

He was a philanthropist, he was a contributor to the growth of the island as a Board of Regents member, as a philanthropist throughout the island.

His wife Eugenia, his children, Lou Leon Guerrero, who is a member of the Guam legislature, Tony, who is currently CEO of the Bank of Guam, and Jesse, also employed in the Bank of Guam, will miss their father, as we all will miss him. We certainly want to take the time to honor and celebrate the life of one of Guam's greatest citizens, Jesus Sablan Leon Guerrero.

□ 1215

#### EXPRESSING APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

The SPEAKER *pro tempore* (Mr. THORNBERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in what will be my last speech as a Member of the House to thank the people of Texas' 25th Congressional District for the privilege they have bestowed upon me to serve as their representative over these past 8 years.

I want to at the outset thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the distinguished minority whip and incoming minority leader, who in fact, as she mentioned, her grandchildren do live in the district that I have had the honor of representing. She has been a great whip, she is going to be a great leader for our caucus, and we can expect some wonderful things from her over the years.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD). We have spent many hours together on flights, his flight a lot longer than mine, but to get to Guam, he had to go through Houston, so we had a good deal of time to spend together.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, yourself as the Speaker's designee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY), my colleague and classmate from the 104th Congress, and it has been a privilege to serve with him as well.

I can think of no greater honor than to be elected by one's fellow citizens to serve as their voice and vote in this, the people's House, in matters affecting their life, liberty, and property. I consider myself to be among the fortunate few Americans, less than 10,000 throughout history, who have had the opportunity to serve in this body.

Mr. Speaker, as I have served, I have learned more about my country and what it means to be an American, and I have learned more about my heritage and home as a representative of the people of Texas. I often have told friends at home how in this job it is not just the public figures with whom one interacts that are the most interesting but rather it is a chance to meet so many of one's fellow citizens in

one's district who, but for this position, I would have never come to meet or know. As I leave the House, I do so with a far greater understanding of my constituency and my roots than when I arrived 8 years ago.

Furthermore, I have had the distinct pleasure of serving with my colleagues from all across this great Nation, from all walks of life, and from all points of view for whom I have the greatest respect. Serving in the House of Representatives gives one a more clear understanding of just how big and diverse our Nation has really become. The House is truly a unique national institution in that its Members are the closest to the people and their whims, and underscore our cultural, geographical, philosophical, ethnic, and religious diversity.

While ideology and partisan considerations have frequently divided us, it often seems that geography and culture are paramount. More importantly, one learns that there is more to our Nation than his or her district. It is the sum of these districts, their geography and cultures, that make us whole and strong. Even in this post-modern age, 220 years since the founding of our Nation, what de Touqueville saw in our democratic experience when he visited the United States in 1831 still holds true today.

Throughout my tenure, I have had the opportunity to witness and participate in a part of our Nation's history. I arrived with the Republican takeover of the House, a position I certainly did not advocate, but that was nonetheless historic. I watched as the government came to a halt and a presidency was resurrected after a stinging mid-term defeat. Even as the Congress took a turn to the right, I was able to participate in the greatest expansion of access to health care since Lyndon Johnson was President through the Children's Health Insurance Program and the largest investment in higher education since Eisenhower was President.

We went from deficits as far as the eye can see to an era of surpluses in paying down the Nation's debt, only to see deficits and debt return. I was here when we dismantled the regulatory barriers going back to the New Deal in finance and telecommunications and saw the rise of the new economy. We began making dramatic new investments in health and in basic science research as we witnessed historic breakthroughs such as the mapping of the human genetic structure. We enjoyed the "best economy in a generation" and impeached a President, witnessed the downfall of a Speaker, a tied national election and Supreme Court intervention for the first time in the history of our Nation, and saw that even in our time, mankind was still capable of genocide in Europe and Africa.

Then we suffered a startling and devastating attack, killing nearly 4,000 innocent Americans and others, and found our Nation at war and, once again, saw the economy go into a free-

fall. Yet the American people and its Congress rallied to the Nation's common defense.

