

RECOGNITION AND HONOR TO ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE PARISH OF CLEVELAND ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of St. John Nepomucene Parish of Cleveland, as they celebrate 100 years of service to our community.

In 1898, 200 Catholic Americans of Czech heritage met at the East 52nd Street home of Frank Stepanik. The gathering, organized by John Jira and Charles Vana, sparked the beginnings of a new parish. In 1902, St. John Nepomucene Parish was established.

Parish members were also focused on the welfare of their children. To preserve the culture, history and language of their Eastern European motherland for their children, members organized again to establish a school. In 1903, St. John Nepomucene School was established, with an enrollment of 300 students.

As immigrants navigated their way through the difficult transition of assimilation in America, St. John Nepomucene served as a haven of security, faith, support and assistance. As immigrants embraced the freedoms and ideals of their new nation, St. John Nepomucene served as a bridge between two worlds—connecting Fleet Avenue to their homeland across the ocean.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor, recognition and celebration of the generations of spiritual leaders and parishioners who founded, supported and sustained St. John Nepomucene Church for 100 years. The leaders and members of St. John Nepomucene Parish, past and present, continue their tradition of providing faith and hope to individuals and families in and around Fleet Avenue—reflecting light and hope throughout our Slavic Village neighborhood, and enriching our entire community.

HONORING ANTHONY LERIOS AND NICK TOTH

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who epitomizes the pride that Greek-Americans take in our heritage and the love we have for America.

Nick Toth, one of my constituents, was one of only sixteen Americans recently to receive a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He received this prestigious honor because he has carried on a nearly century-old family tradition of handcrafting copper sponge-diving helmets.

Mr. Toth crafts the helmets with pride. He spends approximately 140 hours on each of the thirty-six pound helmets. Although the helmets have sold for as much as \$10,000 a piece, there really is no way to put a real price on what they mean to his family and to my community of Tarpon Springs, Florida.

Mr. Toth's grandfather, Anthony Leros, came to the United States from Greece in

1913 and founded A. Leros Machine Shop, which made engines and other parts for local sponge boats. He also made helmets for sponge divers and later taught his grandson, Nick, the art of helmet-making. After his graduation from my alma mater, the University of Florida, Nick and his grandfather teamed up to produce the helmets full time.

Nick and his grandfather received a Florida Folklife Master Apprentice grant to make the helmets in the 1980s and soon they became recognized nationwide. Nick's grandfather died in 1992 at the age of 100. Nick now is one of the few people worldwide who produce the helmets which have earned him this praise. He will be coming to Washington in September to attend a dinner honoring the sixteen recipients of this year's National Heritage Fellowship.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the attention of this House to the outstanding lives and work of Anthony Leros and Nick Toth. They have shown that hard work, perseverance, and determination can lead those from modest beginnings to great acclaim. I am proud to call Nick Toth a constituent, and more important, a fellow Greek-American.

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL
SCOTT C. BERGREN

HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to honor Major General Scott C. Bergren upon his retirement after 33 years of dedicated service to the United States. His contributions to our Nation's security, his years of sacrifice on behalf of others, and his superior leadership have paved the way for excellence and innovation for generations to come.

Scott Bergren was commissioned in 1970, and has had a distinguished career in the United States Air Force, including combat time in Southeast Asia as an F-4 Weapon Systems Operator, and command assignments at the squadron, group, wing, and now center levels.

General Bergren's leadership has been, tested and thoroughly proven during his time as Commander of the Ogden Air Logistics Center. During a period when the Center has been heavily tasked for warfighter support, his superb application of financial, human, and materiel resources has delivered results far beyond expectations.

Recently, General Bergren created an atmosphere at the base of total focus on winning the war on terrorism. As a result, Ogden ALC shipped over 8,500 tons of munitions to support deployed air operations, and our Nation's pilots were safer and more effective in mission performance. An emphasis on innovative approaches led to expedited aircraft modifications that gave aircrews the edge they needed for victory.

General Bergren has led Ogden ALC to numerous awards in many areas including safety, environmental restoration, and efficiency.

I, along with the great men and women of Team Hill, congratulate General Scott C. Bergren on reaching this significant milestone, and wish him and his wife, Pam, the very best as they transition to new challenges and opportunities.

COMMENDATION OF ADDISON
TOWNSHIP, ILLINOIS

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, on March 27, my district office in Addison, Illinois was completely destroyed by a fire. Only a few cherished career mementos survived, and even then, they were severely damaged by heat, smoke and water. Thankfully, the early morning fire injured no one.

After assessing our loss, my district staff's thoughts immediately turned to the citizens of my district. How could we continue to serve them locally without a roof over our heads or even something as simple as pen and paper?

That's when many people and government entities in my district stepped forward to offer assistance. I would like to particularly commend Addison Township—whose offices also were destroyed by the fire—for making sure repairs to the office were completed accurately and on time. This vigilance helped my staff resume normal operations as quickly as possible.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Addison Township for unselfishly offering aid and comfort to my district staff in our hour of need. Paraphrasing the great movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, I can only say that I am indeed the richest man in town with friends like these in Addison Township, Illinois.

IN HONOR OF LIEUTENANT
WALTER J. THOMAS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Lieutenant Walter J. Thomas, Officer in Charge of the Fourth District Vice and Strike Force, upon the occasion of his retirement from the Cleveland Police Department after twenty-two years of service to the Cleveland community.

Lieutenant Thomas' strong work ethic, personal dedication and concern for others has been clearly present throughout his career. His work reflected the highest level of intelligence and wisdom, and his ever-present wry sense of humor was a saving grace during the most stressful situations.

Lieutenant Thomas rose steadily up the ranks of the Cleveland Police Department. In 1989, Officer Thomas was promoted to Detective of the Narcotics Unit. Several years later, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the Second District. And last year, Officer Thomas was promoted to the well-deserved position and title of Lieutenant, working in Cleveland's Fourth District.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor, gratitude and recognition of Lieutenant Walter J. Thomas, upon his retirement from the Cleveland Police Department. Lieutenant Thomas carried out his duties with honesty, loyalty, quiet confidence and dignity, and his exceptional and courageous service on behalf of the citizens of Cleveland, has served to lift the spirits and the lives of countless individuals, families—and the entire Cleveland community.