Alaniz)

FORT WORTH, TEXAS.—Robert Barton's hands and arms are covered with marks of hatred, each painfully etched into his skin when he was in his early teens.

Tattoos that he once wore with pride are now shameful reminders of a life that Barton, 19, says he has left behind. But with the help of a nonprofit program the emblems of racism are beginning to fade from his body.

When they are finally gone, thanks to laser surgery provided at no cost by a Fort Worth doctor, Barton said, he will know that his new life has really begun.

"At the time, I thought it was the right thing to do," Barton said of the designs traced across his forearms, wrists and knuckles. "Now, it just doesn't make any sense. I want them gone. They don't mean anything to me now."

Getting rid of the unwanted tattoos and the shame that comes with them is Michael Bumagin's mission.

Since returning to Fort Worth a little more than a year ago, Bumagin, 57, has volunteered his time and expertise to help those with little means remove ugly reminders of their past.

"These kids have been in bad situations—gangs, broken homes. Some of them have been on the street. They've had a hard life," said the doctor, who has his own plastic surgery practice. "These tattoos are going to keep them from succeeding in life. They make it hard for them to get jobs, even in the most entry-level positions."

That is one of the reasons Jessica Cross, 21, wants the Tasmanian devil cartoon character above her right breast removed.

"If you have a tattoo, I think a lot of people think you're a bad person," said Cross. "Everybody looks at you, and I can see what they're thinking."

Barton said that feeling is all too familiar to him, and he'll be glad when he doesn't have to hide his hands in his pants pockets in shame.

"People see this stuff on me and slap a label on me and write me off," Barton said. "But this (tattoo removal) is going to open up a lot of doors for me and give me a lot of opportunity."

Every other month, young people such as Cross and Barton come by the dozens to wait for their turn with Bumagin.

Some hear about the service, administered by the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Fort Worth, by word-of-mouth. Others are referred by their local police departments, school counselors or probation officers.

In return for what many recipients call a life-changing service, the patients perform four hours of community service for each treatment. They call it a more than fair trade.

Gary Grossman, an Arlington Independent School District counselor, works with students in alternative programs and refers some to the tattoo removal program. He call Bumagin's work a godsend.

"Erasing those marks off their bodies is symbolic," Grossman said. "It's a way of leaving their past behind, a way to start a fresh, new, clean life. But for many, it's beyond their financial ability."

Bumagin said hearing his patients' stories is why he keeps doing the work.

"The kids benefit, the community benefits, and I get the feel-goods," he said.

But the program couldn't exist with Bumagin alone. Donations pay for rental of the laser machine and other supplies.

Cross, who paid \$50 for her tattoo while she was in high school, said that when she first looked into having it removed, the \$2,500 estimates she was given were prohibitive.

"I thought I was going to have to live with it forever," she said.

Danielle Lessard said she, too, was floored by the cost of losing her tattoo—a 2-inch-high tribute to her ex-boyfriend's gang name etched on her right hip.

When Lessard found out about Bumagin's work from the Fort Worth Police Department's gang unit, she jumped at the opportunity. She said that though her tattoo is not readily noticeable, its presence haunts her.

"Stupid. That's all I can say. I was 15, and it was a home job," said Lessard, now 18 and a Tarrant County Junior College student. "Since I'm not in that stuff anymore and I'm not in that environment, I don't want that stuff on my body."

Israel Villareal, 23, who got the first of several gang tattoos when he was 13, said he wants them gone so they won't influence his three children.

"I don't want my little kids growing up seeing them and thinking it's OK," he said.

Removing the tattoos takes far more time—and often hurts more—than getting them.

After her first treatment in January, Lessard said she wasn't expecting it to be so painful.

"Oh my gosh, this is stinging real bad," she said as she squirmed in her seat.

Bumagin said the pain comes from the particles of pigment that, when touched by the laser, explode through the skin.

The treatments cause redness, swelling and sometimes bleeding, but the symptoms disappear in a few hours. He said the pain decreases with each treatment as the tattoo fades, and the number of treatments varies by tattoo.

When Angela Acua showed up for her treatment last month, she was very apprehensive.

"I'm scared. What if it hurts?" she asked the doctor. After whimpering through the few minutes that it took to zap her tattoos, Acua turned to her boyfriend and gave him some advice.

"It hurt," she said. "Don't ever put anything on you."

NATIONAL KICK BUTTS DAY 1999

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for a nationwide initiative that encourages the reduction of teen smoking. Teen smoking reached an all-time high in 1997 with roughly 4.5 million kids between the ages of 12–17 using some type of tobacco product. Each day some 3,000 young people start smoking; one third of these kids will die too young because they smoked. If that wasn't enough, approximately 400,000 Americans die each year from cigarette smoking.

To counter these alarming statistics and to provide greater awareness about the dangers of smoking, The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids chose April 14 as the National Youth Movement to "Kick Butts." The goal of National Kick Butts Day is to encourage our teens to take a stand against tobacco products and fight for healthier futures for themselves and their peers.

I have spent my entire public career trying to prevent youth smoking. I support the objective of National Kick Butts Day. I urge all of my colleagues to join me and show their support for this serious and necessary campaign.

BREAUX-THOMAS PLAN IS NO
CURE FOR MEDICARE

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, thirty-nine million senior citizens and persons with disabilities on Medicare are relying on Congress to do the right thing. They are counting on Congress to save Medicare, a program that continues to improve the quality of life for millions of people. But they are certainly not counting on Congress to privatize Medicare and turn over the program to for-profit HMOs and insurance companies. The Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare debated such a plan. And that is the reason why the Commission did not have enough votes to make a formal recommendation to Congress. The Commission's proposal would have been a disaster for seniors and persons with disabilities and a boon for the HMOs and insurance industry.

My recent remarks printed in the Chicago Sun-Times follow:

The Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare nearly approved a plan to save Medicare. But a fundamental consideration was strangely missing from the proposal by Medicare Commission Chair Senator John Breaux (D-LA) and co-chair Representative Bill Thomas (R-CA): the detrimental effect this plan would have on the millions of seniors and persons with disabilities who rely on Medicare.

The simple fact is that the proposal nearly passed by the Medicare Commission is a disaster. It is a disaster for seniors and persons with disabilities.

By far the majority of the proposed "savings" under the Breaux-Thomas plan would