

books and sewing quilts that would be attractive to children. Through "Project Books and Blankies", she donates blankets, along with a basket of books, to children's educational programs in her area. Robyn also reads aloud to children once a week, in an effort to show them the importance of books.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we recognize and support the kind of selfless contribution this young citizen has made. People of all ages need to think more about how we can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Miss Strumpf are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought this young role model to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created in 1995 by The Prudential Insurance Company of America in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principles. It aims to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued and to inspire other young people to follow their example. In only five years, the program has become the nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, with nearly 75,000 youngsters participating since its inception.

Miss Strumpf should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. I heartily applaud Miss Strumpf for her initiative in seeking to make her community a better place to live and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL "DOC"  
DUNPHY

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 9, 2000*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a brave American veteran, Michael A. Dunphy, Jr., of Greenville, NY, who was awarded the Bronze Star this past February 4th at a West Point ceremony.

Moreover, I am honored to attend a ceremony on June 17th, 2000, at the Greenville Town Hall in Greenville, NY, in which the people of New York will be able to express their appreciation for the contributions of "Doc" Dunphy.

On February 4th, 1969, Michael "Doc" Dunphy was a 20 year-old Private First Class serving as a combat medic with 3rd Platoon of C Company in the rice paddies of Vietnam. That day his platoon was ambushed and when he heard the calls for medical attention from his comrades, he rushed through a wall of machine gun fire and mortar attacks to reach the

wounded. This courageous display of valor in the face of oncoming fire is a testament to the patriotism and esteemed character of Michael Dunphy. His actions on the field of battle saved the life of a man who is now a Tennessee State Trooper.

Michael Dunphy is the recipient of several military awards for his service to the United States including the Combat Medic Badge, Army Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart. Mr. Dunphy is now employed at the Middletown Psychiatric Center and he and his wife, Cheryl, are the proud parents of four children.

I would also like to commend Colonel Thomas Bedient on his persistence in making sure "Doc" Dunphy received the Bronze Star, which was delayed due to a bureaucratic mistake. At the ceremony on February 4th, "Doc" Dunphy said: "America didn't do very well saying thanks to our soldiers." Mr. Dunphy is correct in that sentiment, and by bestowing this award to him we are thanking an individual who went above and beyond the call of duty from his country.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join in congratulating Michael "Doc" Dunphy, Jr., on receiving the Bronze Star and thank him for his valor and heroism in serving our Nation.

THE STORY OF COREY JOHNSON

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 9, 2000*

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, every so often we learn of individuals confronted with enormously difficult choices who take the courageous, though difficult, path. The story of Corey Johnson, a constituent of mine from Middleton, Massachusetts, and a student at Masconomet High School, fits that description.

Corey is co-captain of the school football team, a good athlete in several sports, and popular among classmates. Although he suspected his homosexuality since grade school, it was this year that he shared the information with family, friends, teammates and strangers—by nature of the publicity attendant to the circumstances surrounding a gay athlete's decision to "come out."

Sunday, April 30, 2000, the New York Times front page carried the story of Corey's courage, and the community's reaction—thankfully mostly tolerant and supportive. Because the story is—as the article notes—a hopeful model, I submit the article for the RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 30, 2000]

ICON RECAST: SUPPORT FOR A GAY ATHLETE

(By Robert Lipsyte)

When Corey Johnson told teammates on the Masconomet High School football team last spring that he was gay, the two other starting linebackers responded characteristically. Big, Steady Dave Merrill, quietly absorbed the almost physical shock, then began worrying if the revelation would divide the team. Merrill said he decide to take it on as a challenge, a test of the captaincy the two shared and a test of his own character. Jim Whelan, the artist, said he looked into Johnson's eyes and saw a need for instant support. He broke the silence by saying, "More than being teammates we're your

friends and we know you're the same person."

Their reactions were critical in the risky, uncharted, carefully planned campaign to bring out of his increasingly claustrophobic closet an American icon, the hard-hitting football hero. The campaign involved Johnson's parents, teachers, and coaches, as well as a gay educational agency, all encouraged by the administration of a school with a long history of diversity training. One measure of their success will be seen Sunday when Johnson, who turned 18 on Friday and will graduate in June, speaks in Washington at the Millennium March for Equality.

For gay activists trying to shatter stereotypes, Johnson is a rare find, a bright, warm quick study who also wrestled and played lacrosse and baseball as he earned three varsity letters on a winning football team. For athletes, whose socialization often includes the use of homophobia by manipulative coaches, he is a liberating symbol. And for school systems struggling with such complex issues as diversity, tolerance and jock culture, his story is a hopeful model.

"Someday I want to get beyond being that gay football captain," Johnson said, "but for now I need to get out there and show these machismo athletes who run high schools that you don't have to do drama or be a drum major to be gay. It could be someone who looks just like them."

