

STUDENT'S ACTIVISM WINS
PRAISE**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the accomplishments of an extraordinary young woman, Sipfou Saechao, a senior at Richmond High School in Richmond, California. Feeling frustrated by the self-imposed racial segregation of her fellow classmates, Sipfou took it upon herself to improve race relations at Richmond High, a school as culturally diverse as any in California. Overcoming the initial pessimism of friends, students and faculty, Sipfou formed ACTION—All Colors Together In One Nation—a student organization which now boasts over 40 active members. ACTION has challenged the students and faculty of Richmond High to confront the often volatile issue of race, and to learn and grow from the experience. As described in the following article, Sipfou's activism has earned her the respect and admiration of her peers, and she serves as a model for young people throughout our country. I know that my fellow Members of the House of Representatives join me in recognizing Sipfou Saechao for her tremendous contribution to the health of her community, and congratulating her on receiving the 1999 Take Action Award.

STUDENT'S ACTIVISM HELPS HEAL RACE RIFTS
(By Tony Mercado)

RICHMOND.—Somewhere between sips of cola and bites of a crumb doughnut, Richmond High's Sipfou Saechao decided to make a difference.

It was lunch time when Saechao, then a sophomore, glanced around at the clusters of students and noticed something terribly wrong. For a school so rich in diversity, Asian, Latino and black teens kept to their own.

"That was so stupid," said Saechao, now an 18-year-old senior. "They were excluding themselves from learning about people who could possibly make them a better person."

Last school year, Saechao formed the student club All Colors Together in One Nation—ACTION—to help improve race relations at the school. Friends said it wouldn't work. But Saechao's drive has helped mend a racially split student body, and it has brought her acclaim as one of the country's top young activists.

React Magazine, a teen news publication, has named the UC-Berkeley-bound student one of five grand-prize winners at the 1999 Take Action Awards in New York City. The honor carries a \$20,000 scholarship—a prize sought by about 600 students across the country.

Saechao, who immigrated from Laos at age 2 with her parents and brother, said the money brings her dream of becoming an English teacher closer to reality.

"I'm relieved," said Saechao. She was a semi-finalist for the same prize as a sophomore, for her work to educate Laotian immigrants about the hazards of washing clothes and growing vegetables in toxic soil and water.

"I was stressed about how I was going to be able to afford college," she said. "This changes everything."

The magazine, which reaches 3 million readers as a newspaper insert and through

schools, also awarded Saechao \$24,000 to give to the charity of her choice. Saechao, the school's Associated Student Body president, chose Richmond High. The school plans to buy supplies and encyclopedias.

Dennie Hughes, React's senior editor, called Saechao a tireless worker who yearns to make things happen.

"She's one of those people who wants to see what else can become her project," said Hughes. "She educated the Laotian community, it worked, and then she turned her attention to her school to see how she could help there."

Richmond High has one of Contra Costa County's most diverse student bodies. Fifty percent of students are Latino and 25 percent are Asian. Blacks account for 20 percent. Whites and other ethnic groups account for 5 percent.

The trick to fostering unity was getting classmates to focus on being proud of their school, Saechao said. Scars remained from the past, when tempers between ethnic groups would flare and fists would all too quickly fly.

Some friends told her it would be a nearly impossible task.

"I thought she was crazy," said San Saephanh, an 18-year-old senior. "Because of the violence we had a long time ago, everyone at the time was usually separated."

Saechao helped create a forum where students for the first time could talk about what was on their minds. She began publishing a newsletter call ACTION, filled with students' concerns about the school. Many classmates wrote about pervasive gangs and violence, teen pregnancy and discrimination against girls by boys.

Teachers also got into the act, writing about the frustration of getting students to do homework or bemoaning the lack of respect and communication between teens and adults. But they also wrote about encouraging students to stay in school and work together.

"I thought teachers would be the hardest to convince we could change," Saechao said. "They see what we're like every day, so they have certain stereotypes."

Club membership grew from six to 40, with students from varied backgrounds. The climate is still far from perfect, she said, but students and teachers said people tend to get along better now. Some even share the same picnic table at lunch.

"She gained a real reputation as someone who speaks up for what she thinks is right," said Nancy Ivey, Saechao's leadership class teacher. "Her name comes up the most when kids are asked who they admire as a leader."

The ACTION club is planning fund-raisers so it can provide a scholarship to a graduating senior next year. So far, it has raised about \$1,000. Saechao said it just proves what can happen when there's unity.

