

"I would like to start by stating that this award is not given out each year. Only when a citizen exemplifies the highest degree of devotion to the well being of our community, do we bring out this award. However, this year it is certainly necessary to acknowledge the devotion of Bill Eckman, the mayor of La Plata, with this award.

Bill Eckman first came to Maryland when AT&T transferred him here from Pennsylvania. He had been the Fire Chief in his Pennsylvania town. He joined the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, where he served for 12 years. He has been a consistent and steady supporter, participant, teacher, writer and speaker for fire and rescue issues. He has traveled to many cities addressing fire and rescue infrastructure. He has started 9 specialized fire fighting training programs. After he retired from AT&T, he wrote a book about fire protection and water supply.

Bill and his wife Delores lead a bible study program focused on community. The program teaches others to build relationships and care for one another. Bill practices this philosophy in his activities with the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home where he regularly brings services and music with other lay preachers to the residents. This also gives him the opportunity to display another talent. Bill plays his trumpet with an informal group at the Veterans home.

Bill has been married for 52 years, has three children and three grandchildren.

Bill Eckman was a La Plata Town councilman for at least 10 years and has been mayor for 20 years.

In that time, La Plata has changed. The population has grown from under 2,000 to nearly 8,000. The Town Hall has had 4 homes and is getting ready to find a new location. The town staff has grown from 15 to 50.

He has devoted much of his adult life to municipal government. He has been the president of the Maryland Municipal League and is presently a well-respected member of the League's Legislative Committee. Often, he is asked to speak before the State Legislature.

It is safe to say that during this time Bill has made friends and earned the respect of elected officials on both sides of the aisle.

Bill has always wanted La Plata to be a happy place to live; a town that enjoys the fruits of good growth without losing the benefits of a small town. He has always wanted to plan, and whenever possible, to stay ahead of infrastructure needs. He has been known to get excited about the very unsexy jobs that come with being mayor—like putting in a new 15-inch sewer pipe.

Doug Miller, La Plata town manager, remembers when Bill first had the summer long concert ideas. Doug thought there might be a citizen turnout for 3–4 concerts, but thought Bill's vision was a bit ambitious. Well, for over 10 years, the La Plata Town Hall has hosted Friday night summer concerts to a packed lawn of families.

However, all the smart growth initiatives, concert series and sewer pipes were just sand in the bucket compared to the leadership Bill would exhibit after April 28, 2002. Every Mayor and Town Manager sweats weather conditions that have the potential of causing harm to their town and heaves a sigh of relief when storms pass on by, but this time they were not so fortunate. This time Bill had to go into high gear and get the job done. He had to stand strong for residents and businesses

that faced ruin, despair and fear. He was dealing with a complete lack of services, the water tower was down, electricity was gone, telephone communication was hampered, helicopters were med-evac-ing the injured, and the press was descending. He will tell you that there were many people who made the miraculous recovery possible, but there always has to be a leader that makes everything seem possible.

Here is a quote from the newspaper. "Every morning since the tornado hit early one Sunday evening, La Plata Mayor Bill Eckman has taken a walk around town to talk with demolition crews and neighbors."

Regardless of how many people contributed there is a very interesting reason why recovery did not have to start from square one. Bill had already realized that La Plata was in transition and had previously put together a new town visioning process many months before the tornado.

The blue print for recovery was there because Bill is an optimist, a visionary and a leader.

It is for those qualities that we honor Bill Eckman as the 2003 Citizen of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me and the Charles County community in recognizing the numerous contributions Mayor Eckman has made to our County, our State and our Nation.

INTRODUCTION OF FEDERAL DETENTION CENTER LEGISLATION

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced this legislation today to stop the Federal Detention facility from being built in Dundalk, Maryland.

This past month the Office of Federal Detention Trustees (OFDT) in the Department of Justice solicited proposals for a new detention facility for the Baltimore-Washington region. One of the proposed sites was in Dundalk, Maryland. I was concerned that this office took action without consulting the community. OFDT solicited proposals without bringing the communities into the process. OFDT took action without the input of Federal, State, and local officials. This is wrong.

The Dundalk community is undergoing revitalization efforts, and even proposing such a facility might have cooled businesses and new residential interest in this community. As the former Baltimore County Executive, my administration spent over \$130 million to revitalize the area. It is very important to me that we help our older communities. It is important that we allow these communities that have generations of families living there to revitalize and attract new jobs and new businesses.

