

TRIBUTE TO BERT BOECKMANN

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. SHERMAN, and I rise today to pay tribute to our good friend, Bert Boeckmann, who will be leaving the Los Angeles Police Commission because of term limits. The Police Commission is one of Los Angeles' most important panels, and Bert's strong leadership and vision have played a vital role in setting police policy for the City of Los Angeles during the past seventeen years.

Bert began his remarkable career selling automobiles at Galpin Ford in 1953. Four years later at the age of twenty-six, he became the General Manager of the company. Shortly afterwards, Bert began a buyout of the corporation. By 1968, the buyout was complete. Bert's innovation and management skills, along with a very strong sense of integrity and customer concern, have helped make him one of America's most successful entrepreneurs. By surrounding himself with a management team that shares his enthusiasm, honesty and dedication, Galpin Ford has become the world's most successful Ford dealership. Bert is widely recognized as the most honored and successful automobile dealer in America.

In 1984, Bert was appointed to the Police Commission by Mayor Tom Bradley. In his many years as a member of the Commission, Bert served as a stabilizing force, often counseling younger committee members. As a Commissioner, Bert worked to revise the system-wide deployment of police units to ensure that all areas of Los Angeles received equal police response. Bert has also worked to enforce and create policy regarding Official Police Garages. In the wake of September 11, Bert monitored the police's Anti-Terrorist Division. The mark Bert leaves on the Police Commission is indelible, positive and a testament to his commitment to public service.

Bert's many philanthropic achievements have touched the lives of millions, even beyond his well-known projects in Los Angeles. For example, in 1992, Bert and his wife, Jane, personally responded to a desperate plea from the city government of Moscow and Russian farmers who were in dire need of seed for the approaching winter harvest. Through his involvement with various organizations, Bert helped arrange the donation of over 57,000 pounds of seeds. Recently, he established the Boeckmann Charitable Foundation, which gives millions annually to charities around the world. Locally, Bert has donated more than \$1.5 million to the Boeckmann Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies at the University of Southern California.

Bert is a devoted and loving husband and cares deeply for his five children, their families and his five grandchildren. We are extremely pleased to know Bert and feel fortunate to have a person like him in our community.

Mr. Speaker, we invite our colleagues to join us in thanking Bert Boeckmann for his outstanding contributions to the Police Commission and wish him continued success.

THE "LIBRARIAN EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2003" (LEND Act) TO PROVIDE LOAN FORGIVENESS TO LIBRARIANS IN CRITICAL NEED AREAS

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, public libraries and schools across this nation are experiencing a dire shortage of librarians. To help fill the void, I have introduced legislation that will encourage individuals to pursue careers as librarians in public schools and libraries in low-income areas by providing student loan forgiveness.

The shortage of librarians is attributed to a combination of two factors. First, it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified librarians in the face of low salaries. Libraries are now in direct competition with industries needing workers with librarian skills such as those in multi-media technology, database administration, and systems analysis.

Second, an alarming number of librarians are reaching the age of retirement. One in four librarians will retire in the next five years. Nearly 60 percent of professional librarians will reach the age of 65 between 2005 and 2019.

State and local government budgets are tighter than ever and public libraries are being closed to save money. For example, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens libraries closed their doors two days a week, reduced staff and eliminated programs. 67 of New York's 85 libraries have reduced services, affecting primarily children. Proposed cuts in Ohio nearly led to the closing of two-thirds of the state's 250 public libraries; in the end, the legislature chose to provide no state funding for the month of July. In Washington State, Seattle's 24 libraries will close for two weeks as they did last year, in an effort to save \$1 million in costs. In 2002, branches were closed, hours were reduced, a hiring freeze was implemented, programs were eliminated and the book budget was cut. 2003 is looking worse. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, school libraries have become even more important as the place where our children learn outside of the classroom.

Not just any college graduate can be a school librarian. Specialized training is necessary if we are to expect our libraries to be staffed by the right people with the right skills. My home state of California requires that a school librarian have a media teacher credential in addition to the usual teaching credential. The shortage of qualified librarians is so serious that many schools are asking teachers to leave the classroom to obtain the required training to become school librarians. Our schools cannot afford to lose teachers any more than they can afford to be without librarians.

