

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM KERR OF
PITTSBURGH, PA

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, as we recognize the founding of Flag Day, I would also like to pay tribute to William Kerr. William Kerr, of Pittsburgh, PA, worked continuously for over 50 years to establish a national Flag Day. Kerr believed that the American flag had symbolized love for country since its adoption on June 14, 1777. He felt it of great importance that this date be celebrated along with Independence Day on July 4.

Kerr was born in 1868 and began his quest to establish a national holiday at the young age of 14. He was a deeply patriotic young man with a talent for speaking in public. After delivering a speech in Chicago in 1882, he started to think about the important symbolism the flag had for the American people. This love of country and flag was especially fitting when one considers that he was born and lived in a state where the American flag was first adopted.

Kerr's belief in the importance of the flag led him to organize the American Flag Association of Western Pennsylvania in 1888. He went on to speak all over the state on behalf of the organization, building momentum by urging other Pennsylvanians to join the charge. Kerr also began his efforts to lobby the United States Government to officially name June 14th a federal holiday.

In 1898, during the Spanish American War, he expanded this scope of his organization to a national level as head of the new American Flag Association. He began to visit the President of the United States on an annual basis, using his powers of persuasion at the highest possible level. At the same time, his association waged an intensive letter writing campaign to elected officials and other persons of influence.

Kerr's efforts and intensity proved successful. In 1916, Woodrow Wilson urged Americans to celebrate Flag Day, effectively making June 14th a holiday, if still an unofficial one. In 1937, Pennsylvania, his home and the birthplace of his efforts, became the first to make June 14th an official state holiday. And finally, in 1949, William Kerr was asked by President Harry Truman to witness the signing of the Bill that marked June 14th as an official federal holiday. He was 81 years old, and had worked almost his entire life for the day in which he stood by and watched as the Flag Day Act was signed into law.

William Kerr worked tirelessly to ensure that "Old Glory" has a special day to commemorate its importance to the American people. His efforts were rewarded then, and they are to be admired and noted today.

A TRIBUTE TO CAPT. JIM
FOURNIER FOR 50 YEARS OF
PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding official of the U.S.

Congress, Capt. James M. Fournier of Fountain Valley, California, who has dedicated almost 50 years of his life in public service to his country.

Twelve years ago, I stood on this same floor to thank Capt. James M. Fournier, upon his retirement as my California Chief of Staff, for his many decades of service to our country. It was the good fortune of the people of southern California that, a few years later, Jim returned to work for the citizens of the 48th Congressional District. Just as Michael Jordan had difficulty staying away from the game that he loved, Jim Fournier has trouble walking away from his personal dedication to public service. In fact, if you ask the people of Orange County, they might say that Jim is the Michael Jordan of public and constituent service: He is a true professional, and has devoted his life to serving his country and his fellow man.

Today, Capt. Jim Fournier is retiring as my California Chief of Staff so that he might spend more time with his family and his beloved wife, Lucille. As he departs, I offer heartfelt thanks for his almost 50 years of service to his country. Jim Fournier has excelled in many fields: As a military officer, a sea captain, an engineer, and a public servant. He is, I am proud to say, a good and loyal friend who has worked with me throughout my congressional career.

As my District Representative and the Chief of Staff in my California office, Jim Fournier has become a beloved figure to the people who work for him and, more importantly, to the thousands of southern Californians whom he has personally helped.

Although it would have been equally well-deserved, Jim did not earn the title of "Captain" by navigating the political waters of Washington, DC, or California. Rather, it was his long and outstanding service in the U.S. Coast Guard that earned him this designation. He began serving our Nation in 1954, when he was commissioned an ensign following graduation from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The next 30 years found Jim on Coast Guard cutters sailing to all four corners of the Earth, as well as on the vast network of waterways throughout the United States. Among his varied assignments, Jim captained icebreakers in the Antarctic and in the Arctic Circle; he commanded the Coast Guard's 8th District Field Office in New Orleans; and he managed the Coast Guard's Congressional Liaison Office in Washington, DC.

Jim Fournier's rapid advancement and stellar performance sailing under the flag of the United States earned him several national honors, including one of our Nation's top military service awards, the Legion of Merit. Although he would not be one to mention it, a listing of the other honors awarded to Captain Fournier is nothing short of amazing: two Meritorious Service Medals; two Coast Guard Commendation Medals; two Letters of Commendation; the National Defense Medal, twice; three Antarctic Service Medals; four Arctic Service Medals; and 11 other awards. In between his seagoing assignments, Jim found time to study engineering at the prestigious Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and to do postgraduate work at John Carroll University.

Jim has often mentioned that the best import ever to sail to the United States from Canada is Lucille, his wife of 40 years. I have had the pleasure of knowing Lucille since 1988, and I agree with Jim completely. Jim

and Lucille have three grown children, and now Captain Jim is Grandpa Jim to his beautiful grandkids, Renee and Ryan.

Following his retirement from the Coast Guard and from private business in the field of engineering, Jim came on board with me after my first election in 1988. He set up my Orange County office from scratch, finding office space, hiring the staff, and organizing the workload. He has served Orange County as the first line of assistance for thousands of constituents who have had problems with Federal agencies—from the IRS to the INS, from Orange County to our most distant and far-flung embassies around the world.