Also, the eastern part of Baltimore County was hit hard by Hurricane Isabel. It has caused extensive damage and many of the residents and businesses are still struggling to get on their feet. Hurricane Isabel damage estimates for Maryland alone are valued at six million dollars. We must continue to work to help this area.

The Maryland Congressional delegation has worked tirelessly to stop the detention center, and I remain committed to its defeat. We

worked together to insert language into the FY' 04 Omnibus appropriations to stop this facility. I want to thank Senator MIKULSKI and Democratic Whip STENY HOYER for all their efforts. We knew the actions of OFDT would do more harm to our community and we fought to stop it.

This legislation takes an additional strengthening step to ensure that this facility and no new detention center or prison is built in my district. This legislation prohibits the OFDT from building or proposing any sites and it prohibits the Attorney General from building a detention center or prison in Dundalk.

In the past few months this area has experienced major problems. They saw thousands of Marylanders lose their jobs with the restructuring at ISG. They saw severe damage from Hurricane Isabel. This prison would be one more concern for the community. It is important to allow this area to revitalize and to grow. I remain committed to fighting for Dundalk and for my fellow Marylanders.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR TAUER AND THE RETIRING AURORA CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

HON. BOB BEAUPREZ

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, the political landscape of Colorado's third largest city changed considerably after the City of Aurora's November 4 municipal elections. Due largely to term limits, the largest turnover of elected officials in city history has occurred. The people who left public service were committed public servants who have left indelible marks on Aurora and positioned the City and its citizens for great success and achievement in the 21st century.

Collectively, Mayor Paul Tauer and Council members Barbara Cleland, Bob LeGare, Edna Mosley, John Paroske and Dave Williams provided their constituents with 85 years of service as elected officials at the City. They have provided visionary leadership and both their knowledge of and commitment to issues of importance to the people of Aurora will be hard to replace.

Paul Tauer was the Mayor of Aurora from 1987 until 2003. He was a City Councilman for eight years before that. He has been a visionary leader whose legacy will be felt for decades to come. He has been at the forefront of development in the City, including Original and Southeast Aurora, Buckley Air Force Base, Gateway, E-470 corridor, City Center, Aurora Municipal Center and the redevelopment of Fitzsimons. He was instrumental in establishing a growth management plan that sets goals for quality and smart growth and has been a leader in water issues including drought management, the enhancement of Aurora's water supply including acquisition of new water resources, treatment and use of recycled water and more than doubling storage and distribution systems. He has also overseen the enhancement of the City's transportation systems. He has been Aurora's greatest cheerleader and defender and under his leadership, Aurora has grown from a sleepy suburb to a vibrant city.

Barb Cleland served as an Aurora City Councilwoman for 20 years. She distinguished

herself as an expert on public safety issues and was instrumental in decisions to make Aurora a leader in ensuring its citizens had necessary protections with programs including the Victim Advocate program and service on the Officer Standard and Training Board, the Aurora Gang Task Force and the National League of Cities Public Safety and Crime Prevention Steering Committee. She was active in municipal organizations and has been a respected leader in the National League of Cities, the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the Colorado Municipal League, where she remains a member of the Board of Directors.

Bob LeGare was an Aurora City Councilman for eight years. Devoted to the importance of small business, he worked to make Aurora a partner with businesses to provide jobs and services. He provided leadership on a variety of economic development initiatives including the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, Colorado Commission on Taxation, Aurora Citizens Advisory Budget Committee, Colorado Office of Regulatory Reform Advisory Board, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Association of Realtors and the Aurora Realtor Governmental Affairs Committee and further contributed to the community through Leadership Aurora, Aurora Museum Foundation, Aurora Open Space Board and the Aurora Boys and Girls Club.

Edna Mosley spent 12 years serving Aurora as a City Councilwoman. She championed issues of importance to veterans and military retirees and worked to promote volunteerism, diversity and the enhancement of the cultural arts in the community. She was instrumental in the formation of the Aurora Youth Commission and served with distinction on the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority Executive Committee, Aurora Economic Development Council, Denver International Airport Business Partnership, Lowry Economic Recovery Project, Adams County Economic Development Council, Community College of Aurora Advisory Council and Aurora Business Advisory Board.