There have been bipartisan efforts to address the critical shortage of librarians. The President's FY 2004 budget requested \$20 million to fund an initiative to recruit and educate librarians for the 21st century. This is a good idea, but I also think we can do something simple that will also encourage more students to enter and stay in the field and serve children and youth in our highest risk schools.

Current law allows for the cancellation of educational loans for several categories of

professionals that serve in low-income areas, such as teachers for Title I schools, special education, and Head Start, as well as members of the armed services, law enforcement officers, Peace Corps volunteers, medical technicians and nurses. The Librarian Education and Development Act adopts the same incentive for our college students to make the choice to train and serve as librarians in areas where there are concentrations of children with the greatest need for improved educational opportunities.

Specifically, under my bill, a librarian working full-time in a public library that serves a geographic area with combined average of 40 percent of enrolled students at the poverty level, or in an elementary or secondary school library that is eligible for Title I assistance would qualify for the following levels of loan cancellation based on number of years of service: 15 percent of Perkins in the first or second years, 20 percent of Perkins in the third or fourth years, 30 percent of Perkins in the fifth year, and \$5,000 (total) of direct and indirect Stafford after five years of service.

I am honored that the American Library Association supports my bill. I've included their letter in the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I think it is just as vital to the improvement of our public schools and education of our children as legislation the House considered today to encourage qualified graduates with increasing debts to enter educational fields that are suffering from critical shortages.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, July 7, 2003.

Hon. XAVIER BECERRA,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BECERRA: Thank you very much for offering an amendment to H.R. 438 for Loan Forgiveness for Librarians. This issue is of great concern to school and public libraries as they face devastating shortages of librarians, especially minority librarians.

As you are aware, over the next five years, 25 percent of currently working librarians will retire and there are too few people going into the profession. This is not for lack of desire, but because professional librarians must have at least one Masters degree and salaries in this field are not commensurate with other professional fields.

There are a great number of college graduates who desire to be librarians and serve their communities, but the resources aren't available to them. This is especially true in low income communities.

Your amendment will do a great deal to open up the opportunity for dedicated community members to go to library school. The American Library Association appreciates your continued support for libraries in this country.

Sincerely,

EMILY SHEKETOFF,
Executive Director.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall vote

Nos. 334, 335 and 336. I present I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote No. 334 and "yea" on rollcall vote Nos. 335 and 336.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
FIRST SERGEANT ROBERT J.
DOWDY

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 remembrance of United States Army First Sergeant Robert J. Dowdy, who courageously and selflessly rose to the call to duty and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country.

Sergeant Dowdy was an exceptional United States soldier and was an equally exceptional human being. Sergeant Dowdy's life was characterized by his unwavering sense of duty and commitment to our nation, and above all, his life reflected a deep dedication to, and steadfast focus on his family. He worked diligently to effectively balance his military career with his main priority—his wife and daughter.

Sergeant Dowdy grew up in the North Broadway neighborhood and graduated from South High School in 1982. He enlisted in the U.S. Army soon thereafter. Throughout his journey in the military, Sergeant Dowdy carried with him a strong foundation of faith, family and community. He quickly ascended through the ranks, and held the title and command of Master Sergeant.

Most recently, Sergeant Dowdy was promoted to the rank of First Sergeant. His strong intellect and solid sense of integrity evenly matched his outstanding athleticism. Moreover, Sergeant Dowdy's life reflected his generous heart and sincere concern for the welfare of others. He often and easily offered his assistance to anyone in need, without regard to his own sacrifice.

BARBARA VAN BLAKE: A POINT
OF LIGHT FOR ALL AMERICANS

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to salute Barbara Van Blake who retired from the American Federation of Teachers in December 2002, for her past service to her country and the community; and for her continued activism on behalf of civil rights, women and education. Ms. Van Blake is a POINT-OF-LIGHT for all Americans.

Barbara Van Blake has been employed as director of the Human Rights and Community Relations Department of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) since 1975. Her responsibilities include keeping State and local affiliates informed of current trends, publications, laws and Federal regulations in the area of civil and women's rights. She participates as a consultant in the area of civil rights, discrimination, women's rights and desegregation activities to affiliates. Her duties also include representing AFT in coalitions with national organizations, whether they be civil rights, women, political or education.

