

new Transitional Housing Program for homeless veterans, located at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis. Today's celebration is an accumulation of hard work, dedication and determination, reflective of Minnesota's commitment to our nation's veterans and a testament to the spirit of the veterans' community in our great state.

Most Americans are not aware of the severity of our veterans' homeless problem. Nearly 25 percent of homeless people are veterans, and many veterans who live in poverty are at risk of becoming homeless. On any given night, 275,000 veterans of the United States armed forces—including thousands in Minnesota—are homeless, and many struggle with alcohol, drug, and mental challenges.

The goal of the new Transitional Housing Program is to provide and coordinate preventive transitional and permanent housing and supportive services for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or who are in danger of becoming homeless. This new program will help assist Minnesota's homeless veterans in gaining the necessary skills required to successfully transition back into mainstream society.

The most effective programs for homeless veterans feature transitional housing with the camaraderie of living in structured, substance-free environments with fellow veterans who are succeeding at bettering themselves. Minnesota's new Transitional Housing Program seeks to employ these methods and provides an important community partnership in improving the lives of those who sacrificed so much for our freedom and democracy.

As we celebrate this new program, I urge my colleagues to remember the thousands of homeless veterans across America that go without help each and every day. We must continue to support the efforts of those who seek to provide these honorable veterans with a better way of life.

#### NAGORNO KARABAKH LIBERATION MOVEMENT

#### **HON. FRANK PALLONE JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 27, 2003*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want bring the attention of my colleagues to an anniversary that occurred this past Thursday, February 20th, 2003. That day marked the 15th anniversary of the modern day liberation movement of the people of the Nagorno Karabakh (NK). Fifteen years ago, in the twilight of the Soviet Union, the people of NK petitioned the Soviet government to correct historical injustices and reunite them with their brethren in Armenia.

The Armenians of NK were placed within the borders of Azerbaijan in 1921, as one of the many ethnic groups that were separated by Joseph Stalin through his "divide and conquer" strategy. Despite the fact that 96% of the population of NK were ethnically Armenian, and NK's stated wish to be part of Armenia—or even be represented as an autonomous region within Azerbaijan—the Armenians of NK were subjected to brutal Soviet Azerbaijani rule for 70 years.

During those seven decades, the Armenians of NK repeatedly stated to each successive Soviet regime their desire to be joined again with Armenia. These peaceful and legal maneuvers were met with violent repression and forced settlement of ethnic Azeris into NK.

Heydar Aliyev, current President of Azerbaijan, ran the Azeri spoke of these policies frankly to reporters on July 22, 2002. He said, "I tried to change Nagorno Karabakh's demography . . . Instead of sending Azeri workers to Baku, I sent a large number of them to Karabakh from surrounding Azerbaijani regions . . . With these and other measures, I was trying to make sure that Azerbaijani population grew in Karabakh while the Armenian population diminished. Those who used to work in Karabakh back then, know what I am talking about." This comment smacks of human rights abuses; working to directly change to demographics of the region while paying no mind to the Armenian or Azeri human condition.

In 1988, when the Armenians of NK heard of the Mikhail Gorbachev's democratization agenda, they began to again move peacefully for reunification with Armenia. At this time, the Soviet and Azeri armies would not stand even to entertain this request and immediately resorted to violence. Public expressions of determination by the Armenians of NK were met with a campaign of ethnic cleansing, deporting the Armenians of NK and Azerbaijan.

In 1991, as Armenia and Azerbaijan followed most soviet states in succession from the USSR, NK also voted to succeed. In an internationally monitored referendum, the NK population overwhelmingly voted to establish an independent Nagorno Karabakh Republic, currently known as NKR.

Following this referendum in which the country was established, the Azeri army began a full-scale war on the Armenians of NK, which took thousands of lives over three years, but eventually ended up with NKR repelling Azeri forces. This victory was gained with an army that was out-manned and out-gunned, but had desire and guile that proved to be overwhelming. This conflict had a terrific human cost, leaving 30,000 dead and over one million displaced. Thankfully, although small skirmishes have broken out from time to time, the peace has been kept since an agreement ceased hostilities in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, I have repeatedly come to the House floor to speak of the plight of the Armenians of NK. I can now speak from personal experience about NKR, having traveled there with Congressman DOGGET of Texas last August. We had the opportunity to travel to NKR to witness the Presidential elections there, where we served as official monitors. I am proud to say that all election observers that participated in this historic event gave an overwhelmingly positive response. One group in particular, headed by the Baroness Cox from England stated that, "Our overall conclusion is one of congratulations to all the people of Artsakh (NKR) for the spirit in which the elections have been conducted, their commitment to the democratic process and their pride in their progress towards the establishment of civil society."