"It was actually easy for us students to change," she said. "Most were open-minded about the idea. Hopefully, I've shown that everyone on campus can work together."

CONGRATULATING TERRY NAGEL
ON HER SERVICE AS PRESIDENT
OF THE NJFRW**HON. MARGE ROUKEMA**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Terry Nagel on her past four years of service as president of the New Jersey Federation of Republican Women. Terry is a stal-

wart veteran of the political process who has fought for her party's values—and promoted the values of our democratic system—for more than 30 years. Her leadership will be missed, but her many contributions will never be forgotten.

As a secondary-school teacher before coming to Congress, I used to tell my students to become politically active in the party of their choice. Whether you are a Republican, Democrat, Independent or member of a minor party, it is important to find the political party that represents your beliefs and then become an active part of the political process. Terry Nagel is someone who has done just that. She is a loyal Republican, of course, but promotes more than just Republican ideals and values. She extols the values of a democratic society and knows the vital importance of an elected government accountable to the electorate. And she always emphasizes that the vote is not just a right but a responsibility—if you don't vote, you have no one but yourself to blame if you're unhappy with government.

Terry Nagel has worked hard to promote her party's candidates—not just women—and has met with tremendous success. While working for men and women candidates alike, she has realized that all issues are women's issues—whether they involve career opportunities or tax rates. Under her guidance, the New Jersey Federation of Republican Women has championed the issues that count with New Jersey voters—a strong economy, good jobs at good wages, streets safe from crime, and welfare reform that works.

The NJFRW grew significantly under Ms. Nagel's tenure, adding chapters in Hunterdon, Warren and Salem counties. The organization participated in the Get Out the Vote campaign in Washington, D.C., increased financial support for candidates throughout the state and urged the State Republican Committee to give the federation a voting seat on the committee. The Federation also played a major role in helping pass the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act.

Ms. Nagel's involvement in politics began in 1969 as a member of the Women's Republican Club of Middletown, where she planned programs and worked as a fundraiser. She became a member of the Middletown Republican Committee in 1975 and served as president of the Monmouth County Federation of Republican Women from 1983–1985. She was named president of the New Jersey Federation of Republican Women in 1995 and became a member of the board of the National Federation of Republican Women the same year. She chaired former Governor Thomas Kean's telephone campaign in the 15th Congressional District in 1985, and has chaired and organized many political events over the years. She has been an honorary delegate to each Republican National Convention since 1998.

Ms. Nagel has also served on the Middletown Board of Public Assistance and the Middletown Recreation Advisory Committee.

Professionally, Ms. Nagel is a former director of children's recreation at the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at New York University. She also directed the preschool program at Exxon's Bayway Community Center. She has also taught physical education at Mater Dei High School and owned her own dance studio. She is a graduate of Panzer College and holds a master's degree in education from New York University.

Ms. Nagel is also a former president and board member of the Women's Club of Asbury Park and a Girl Scouts camp counselor. She and her husband, William Nagel, live in Midletown and have three children.

I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in thanking Terry Nagel for her work on behalf of our democratic electoral system. She has helped create a better life for New Jerseyans, our children and our grandchildren.

HONORING VICTOR V. SCUDIERY

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of my colleagues to a great humanitarian from central New Jersey, Victor V. Scudieri.

Born and raised in Newark, NJ, Victor graduated from Seton Hall University, then served his nation in the U.S. Army on both active and reserve duty.

In addition to his duties as president of Interstate Electronics, which is located at Airport Plaza in Hazlet, he can be found six or seven days a week at his corporate offices where he oversees the duties of several other business ventures located throughout the State and in Florida.

In addition to his civic activities, he has always found time for other worthwhile causes. Victor is a tireless advocate for numerous charities, particularly for our State's oldest citizens, where he serves on the board of seven organizations.

Mr. Scudieri is the chairman of the Bayshore Senior Day Center board of advisors. This organization is the lifeline to many area senior citizens, providing meals, companionship, and daily activities as an outlet for their loneliness.

As chairman of the Buck Smith Memorial Foundation, he has overseen the granting of scholarships to deserving students.

The Bayshore Hospital Health Care Center selected Victor as chairman of the Board of Trustees. His duties include acquisition of land and construction facilities for use in the health care field. Plans are well underway in the construction of a 75-unit assisted living facility.

His devotion to these and many other worthwhile organizations has been recognized by countless honors by civic and charitable organizations throughout the State for his devotion to them.

