

the jobsite. Her work with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society and Christ Fellowship Baptist Church are testimonials to her warmhearted benevolence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in wishing Earlene, her husband James, and her family all the best as she begins this new phase of her life.

# IN RECOGNITION OF HISPANIC AMERICAN ATHLETES AT THE 2002 OLYMPICS

## HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements of the United States Latino athletes in the 2002 Winter Olympics. At these Olympic games we have seen a number of outstanding United States athletes from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. We have witnessed a number of "firsts" in our minority communities. These athletes have risen to the Olympic challenge against incredible odds, and for this, I honor them. I again recognize Mrs. Vonetta Flowers who won a Gold medal; in bobsledding at the Winter Olympic games, becoming the first African American to win a Gold medal for the United States in a Winter event.

In addition to those accomplishments made by the African American community, I also commend those achievements of Hispanic American athletes as highlighted in the Daily News article on Latino Olympians. The article follows this statement and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Olympians' reference in it. Mr. Parra, 31 years old, is a Mexican American speed skater from Orlando, Florida. He began his athletic career as an inline skater and only picked up speed skating on ice five years ago. Considered the first Hispanic American to ever win a medal in the Olympic games makes Parra incredibly unique, but Parra did not just medal. Parra came in first, receiving a Gold medal and breaking the world record for his performance in the 1,500 meter. He also received a Silver medal in the 5,000 meter race.

In addition, Jennifer Rodriguez of Miami, Florida became the first Cuban-American to medal in the Winter Olympics. A former inline skater—now speed skater, like Parra—Rodriguez competed in the women's 1,000 race and won a Bronze medal. Our nation's Puerto Rican heritage was also represented at the Salt Lake City Games. Though the two-man bobsled team was unable to complete in the end, Puerto Rico's presence was felt and we look forward to their full participation in 2006.

Parra, Rodriguez, and the Puerto Rican athletes have performed to commendable heights. They are a tribute to everything the Olympics stand for: courage, athleticism and national and international unity. I thank them for their hard work and perseverance. These, along with African American and Asian American, athletes are great examples to our future athletes, especially our minority communities. Their faces reflect the composition of our country and are an inspiration to countless young people who might believe the Olympics are not for them. Thank you again and congratulations.

[From the New York Daily News, Feb. 21, 2002]

### LATIN OLYMPIANS GOOD AS GOLD

Global warming has affected the Utah Winter Olympics in unexpected ways. And all of them seem to be good.

For one thing, there are all these warm-weather people heating up the ice at Salt Lake City. And doing their part to make the medal count grow for the U.S.

Take Derek Parra.

Believed to be the first Hispanic ever to win a medal in the Winter Games, Parra, a 31-year-old Mexican-American, lives in Orlando, Fla., where Mickey and Donald are found all over the place, but snow is as rare as, well, speed skating.

He is 5-foot-4 and weighs 140 pounds, but Parra accomplished what many bigger men had unsuccessfully attempted before. He broke a world record to take the gold in 1,500 meters speed skating Tuesday in such spectacular fashion that even his competitors were thrilled.

"It sounds stupid, but I enjoyed [seeing] it," said Jochem Uytdehaage, of the Netherlands, who won silver, after Parra broke the world record he had set a few minutes before.

The reverse had taken place the opening day of the games, when Parra set a world record in the 5,000 meters. Uytdehaage destroyed it a few minutes later.

"It is just an amazing thing," Parra said after his 1,500-meter victory.

### CUBAN-AMERICAN PIONEER

Now take Jennifer Rodriguez.

Born in sunny Miami to Cuban parents, Rodriguez is believed to be the first Cuban-American to compete in the Winter Games.

Rodriguez not only competed but won the bronze in the women's 1,000 meters. Another American, Chris Witty, won the gold and established a new world record.

That no Cuban-American had competed in the Winter Olympics before is not at all surprising. After all, in Miami, ice is usually found only in drinks. Not exactly an ice-skating paradise.

Baseball, football, swimming, boxing, soccer—all of them are pretty popular in warm, heavily Latino Miami. But a Cuban-American speed skater? Rodriguez's and Parra's feats will do wonders to change that.

Parra and Rodriguez—as did Apolo Anton Ohno, for that matter—got their start as inline skaters. Actually, Rodriguez didn't train on ice until six years ago, and Parra made the switch only five years ago.

The young Mexican-American also was a phenomenal in-line skater, becoming national champion three times in the 1990s and holding world records in short- and long-distance events.

And then take the case of the Puerto Rican bobsled team.