At 5 feet 8 inches and 180 pounds, Johnson had to make up for drama-club size with the speed and brutality of his blocking and tackling. "He hit like a ton of bricks," said Whelan, who became his friend in seventh grade because, he recalls, "he had a strong mind, he liked to think and he was unwilling to accept injustice."

Others in school, including the girls he refused to date ("It's not fair to use people as pawns," he said) were attracted by his friendliness and sly wit. Asked for publication in the yearbook how football captains spent the night before a game, he said, "I go to sleep early with my Tinky Winky." And he indeed has one of those purple Teletubby dolls "outed" by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, crammed in a corner of a stereotypically messy room filled with trophies, athletic posters and balled-up T-shirts.

"This is a great kid with a mind of his own," said Coach Jim Pugh, who faced down a booster club president who wanted Johnson's captaincy revoked. "My issues with him were not gay-related. They were about who knows better how you step out on certain defensive plays."

Johnson said he had suspected his homosexuality since sixth grade but suppressed thinking about it. In the high school's "elite jock mix" of heterosexual innuendo and bravado, he came to realize "this just isn't me." His crushes were on other boys.

"In health class a teacher told us that in every large group of friends, one turns out gay," he said. "When I was lonely and depressed and isolated, I kept thinking, 'Why does that have to be me?' I wanted to live a quiet normal life."

In the fall of 1997, in the first game of his varsity career, as a sophomore starting at both right guard and middle linebacker, his blocking was so effective and he made so many sacks that the line coach awarded him the game ball. Yet, he was so afraid that everyone would hate him when his secret was revealed that he was often unable to sleep at night or get out of bed in the morning.

He would reach out on the Internet in a teen chat room on a site called Planetout.com finding other gay youngsters, even other gay football players. For years, he has exchanged e-mail messages with a gay right guard in Chicago.

Johnson's decision to come out began taking shape during his family's 1998 Super Bowl

party in the living room of its rented townhouse in this suburb 25 miles north of Boston. One of the uncles pointed at the comedian Jerry Seinfeld in a television commercial and described him with a gay slur, and said that such "sick" people needed to be "put into institutions." Another uncle laughed. Corey's mother, unaware at the time of Johnson's sexual orientation, said she chided her brothers and asked them not to use such language.

Johnson said he went into the bathroom and cried. A month later, he told his guidance counselor and biology teacher that he was bisexual. He says he was a virgin at the time. Later, he told his lacrosse coach that he was gay. All three were supportive. They also began to understand his moodiness and mediocre grades.

#### ONE OF HIS PARENTS WASN'T SURPRISED

He told no one else during that summer and the football season of his junior year. He joined the school's Gay Straight Alliance, which was made up mostly of straight girls. Since he was known for defending kids being hazed or bullied, no one found this remarkable. In December 1998, the football team voted Johnson and Dave Merrill co-captains.

After Christmas vacation, he decided to tell his parents. His father already knew. He had read an exchange between Johnson and a gay e-pal. For months, his father held the secret; he did not want to burden his wife, absorbed in ministering to her dying mother.

"I dropped the ball," he said in retrospect. "What if Corey had done something to himself?"

A burly, 45-year-old, chain-smoking former marine who drives a Pepsi-Cola truck, Rod had helped raise Johnson since the boy was 1. He and Johnson's mother, Ann, who gave birth to Corey when she was single, were married 12 years ago. Johnson never knew his biological father, though he kept his last name. (For reasons of "privacy and safety," Rod and Ann agreed to be interviewed only if their last name was not published. They also have a 10-year-old daughter.) Ann's reaction, according to both of them, was the unreserved love she had always offered, but now it was tinged with fear; if people found out, would they be mean to her son, would they hurt him?

That spring, Donna Cameron, a health teacher at the school and a Gay Straight Alliance adviser, took the group to a conference of the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network, a national organization that works with Massachusetts' Safe Schools program. Johnson attended a sports workshop led by Jeff Perrotti, the organization's Northeast coordinator. Perrotti talked about challenging the entitlement of athletes and finding a way for all students to be treated as well.

At the end of the session, Johnson raised his hand and said he was a football captain and wanted to come out and needed help.

#### PLAYER'S STATEMENT THOUGHT TO BE A JOKE

Perrotti, a 41-year-old openly gay former high school teacher, said he immediately realized what this meant. "A football captain is an icon," he said last week, "and one coming out would raise the expectations of what was possible, it would give hope."

Masco, as Masconomet is called up here, is the regional high school of 1,300 students for affluent, predominately white Boxford, Topsfield and Middleton. The phrase "Only in Masco," used by friends and critics, often refers to its liberal commitment to diversity and alternate education. Pugh, the football coach, a warm, steady 50-year-old from Long Island, seems equally at home on the field and in what he calls his "touchy-feely world" as a special-education teacher.

Perrotti said he consulted with Bob Norton, the Woburn High School principal, who

had been a football and hockey coach. Johnson's mother came to school for meetings with the staff and Perrotti. It was decided that Johnson would first tell his junior classmates on the team, on April 8, 1999, more than a year after he had first told some teachers.