Ms. Van Blake is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) National Life Membership and Labor Committee; a member of the boards of directors of Bethune Museum and Archives; a member of the Federal Advisory Commission of the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House; and life member of the Bethune-Cookman College National Alumni Association. She is also vice president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Chair of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators Labor Roundtable, and Treasurer of the Washington, D.C. Chapter Bethune Cookman College Alumni Association.

Ms. Van Blake has served in numerous capacities: former National Treasurer of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc.; former Chair of the Ad Hoc Labor Committee of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc.; former Secretary of the NAACP Ad Hoc Labor Committee; former executive committee member and Vice President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and former member of the board of directors of the National Consumers League.

She is a legacy member of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc.; a Diamond Life member of the NAACP; a member of the Washington, D.C. Urban League; and a member of the Omicron Phi Zeta Chapter of ZØB.

Prior to her work with AFT, she taught mathematics in junior and senior high school for twelve years in Florida, where she was active in support of civil rights and labor union organizing. She visited Somalia and Sudan on a refugee fact-finding mission for the labor movement in 1982, and was an official international observer of the South African elections. She has done Trade Union leadership training in Benin and Cote D'Ivoire Africa, and Barbados, West Indies. She was also a delegate to the International Confederation of Free Trade Union Women's Conference in Hague, Netherlands.

Ms. Van Blake has received numerous awards including the NAACP Women's Labor Award, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Fannie Neal Award, the A. Philip Randolph Institute Rosina Tucker Award, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionist Women's Addie Wyatt Award, and the National Black Caucus of State Legislators Nation Builders Award.

A graduate of Bethune-Cookman College, Ms. Van Blake holds a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and chemistry.

Ms. Van Blake is the proud mother of one daughter and one granddaughter. She is also a member of the Corinthian Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

In recognition of her dedicated leadership and tireless service to our youth, I am honored to recognize Ms. Barbara Van Blake as an outstanding POINT-OF-LIGHT for all Americans.

HONORING POLICE CHIEF JOHN
ROBERTSON

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Police Chief John Robertson of the

City of Newark Police Department for his 29 years of devoted service to the citizens of California.

Chief Robertson dedicated his life to reducing crime, implementing technological advances, and helping the lives of many people on a personal basis. He was not content to merely punish wrong-doers, but set about to bring an end to the problems he encountered by using a community oriented philosophy that worked wonders to stop crime.

In the course of his career in law enforcement, Chief Robertson has left his mark on three cities. He began his career in the City of Garden Grove in July 1974 as a Patrol Officer and worked his way up to Detective. He was appointed Sergeant in March 1980 and Lieutenant in May 1981. He became Captain, February 1986, and served as Deputy Chief until August 1988 when he was promoted to Police Chief. He served as Police Chief of Garden Grove until June 1992, then as Police Chief of the City of Orange until March 1998, and finally as the Chief of Police of Newark in August 1998.

In Garden Grove, Chief Robertson is accredited with revitalizing the community through "family policing" and developing the Department's Pride Program. In Orange, he significantly reduced crime, managed the Department's budget and made a significant number of technological improvements. In Newark, Chief Robertson implemented a Citizen's Police Academy, improved technology, remodeled the police facilities, became a mentor for a local high school student, implanted the HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed) Tutoring Program, and took responsibility for the City's Code Enforcement Unit and cleaned up a large blighted area of Newark.

Chief Robertson's greatest accomplishments in the City of Newark include bringing together the Newark Community by spearheading a youth summit with NAACP, setting up meetings with the Afghan Community to bridge cultural differences, and working with the gay/lesbian community after the murder of a transgender youth. Chief Robertson demands by word and shows through leadership that everyone must be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, color, creed, or sexual orientation. He was the first Police Chief to require all officers to document racial information on all car stops. He also mandated that all police employees attend training at the Museum of Tolerance to promote understanding and acceptance in the community.

I am honored to join the colleagues of Police Chief John Robertson to commend his many years of exemplary service to law enforcement. His commitment to excellence has shaped the lives of many, and his services to California will never be forgotten.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last night the Wabash River in northeastern Indiana crested at an incredible 25 feet. However, thanks to the extraordinary leadership of Mayor Ted Ellis and Sheriff Barry Storie, Bluffton, Indiana was spared a catastrophe.