Browsing through his office you can find honors from such organizations as the Bayshore Senior Center, Brookdale College, Knights of Columbus, Society of St. Anthony of Padua, NAACP, numerous townships, and political organizations to name a few. Yet he is too humble to ever acknowledge the impact his contribution has made on these clubs and organizations.

However, the pride of his life is his beautiful and talented daughter, Vici.

Mr. Speaker, Victor Scudieri is an amazing man who sets an example of hard work, community involvement, and dedication that all of us can take a lesson from. I hope all of my colleagues in the House will join in recognizing Mr. Scudieri.

NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS
MEMORIAL DAY RESOLUTION

HON. JOEL HEFLEY

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today a resolution to honor the sacrifice and commitment of the men and women who have lost their lives while serving as law enforcement officers. This resolution, which is cosponsored by over 130 of my colleagues, expresses the gratitude of the House of Representatives for the work peace officers perform and honors peace officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

We have all been affected by the tragic and senseless deaths of peace officers around the country. Unfortunately, there are few communities in the United States that have not been impacted by the meaningless death of a peace officer. Our own Capitol community was shocked and saddened last year by the tragic shooting of Capitol Police Officer Jacob Chestnut and Special Agent John Gibson. Each of these officers provided unparalleled protection to citizens throughout the United States.

As Members of Congress, we recognize and honor the protection, safety and public service these officers provided on a daily basis. These officers will be further honored this Saturday when peace officers from around the country travel to Washington for a day of commemoration and honor for fellow officers slain in the line of duty. The National Peace Officers Memorial Day serves as a solemn reminder of the sacrifice and commitment to safety that these men and women make on our behalf.

Law-enforcement officers face unprecedented risks while bravely protecting our communities and our freedoms. I hope my colleagues will join me in expressing our appreciation to all peace officers and paying tribute to those slain in the line of duty and to their surviving families.

TRIBUTE TO TEACHING FELLOWS
FROM RICHMOND COUNTY, NC

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate six Richmond County Senior High students who are among the 1999 recipients of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows scholarships. Each Fellow receives a \$26,000 scholarship loan from the state of North Carolina.

The full loan is forgiven after the recipient has completed four years of teaching in North Carolina public schools.

In addition, all Fellows take part in summer and academic summer enrichment programs during their college careers.

The Teaching Fellows Scholarship program was created by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1986 and has become one of the top teacher recruiting programs in the country.

This innovative program attracts talented high school seniors to become public school teachers. This is a commonsense, state-based program that will help encourage our best and

brightest to come back to their communities to teach.

The 1999 recipients from Richmond County, NC, are James Haltom, Kristen McDonald, Shana McLaughlin, Matthew Pence, Patience Whitehead, and Melissa Allen.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate these individuals for the courage and desire to enter the teaching profession.

TRIBUTE TO DEE THOMAS

HON. KAREN L. THURMAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Delores L. "Dee" Thomas, a successful businesswoman in my district who this month became the first woman to chair the national ESOP Association.

The association is made up of twenty-one hundred members representing nearly one million employee business owners across the country who participate in an Employee Stock Ownership Plan, known as an ESOP.

Ms. Thomas is well prepared for this leadership position. She cofounded a company 30 years ago that is still operating successfully today in New Port Richey and Sebring, FL.

The company, called Ewing & Thomas, is the only physical therapy company in the country that is 100 percent employee owned through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan.

Ms. Thomas is a true advocate of ESOP companies. She testified before the full Ways and Means Committee in March about the many benefits of these type of employee-owned businesses. She said, "We believe that significant employee ownership does improve performance of a corporation, and just as important does maximize human potential and self-dignity of all employees as they share in the wealth they help to create."

She cites her company as proof.

At Ewing & Thomas, where she is vice-president, employee owners are represented on all levels of the board of directors and participate in the company's decision making. In her testimony, Ms. Thomas said, "Each day incredible unselfish acts are performed by this group of employee owners."

Ms. Thomas may have given away some control and power when she decided to convert her business to employee ownership. But in return, she gained more than she ever thought possible. The company's stock price and annual sales are way up, and the employees genuinely care about the company's future.

Ms. Thomas is an American success story. Through compassion, caring and of course hard work, she's moving up in the business world. But she's holding on to her principles and giving a hand up to those around her. That's her way. I also believe that's the American way.

Today, I'm not simply paying tribute to a friend and a constituent. I'm honoring a special woman who is committed to fairness and high performance. And I'm confident in this new leadership role, she will help more employee owners achieve their dreams and prosper. That too is her way. Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join me in paying tribute to Ms. Dee Thomas, chair of the national ESOP Association.