Yes, I know, you are asking yourself what in the world was the Caribbean island—average temperature 85 degrees—doing in Salt Lake City, where freezing weather is their daily bread? Did these sun-tanned, warm-weather guys stand a chance against all those cold-weather-seasoned athletes?

We'll never know.

### BOWSLEDDERS BLOCKED

On Friday evening, the Puerto Rican Olympic Committee dropped out of the two-man bobsled competition hours before it began. The reason: Michael González, one of the two team members, was not able to demonstrate to the island's Olympic committee that he had lived on the island for the required three years.

Ironically, the International Olympic Committee was satisfied with the two years and one month he was able to prove.

"He's a great, great guy, but those are the rules," said Héctor Cardona, president of the

island's national Olympic committee. "We have to follow the rules. As president of the Olympic committee, I took him out, according to our constitution."

Maybe next time. And count on it, there will be a next time.

## HONORING HOLLY JOHNSEN

### HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Holly Johnsen for being recognized by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards as a Distinguished Finalist for her impressive community service activities. The award is presented by Prudential Financial, with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and seeks to honor students who show exceptional achievement in the areas of community service.

Holly Johnsen, a sixteen-year old student at Bullard High School, has been recognized for initiating a "Lunch Buddy" program. The 30 Junior Ladies Auxiliary for Retarded Citizens (LARC) Club members that are involved in this program introduce special-education students to other groups, accompany them on field trips, and organize parties at school. Holly has shown top-quality leadership and organizing skills. The club operates at their school with a shared presidency between Holly and Molly Hopkins. Holly believes the club will make an impact through peer contribution. She encourages students to play a part in the program by taking special-education students to classes, club meetings, and lunch with them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Holly Johnsen for being honored by Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking Holly for her outstanding ingenuity and service to the community and wishing her continued success in all future endeavors.

## HONORING MR. RICHARD FIMBRES ON HIS SELECTION AS "MAN OF THE YEAR" BY THE TUCSON METROPOLITAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

### HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2001*

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize an outstanding individual who was recently recognized for his exemplary work and dedication to his community. On February 27, Mr. Richard G. Fimbres was honored by the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce as their "Man of the Year."

Mr. Fimbres' work throughout the community is evidenced by the time and energy he devotes to so many organizations throughout the City of Tucson and Pima County. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the Knights of Columbus, the Tucson/Pima Arts Council, the Pima Youth Partnership, the United Way, and the Childrens Action Alliance are just a few of the entities he commits his energies to.

He has helped raise funds for local youth programs, establish drug education and prevention programs, and raise scholarship funds for underprivileged students. He has also developed youth leadership training seminars and established a youth education program assisting children with their reading skills. He contributes to various local and state policy boards regarding important issues such as education, immigration and redistricting.

Mr. Fimbres' standing as a community leader is evident by the respect and recognition he receives and for his countless hours of work on behalf of his community. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing this outstanding citizen and role model whom I am also proud to call my friend.

A TRIBUTE TO ALICIA CONTRERAS  
OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Alicia Contreras of San Francisco, California for receiving the Paul G. Hearne American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Leadership Award for 2001. Alicia, herself disabled, is an inspiration to thousands of disabled individuals, and has been providing them valuable assistance through various organizations since 1994. The American Association of People with Disabilities, an outstanding organization founded by cross-disability leaders in 1995, has made an excellent choice in selecting Alicia Contreras as one the recipients of the Paul G. Hearne award.

Mr. Speaker, Alicia Contreras' work for the disabled has touched the lives of many individuals by demonstrating that being disabled does not have to get in the way of enjoying life. Alicia, herself confined to a wheelchair, learned how to improve her life as she began to work for the disabled in 1994 at a one-month leadership training program sponsored by Mobility International USA. Through this experience she learned that even with a wheelchair she could play sports, dance, and live an independent life. Through this experience, she learned, in effect, how to overcome her disability.

Mr. Speaker, after realizing that she had the power to take control of her life, Alicia Contreras founded the Independent Living Center for Women with Disabilities in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, so she could help other disabled women realize what she had learned. Alicia showed women, wheelchair bound like her, that being in a wheelchair does not mean one has to live in seclusion in one's own home, and that one could live a more independent life outside the home.

After her efforts through the Independent Living Center, Alicia took on a newly created government position, Program Coordinator for People with Disabilities in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. While there, Alicia created the first-ever accessible taxi-van service in the state, awarded more than 700 scholarships to disabled people, and provided more than 1,000 hearing aids and 300 wheelchairs to the disability community.