John Paroske completed ten years of public service as a City Councilman last month. An accountant, John offered his financial expertise and worked hard to make sure Aurora taxpayers knew their resources were being used wisely. He devoted countless hours to make Aurora a better place through his work on the Economic Development Committee, E-470 Authority, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Utility Budget Committee, Visitors Promotion Fund, Aurora Education Foundation, Spirit of Aurora, Community Housing Services and Aurora Rotary Club.

Dave Williams served 11 years during two different stints as a member of the Aurora City Council. He worked to improve the efficiency of the City by encouraging better review processes and more efficient administration. He represented the views of his constituents by promoting business and development in an effort to improve the City's quality of life. He has been a leader in the business community as illustrated by his experience on the Aurora Economic Development Council, E-470 Authority, Aurora Rotary Club and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District.

These outstanding public servants deserve our thanks and admiration. Their work on behalf of the people of Aurora has improved quality of life in innumerable ways. They leave

big shoes for their successors to fill. We are honored to have served with them and offer our best wishes for future success.

RECOGNIZING DREW QUINTON THOMPSON FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Drew Quinton Thompson, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 60, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Drew has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the eight years Drew has been involved with Scouting, he has earned 62 merit badges and has held numerous leadership positions, serving as Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Patrol Leader, Quartermaster, Troop Guide, and Librarian. Drew is a Warrior in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say and has received the Arrow of Light Award.

For his Eagle Scout project, Drew completed a walking trail at Mark Youngdahl Conservation Center in Saint Joseph, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Drew Quinton Thompson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING MRS. ZELMA WITT

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being one of fourteen students in Mrs. Zelma Witt's first kindergarten class in Omaha, Texas. Today, I honor Mrs. Zelma Witt for her love of learning and thank her for the wonderful gifts she bestowed on all of the students who were blessed to be in her classroom.

Mrs. Witt left an indelible mark on the lives of countless students during their earliest and most formative years of schooling. Mrs. Witt taught her young pupils the most fundamental building blocks of education, setting her students on a path toward higher education and brighter futures.

I feel honored to have been a part of Mrs. Witt's first kindergarten class and part of the commitment to learning that she ingrained in her young students. May God bless you, Mrs. Witt. Thank you for all the gifts you have given us.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE RE-OPENING OF THE SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to be present at the grand re-opening of the San Francisco Conservatory of Flowers. The Conservatory is considered by many to be the jewel of Golden Gate Park and the City of San Francisco. It is a monument to biodiversity, renewal, and beauty.

Congratulations to all those who joined forces in the fight to restore our Conservatory: John Murray, President of San Francisco Recreation & Parks Commission; Scott Medbury, Director of the Conservatory; Rebecca Green, President of Friends of Recreation & Parks; and Elizabeth Goldstein, General Manager of Recreation & Parks. Thank you for your vision and your leadership. The people of San Francisco, future generations of San Franciscans and visitors alike, owe you a great debt of gratitude.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Richard Goldman, one of San Francisco's most generous citizens. His support of our City and our environment is immeasurable. His tremendous contribution to the Conservatory in honor of his late wife, Rhoda, led the way. Many other extremely generous families followed; the Madeleine Haas Russell family and the Fisher, Friend and Taube families. These families have graciously supported so many of San Francisco's treasures for decades.

This grand undertaking could never have been realized without the leadership of our Mayor, Willie Brown. This is yet another project marked by excellence, effectiveness, and success. It is fitting that this extensive project was completed under his watchful eye. Mayor Brown raised the visibility of the project to a national level and used his unique abilities to develop private public partnerships.

An army of volunteers worked non-stop since the devastating windstorm of 1995 to make this day happen. The 124 year old conservatory was thought to have sustained irreparable damage. Of the \$25 million needed for this massive rehabilitation, \$15 million came from individual donations. The prospect of the Conservatory's imminent destruction was unthinkable to the people of San Francisco. They had the wisdom to know that its beauty could never be rivaled or replicated. They were stubborn and unrelenting in their demand that we preserve this architectural masterpiece. Because of their labor of love, we once again can view the exquisite beauty outside and experience the lush splendor within. Their talent, commitment and dedication to this magnificent project honors our patron saint, St. Francis, honors nature, and honors God's creation.

Today we can once more enjoy the stunning high altitude orchids, the giant cycads, and the rest of the 1,500 species of plants from over 50 countries. In addition to the tropical paradise that we all remember, there are new displays to inspire visitors to appreciate and conserve our planet's extraordinary biodiversity.

San Francisco is proud to be the home of the oldest glass and wood conservatory in the