It has been, to say the least, an exciting 8 years. As I take my leave, I do so with my faith restored in the American democratic experiment, now more than 220 years old. While elections may come and go, this body continues to operate. While we may disagree, we continue to do so in debate, rather than through insurrection and armed struggle. If I have any concerns, it is that perhaps we do not debate enough and that we have become less inclined to point out our differences in philosophy. I fear that frustration from our inability to compromise is resulting in an unhealthy cleansing of our philosophical differences under a forced and conceived cloak of bipartisanship.

Throughout my tenure, I have been willing on more than a few occasions to walk across the aisle to reach a compromise and achieve a greater good. We did this with the Budget Act in 1997, the children's health care program, and just recently with the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, to name but a few.

I do not believe that compromise is a four-letter word, but, at the same time, I have become dismayed with the rising chorus of those who believe Members should hide their partisan and philosophical differences as a means to achieving an end. If we become devoid of any beliefs, can we effectively represent those who have them? Most of us, if not all of us, were sent here because we believed in something, and the people who sent us here believed in us. We should not be afraid to debate our positions and differences any more than we should be afraid to compromise at the end of a debate, if it is for the good of the Nation.

Too often, the perfect has been the enemy of the good. The world just does not operate that way. While I appreciate the position of the majority under the Rules of the House, I have often been frustrated not so much by the loss of debate than by the lack of any real debate. It all too often seems that the majority is more concerned with stifling debate of issues, rather than the potential altering of their outcome.

Members of the minority and the majority should be concerned with any curtailment of actual debate. History tells us that our Founders were not monolithic in philosophy and thought. Jefferson and Adams were political adversaries, yet they served together in an administration. Neither compromised their views, but they led a young Nation. The Congress must again learn to marry its ideological differences, debate, deliberation, and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, as successful as our Nation has been throughout its short history, we confront many problems both at home and abroad. In an amazingly short time, we have lost our fiscal discipline just about at the time Social

Security and Medicare will begin to feel the burden of the retiring baby boomers. And yet it seems that few are willing to face the reality of this pending crisis. We still have too many without adequate access to health care, even though we have the very best medical assets in the history of the world.

I have had the honor of representing the world's largest medical center, the Texas Medical Center, with some of the greatest researchers and institutions on the planet and yet, even with its dedicated staff and investment, within a mile of these fine people and institutions too many of our fellow citizens lack access to the benefits of their care.

We still have too many Americans struggling to make ends meet, even though we have proven to have the most efficient and successful economic model.

We still face dangers and threats, even though we have the strongest military, by far. Our democracy and way of life may well face threats if we do not act, not merely to defend ourselves and our allies, but to eradicate poverty and tyranny throughout the world. The growing number of poor throughout the world is immoral and should be unacceptable to a free and democratic society such as ours. Failure to use our economic might and commitment to freedom and individual liberty can only result in a greater threat to our own freedoms.

The challenges are too great to ignore, but I believe the people of this body possess the ability, if they muster the will. As America continues to lead, we must confront those issues before they confront us.

Mr. Speaker, mine has been a tremendous experience for which I am truly grateful to my constituents. I have always tried my best to represent not just those who voted for me but those who voted for someone else and those who did not vote at all. I have had the benefit of serving alongside some of the finest individuals I will ever meet, from both parties and Independents, and while their friendship will endure, more importantly, as I return to private life, I am comforted in knowing that the leadership of the Nation remains in such competent and committed hands.

My tenure in the House would not have been at all successful had it not been for the excellent staff who tirelessly served the people of the 25th district and our Nation. Often going unnoticed, these individuals deserve the credit for a job well done, as I know Members would agree about their own staff. I would like to take a moment to read their names into the RECORD, because they deserve to be inscribed in the history of this body for the work they have done.

Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues permit me, they are as follows: of my current staff, Ms. Willie Belle Boone, Ms. Jessica de la Torre-Sauceda, Ms. Bradley

Edgell, Ms. Ashley Etienne, Ms. Lisa Hallford, Ms. Gabrielle Hargrove, Ms. Victoria Johnson, Ms. Amber Moon, Ms. Brenda Murphy, Mr. Dominic Nguyen, Ms. Hava Rothman, Mr. J.J. Slater, Ms. Pat Strong, Mr. Andrew Wallace, the Honorable Ed Watson, and Ms. Barbara Winters.