This process is astounding considering that NKR is not recognized internationally; that they still must deal every day with Azeri ag-

gression, and that their economy is still devastated from the war. The elections were reported to have met, if not exceeded international standards. All this just 9 short years removed from all-out war.

Congress recognized this consistent move towards democracy, granting NKR 20 million dollars in humanitarian assistance in FY '97, and an additional 5 million dollars in FY '03. This assistance has not just been crucial for needs of the people of NKR, but has also fostered the beginnings of an excellent relationship between our two countries.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end with a final example of what I saw in Armenia in August last year. During the elections, as I visited the capitol city and small villages alike, everyone I spoke to was incredibly excited about the prospect of voting. They viewed the vote not only as a choice of the leader of their country for the next five years, but a statewide referendum on the democratic process and independence of NKR.

I congratulate the people of NKR for the 15th anniversary of the Nagorno Karabakh Liberation movement and their incredible determination to establish a free and open democratic society.

#### RECOGNITION OF HEIDI TILLY

#### **HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 27, 2003*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Heidi Tilly, a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, Troop 472, and in earning the most prestigious honor of the gold award.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest achievement attainable in girl scouting. To earn the gold award, a scout must complete five requirements, all of which promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values, and leadership skills. The requirements include, 1. earning four interest project patches, each of which requires seven activities that center on skill building, technology, service projects, and career exploration, 2. earning the career exploration pin, which involves researching careers, writing resumes, and planning a career fair or trip, 3. earning the senior girl scout leadership award, which requires a minimum of 30 hours of work using leadership skills, 4. designing a self-development plan that requires assessment of ability to interact with others and prioritize values, participation for a minimum of 15 hours in a community service project, and development of a plan to promote girl scouting, and 5. spending a minimum of 50 hours planning and implementing a Girl Scout Gold Award project that has a positive lasting impact on the community.

For her gold award project, Heidi refurbished and painted a playground.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Heidi Tilly for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of the gold award.

## TRIBUTE TO JUDGE TOMIE GREEN

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 27, 2003*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of Black History Month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of distinguished African-Americans in Mississippi's Second Congressional District.

Today I rise to pay tribute to Judge Tomie Green. Judge Green received her primary education from the Jackson public school system. Upon completing, she entered Tougaloo College where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree. She then earned a Master of Science degree from Jackson State. Judge Green then received her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Mississippi College School of Law. In April of 1999 Judge Green then continued post-graduate training at the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and the National Judicial College, University of Nevada Reno.

Judge Green served in the Mississippi House of Representatives from 1992–1998. She served as Vice Chair of Ethics and a sub-chair of the Judiciary Committee. While serving in this position Judge Green aided in passing several monumental laws. Judge Green also participated in the creation of the laws that established the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Mississippi Court of Appeals, and the Mississippi Torts Claim Board.

Judge Green practiced law for fifteen years before taking the bench. On January 4, 1999, Judge Green took the oath of office to become the first woman elected to the Hinds County Circuit Court. She also continues to be an adjunct law professor as Mississippi College School of Law.

## TRIBUTE TO VERA RISON

**HON. DALE E. KILDEE**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 27, 2003*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing an outstanding humanitarian, Vera Rison. Vera is being honored Thursday night at a Community Tribute and Retirement Dinner in my home town of Flint Michigan.

Vera Rison is one of my dearest friends. I treasure her wisdom, her common sense, and her ability to go to the heart of a dilemma and seek a solution. The many years she spent working at Genesee Memorial Hospital gave Vera insight into the problems faced by average families. She has never stopped working to ease the burdens faced by so many. Through the positions she held as chair of the Service Employees International Union Local 79, director of human resources at Amy Jo Manor Housing Complex, the Genesee County Community Mental Health Board, the Substance Abuse Services Board and the Jobs Central Workforce Development Board, Vera has always maintained her vision and commitment to a better future for everyone.

Through her work as a Genesee County Commissioner and a State Representative, Vera was able to see some of her ideas be-

come concrete, working plans. She sponsored a bill to reduce the number of abandoned houses. She also was the driving force behind the renovation of the Amy Jo Manor Housing Complex. In addition, Vera worked tirelessly for individuals in trouble. She frequently advocated on behalf of persons sentenced to prison. She arranged for basic services to be provided for the handicapped and devoted many hours to ensuring the uninsured received health care.

The Genesee District Library paid Vera an awesome compliment when they named the Beecher branch of their library the "Vera B. Rison Library." It is a tremendous tribute that the library, where all persons of every age can come and improve their minds and lives through knowledge, is named for the woman who spent a lifetime witnessing the potential in all persons and pushed them to achieve their personal best.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring a dear friend, Vera Rison. She is an inspiration to me and I wish her the best as she starts the next phase of her life.