Through this work, Alicia became familiar with Whirlwind Women, an international orga-

nization that teaches women with disabilities how to build appropriate wheelchairs for themselves and others. In November of 2000, Alicia was hired as the Whirlwind Women Program Director and continues to serve in that capacity.

Mr. Speaker, Alicia Contreras has made a valuable contribution to the disabled community; the American Association of People with Disabilities has made an intelligent choice in selecting her as one of the recipients of this award.

Like Alicia, the AAPD is committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities. Founded by disabled individuals, AAPD is committed to promoting the economic and political empowerment of all people with disabilities, educating businesses and the general public about disability issues, and seeing through the full implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act so that all disabled individuals may have an equal opportunity to fully participate in society.

Mr. Speaker, with these goals in mind, it is no surprise that AAPD selected Alicia. She exemplifies the dedication and determination necessary to give disabled people a fair chance in life, and most importantly, she gives them hope. I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Alicia Contreras for receiving the Paul G. Hearne/AAPD Leadership Award.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO NOEL  
CUNNINGHAM

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to pay tribute to a man whose life-long pursuit of improving and enriching the lives of others is an inspiration to us all. Noel Cunningham has dedicated his life to improving the lives of his fellow man. In recognition of this, the Ancient Order of the Hibernians is honoring Noel as Humanitarian of the Year. Although Noel bases his philanthropy in Denver his kindness and generosity have extended far beyond Denver to touch the lives of people around the state, the nation and indeed the world.

It would take hours to describe all that Noel has done for the Denver Community, however, certain projects of his stand out. Noel was one of the founders of Taste of the Nation, an incredibly successful program that raises money to help address hunger and poverty. Last year the event was held in 500 cities across the nation and raised \$300,000 in Denver alone. The millions of dollars that were raised will be distributed to states and countries dealing with the issue of hunger. For ten years, Noel has also run an event called "I Remember Mama" in which every Mother's Day he opens the doors of his restaurant to women from the poorest districts of Denver who participate in the Meals on Wheels programs. All of these women, who are without family in the Denver area, are treated to an incredible brunch, roses, gifts and music. Every Christmas, for the past decade, Noel has also hosted 300 foster children for a holiday party complete with food, gifts and a Santa who arrives in a helicopter.

Not only do Noel's efforts benefit individuals, they also have a tremendous impact on the community at large. Last year, Noel helped to raise a half-million dollars to build a brand new playground for the children of Garden Place Academy in Globeville, one of Denver's poorest districts. The playground was built with help from the surrounding community and by the students themselves. As a result, less than one year later, the discipline problem at the school has been nearly cut in half. Noel hopes to share his passion for helping others with the next generation through his Quarters for Kids program, where school children save a quarter so that someone else can have a meal. Thousands of children participate every year learning the joy of giving to others.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no one more deserving of this award than Noel Cunningham. He is a man of unparalleled dedication and commitment to both his professional and philanthropic endeavors. It is his unrelenting passion for each and every thing he does, as well as his spirit of honesty and integrity with which he has always conducted himself that I wish to bring before this body of Congress. Noel Cunningham is a remarkable man, who has achieved extraordinary things in his career and in his community. It is my distinct pleasure to pay tribute to Noel Cunningham today, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING JOHN L. HUERTA AS AN  
OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE  
TUCSON AND SOUTH ARIZONA  
COMMUNITY

**HON. ED PASTOR**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 2002*

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding member of the Tucson and Southern Arizona community. Mr. John L. Huerta. John has always served his community and his country with distinction, and although he has traveled extensively and held important positions at the national and state level, he has remained El Tucsonese at heart. On March 22, 2002, the University of Arizona Hispanic Alumni Association and the Concerned Media Professionals will gather to applaud and honor John for his many contributions to the cultural and educational vitality of the greater Tucson area. Today I join his family, friends and colleagues in expressing my sincere admiration for his many accomplishments.

John was born in Tucson, Arizona, and graduated from Tucson High and the University of Arizona. While at the U of A, John co-founded the Los Universitarios, a social club for the university Hispanic community, which fostered many of today's innovative leaders in Tucson. After college, John worked as a Juvenile Probation officer and then joined a task force that was successful in bringing the "War on Poverty" programs to Tucson. John's effective leadership in these programs brought him to the attention of national leaders who encouraged him to relocate to Washington, DC, where he joined the staff of the Postmaster General as a Special Assistant.

John's career in Washington, DC, moved upward through several positions in the Department of Health Education, and Welfare, including Assistant Director of the Office for