Of our former staff, Mr. Ron Allen, Mr. Stephen Brown, Ms. Rosemary Burkland, Mr. Lloyd Chinn, Ms. Rosaline Cohen, Mr. Mark Daley, Ms. Audrey Duff, Ms. Natalya Estridge, Mr. Ruben Garcia, Ms. Jennifer Goodman, Ms. Meredith Grabois, Mr. Stephen Hofmann, Mr. Jonathan Kaplan, Mr. Lincoln Loble, Thomas Mayo, Ms. Sandy McManus, Mr. Gary Palmquist, Ms. Sonya Pastor, Ms. Diane Patterson, Mr. Isaac Pesin, Ms. Sheryl Roppolo, Ms. Patricia Rojas, Ms. Susan Schieffer, Ms. Jessica Segal, Ms. Lisa Sherrod, Mr. Whet Smith, Ms. Samantha Smoot, Ms. Barbara Stalder, Ms. Kathryn Tsuchida, Mr. Jeremy Warren, Mr. Vince Willmore, Ms. Jennifer Winans, Mr. Patrick Woehrle, and Mr. Bobby Zafarnia.

In addition, Katie Rosenberg who served as a page, and 75, more than 75 interns who served in our offices in Washington and throughout the district.

These individuals have, in many ways, become an extension of our family; and we will always be grateful.

I also want to thank the professional staff with whom I have had the privilege to work with here on the floor, the Parliamentarian, the Sergeant at Arms, the Chaplain, the Clerk, and the Cloakroom and in committee. They, too, are among the most dedicated souls I have ever met. As some may know, I, too, was once staff of this institution and I understand the burdens of their jobs and I leave with nothing but the highest respect.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank my family for allowing me the opportunity to seek and undertake my position as a Member of the House. As every Member knows, this job, with all of its glory and grandeur, can be grueling on our families. No Member is an exception to this rule. But, at the same time, my wonderful wife, Tamra, who is in the gallery today and our two beautiful daughters, Louise and Meredith, have found a home and an extended family in this body.

I can still remember my first day on January 4, 1995, sitting just to the right of where I stand today with our two girls, then just 2 and 4. It was a long day with a lot of speeches. The gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), juggled Meredith, while Louise searched the floor for something else to do.

Throughout the years, these two girls have grown up in part on this floor, playing in the cloakroom, wrestling and dozing off in chairs during late-night debates. They harassed the staff, created havoc, and always felt at home.

I cannot thank the Members and the staff enough for what you have done to

make my family part of the experience. They have had to put up with a lot, nights and days away, missed school events and uncertain schedules.

□ 1230

All too often Tamra had to play the role of both parents in my absence. I know it was not easy.

I once heard Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia speak at the National Prayer Breakfast, and he said, when asked what his greatest accomplishment was in all those years in the other body, that "I kept my family together." He was right. But I also know that Tamra, Louise, Meredith, and I will miss this place, and it will forever be etched upon our hearts.

Mr. Speaker, 8 years ago I was given the opportunity to serve my fellow citizens of Texas' 25th Congressional District, my State, and my Nation. Few get that chance, not only to witness history, but to participate in its making, even if in a small way. I have had that chance, and I have tried my hardest every day to do the very best that I could. We did not win every battle, but I believe we finished ahead of where we started. I am confident that our efforts have resulted in the betterment of people's lives.

Most of all, I have had the chance to serve my people, doing the same that our forefathers did more than 200 years ago in the founding of this Nation. The people of the 25th Congressional District gave me this opportunity to be a part of history and the American democratic experiment, and for that I shall be eternally grateful.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 12:40 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 12:40 p.m.

□ 1254

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY) at 12 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.

#### REQUESTING SENATE TO RETURN OFFICIAL PAPERS ON S. 1843, EXTENDING CERTAIN HYDRO-ELECTRIC LICENSES IN THE STATE OF ALASKA

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk of the House of Representatives be directed to request the Senate to return the official papers on S. 1843, to extend certain hydroelectric licenses in the State of Alaska.

The House is requesting the return of these official papers to correct an inadvertent error that emerged during its