## REMEMBERING MS. ESTHER JONES LEE

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 27, 2003*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this day, during Black History Month, to pay tribute to a trail blazing civic leader, Ms. Esther Jones Lee. I take pride in honoring Ms. Jones Lee for her lifetime of dedication to organizing and empowering the African American community, particularly African American women, in their struggle to secure the purportedly unalienable rights promised to the people of this nation at its founding.

Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1885, the daughter of Ms. Mary Wanzer Jones and the Reverend J.W. Jones, Ms. Jones Lee inherited her family's unyielding commitment to serving God and her community. The monumental integrity and deep compassion that came to characterize Ms. Jones Lee's legacy were deeply rooted in the lessons she learned growing up in her father's ministries. After graduating from high school in Chillicothe, Missouri, Ms. Jones Lee was trained in pedagogy and taught high school in Macon, Missouri. In 1904, Reverend Jones and his family relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he was charged by the American Baptist Association with establishing the McGee Avenue Baptist Church, still a vibrant spiritual community to this day. Married in 1908 to Mr. George E. Lee, Ms. Jones Lee had three children, of whom only one, Ms. Esther Lee Higgs, survived infancy.

In the Bay Area, Ms. Jones Lee provided skillful and passionate leadership to a plethora of organizations and clubs, especially the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), which she served for three terms as president of the state chapter. In 1918, Ms. Jones Lee was appointed by the President of the NACW, Ms. Mary Burnett Talbert, to lead California's efforts in the Anti-Lynching Campaign, working closely with State Senator William Knowland to introduce the successful legislation that out-

lawed this heinous practice. Ms. Jones Lee also served as: Vice President of Child Welfare for the Civic Center of San Francisco, the predecessor of the Big Sister Movement; President of the Women's Work Baptist Association of the State of California; a founding member of the Fannie Wall Children's Home, the area's first home to care for African American orphans; a founder of the Linden Branch YWCA, the area's first YWCA open to all girls, regardless of race; and head of the Women's Division of Northern California for the 1928 Herbert Hoover Campaign.

During her lifetime, the promises of equality, and justice for all made by our nation's framers were not extended to Ms. Esther Jones Lee. Born into a world in which she could neither vote nor hold public office, she found power by raising her voice and taking action where her conscience deemed it necessary. Inspiring and empowering those whose lives she touched, she rose to positions of leadership from which she challenged the status quo, contributed to policy reform, and advocated for equality. While partaking in the club activities expected of women of their social stature, Ms. Jones Lee and her fellow organizers became fierce, courageous, and compassionate political forces, needing no one's permission but their own. I take great pride in joining Ms. Esther Jones Lee's family and the people of California's 9th Congressional District in honoring her memory and celebrating her legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to include in the RECORD the following articles regarding Ms. Esther Jones Lee.

[From the Oakland Tribune, May 30, 1926]

## ACTIVITIES AMONG NEGROES

(by Delilah L. Beasley)

## WELCOMING SPEECHES

Mrs. Esther Jones Lee, as president of the northern section of California, will have the honor of welcoming the distinguished group of women to Oakland and Mrs. Corrine Bush Hicks, of Pasadena, state president of the California Federation of Colored Women's clubs, will welcome them to California on the night given over to state. Notwithstanding, the great task there are citizens in the east who have visited Oakland, notably Miss Hallie Q. Brown, who have faith in the citizens rally to the assistance of these brave women and helping them in this great effort which will mean much as an educational development of the race.

The following are appointments given to California women by the national president, Mrs. Mary McCloud [McCleod] Bethune: Regional chairmen for northern section—Temperance, Miss Masterson of Stockton; kindergarten—Mrs. L.-J.-Williams, Vallejo, headquarters for the national in Washington, D. C., Mrs. H. B. Tilghman; physical education, Esther Jones Lee, Oakland; state chairmen—Peace and foreign relations, Mrs. Irene Bell Ruggles, San Francisco; citizenship, Mrs. Frank Henry, Oakland; temperance, Mrs. Lillian Smith, Oakland; hygiene, Mrs. L. J. Williams Vallejo; arts and crafts, Mrs. Melba Stafford, Oakland; social work and recreation, Esther Jones Lee, Oakland. She is also local chairman of arrangements for the national.

[From the California Voice, Friday, December 30, 1960]

## FEDERATED WOMEN CLUB NOTES—(CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION)

Maker of History—This is a brief, historical sketch of a personality of pronounced individuality who helped put over remarkable