Three days before the meeting, Cameron, 52, the Gay Straight Alliance adviser, who had been out as a lesbian to friends and family, came out to her students. "I didn't want Corey to stand alone," she said last week. "I wanted to put a second human face on what for most of the kids was just an abstract when they used gay slurs. As it turned out for both Corey and me, kids found it even easier to talk to us about other problems."

The day before the meeting, Johnson came out to Pugh. It was fine with him, Pugh said, as long as everyone remembered that the football season was about football and that it would not become a "media circus" that would spoil everyone else's experience. That attitude prevailed; a major magazine was turned away last fall, and until now there has been no mainstream national exposure.

Ann and Rod were not persuaded about even this controlled coming out.

Rod said, "I felt he was putting a target on his back."

Ann said: "We were afraid for him that he would be hurt. But if I said no, then we were acting as if we were ashamed of who he was."

At the meeting, in Pugh's classroom, Johnson told his teammates that he was gay, that he hoped for their support and not to worry. "I didn't come on to you last year in the locker room and I'm not going to do it now," he said. "Who says you're good enough anyhow?"

That lightly dropped remark had been scripted in the preliminary meetings.

Outside, in the hall, Merrill said players asked him if it was a joke. The news spread quickly through the school. There were several scrawled gay slurs, but no one was going to go bashing the football team.

"It sort of all evolved through the summer lifting program and into the season," Merrill said. "It escalated and then it dropped off. It got to be old news."

"At first the team was meek about it," Johnson said. "People didn't talk to me, and when they saw it was still just me they asked all kinds of questions. They wanted intimate details. They thought it would be cool to know more about the subculture. When they heard about a gay bar called the Ramrod, they asked me to get them T-shirts."

Whelan,\*COM020\*\*COM020\* visiting his girlfriend at college, met an openly gay "fun guy," who he thought would be perfect for Johnson. He told them about each other and tried to fix up a double date.

The most dramatic incidents were football related. Pugh said the president of Masco's active booster club, the father of four past, present and future players, demanded that Johnson be removed as captain for "unit cohesiveness."

Pugh told the father that he was the divisive one, and that it was not an issue.

The night before a game, the captain of the Lynnfield team made anti-gay remarks in a pep rally speech. His coach benched him.

At the game, an opposing lineman shouted gay slurs in Johnson's face.

"I couldn't stop laughing," Johnson said. "Here, I had come out to my teachers, my parents and my team, and this guy thought he could intimidate me?"

#### FINDING A DATE FOR THE SENIOR PROM

Johnson and Perrotti like to say that the team bonded through the experience, but other players are not so sure. While Whelan and Merrill attended and spoke at gay-rights

conferences, and the team once sang the gay anthem, "Y.M.C.A.," after Johnson had a particularly good game, there was an element of distraction. Merrill said "some kids were nervous and had to be talked to." Masco dropped from 10-1 in 1998 to 7-4, but Pugh attributes that to the loss of last season's quarterback and star running back.

Some problems never did materialize. When younger players complained to Merrill about having to shower with a gay teammate, he would growl, as he would to most complaints, "You're a football player, just suck it up." But then, Masco football players have traditionally never showered at school.

Although Johnson's parents and many of his teachers and coaches think he should go to college in the fall, he said he has decided to "become an activist" for a year and to intern in the network's San Francisco office.

Merrill is going to the University of New Hampshire, without a football scholarship but confident that he will walk on the team.

"I'll know now I'll be able to make it in the real world," he said. "I handled it. I was mature. We were a unit."

Whelan is going to the Rhode Island School of Design in the fall. That "fun guy" he spotted finally met Johnson, at a gay conference. Whelan was right. They liked each other. The fun guy, Michael, became Johnson's first boyfriend, and next month Johnson will take him as his date to the Masconomet senior prom.

The season isn't over yet.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

##### HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 9, 2000

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 146, I was unable to vote because of travel delays. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 147, I was unable to vote because of travel delays. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 148, I was unable to vote because of travel delays. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

##### HONORING MS. MABLE MAXINE WRIGHT OF LOS ANGELES, CA

##### HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 9, 2000

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I commend and celebrate the accomplishments of Ms. Mable Maxine Wright of Los Angeles, California, before her untimely passing on May 3, 2000. Ms. Mable Maxine Wright is the mother of Timothy Wright who served on my staff in 1997 and 1998. Tim is a fine young man who has gone on to devote his energy to continued public service. His mother, Mable Maxine Wright was a strong lady, who dedicated her life to education and helping people from many different backgrounds and walks of life.

Mable Maxine Wright was born on July 1, 1921 in Los Angeles, California. Mable was the third of four children born to Mattie Mitchell-Brown and Annias Brown. She attended Nevin Elementary, Lafayette Junior High and graduated from Jefferson High School. She