I well remember one especially poignant success that Jim achieved. Two years ago, my office was contacted by two California youths who were on the verge of being forcibly resettled to Zimbabwe—a country torn by violence and lawlessness—as the result of an international custody dispute. Despite the fact that the youths were U.S. citizens, the U.S. State Department was on the verge of honoring an unjust ruling by a Zimbabwean court that would have required the youths to return to this violent land. That's when they turned to my office for help. Jim Fournier worked on their problem with passion—spending countless hours over a matter of months to guarantee the safety of these two young Americans. The creative energy that led to this success was typical of Jim Fournier.

Mr. Speaker, as my top California aide and advisor, Jim Fournier has established an enviable record of caring service to the people of Orange County. His stewardship in that role will long be remembered, and should serve as a model for all of us in congressional service for years to come. As he sets his course for new challenges, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Jim Fournier, and thanking him for a job well done—for Orange County, for California, and for America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably delayed in the District and missed recorded votes on Monday, June 14 and Tuesday, June 15. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on rollcall votes Nos. 232, 233, and 235. I would have voted "no" on rollcall Nos. 234, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241 and 242. I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 240.

Should you or your staff need further clarification, please feel free to contact me or my legislative director, Marti Thomas, at 225-4011 or marti.thomas@mail.house.gov.

RECOGNIZING DUANE AND
ROWENA JONES BROERMANN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Duane and Rowena Broermann,

natives and life-long residents of my hometown, Tarkio, Missouri. They will be celebrating their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary on Sunday, June 20, 2004.

Duane and Rowena were married in 1954 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Westboro, Missouri. They both graduated from Tarkio High School, Rowena in 1949 and Duane in 1948. Duane served two years in the United States Army during the Korean War and returned to Tarkio to farm for forty-seven years. He retired from farming in 1997. Rowena worked at the local Hy-Vee Food Store and the Flesher Pharmacy in Tarkio. They are both active in the county 4-H organization, the Atchison County Fair, and the St. John's Lutheran Church.

Duane and Rowena have one son and daughter-in-law, Donald and Mitzi Broermann. They have two grandchildren, Eric and Tyler. Rowena is a housewife and a member of the Red Hat Society. Duane is a member of the St. John's Church Choir and enjoys playing ping-pong and golfing with his friends. Both will tell you their main hobby is their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending this exemplary couple for their dedication to community, family, and church. Duane and Rowena are exceptionally fine assets to the Sixth District of Missouri. I am proud of them and wish them well on their Fiftieth Anniversary.

UNITED STATES REFINERY REVITALIZATION ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to join me in opposing a bill that fails to protect human health, our environment and our economy. In the name of reducing gas prices, the House today is debating legislation that will allow the Secretary of Energy to overturn the environmental and health concerns of our federal, state and local leaders.

We need to increase our Nation's refinery capacity. Refineries are running full speed to meet gasoline demand. There are many reasons, however, why the number of domestic refineries has declined since the early 1980s. Congress should examine how consolidation in this industry affects gas prices.

There have been no hearings on today's bill. No record has been established that fully describes the impact of this legislation on gasoline prices, refining capacity, our environment and especially our public health. Instead of finding ways to ensure that our refineries protect the public's health, House Republican leaders want to allow the Secretary of Energy to override clean air, clean water and hazardous waste laws. There was recently a discharge from a local refinery in Newport, Minnesota. My constituents were concerned that their homes and yards were covered with a fine white dust when they woke up a few weeks ago. They didn't know the dust wasn't toxic and dangerous to their health. This bill doesn't protect their public health from future threats.

The Environmental Council of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures

and the Association of Local Air Pollution Control Officials oppose this bill. The House should heed their warnings and reject this bill today.

A TRIBUTE TO AL BURCH

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Al Burch, who has served northern Virginia as an educator for 42 years. Mr. Burch spent 32 years as the principal of Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington, Virginia. After over four decades of dedicated service to our youths, Mr. Burch announced his retirement earlier this month.

I am proud to call attention to the achievements and dedication of Mr. Burch as he ends his career as an educator and principal. I would also like to share a recent article from The Arlington Catholic Herald which honors Mr. Burch and describes his many accomplishments.

[From the Arlington Catholic Herald, May 20, 2004]

FORTY-TWO-YEAR RUN COMES TO AN END FOR
O'CONNELL'S BURCH

(By Mary Frances McCarthy)

In 2001, at the beginning of his 40th year at Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington, Principal Al Burch told the Herald, "In about two or three years I'll be ready to retire."

Three years later, the O'Connell family is saying goodbye to Burch, a much-loved and respected coach and administrator who has worked at the school for all but four years of its existence. A farewell Mass and party will be held at the school on June 5 at 5 p.m.

When his career began, Burch never imagined he would spend 32 years as an administrator.

After graduating from the University of Corpus Christi in Texas with a bachelor's degree in education, Burch thought that "Everyone would hire me because I was so good at sports." Burch attended the university on a football scholarship.

When coaching jobs didn't fall at his feet as he thought they would, he took a job at Surrattsville Junior High in Clinton, Md., teaching history, science and English.

In 1961, Burch learned of an opening in physical education at O'Connell through Bob Rusevlyan, athletic director. Burch took the job, teaching health and physical education and coaching football, baseball and basketball. Under his leadership, the O'Connell 1963-65 baseball teams were Catholic League champions and gained nationwide recognition in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY, for winning 42 consecutive games.

Coinciding with the beginning of co-education at Bishop O'Connell, Burch was named assistant principal under Msgr. McMurtrie in 1972.

"I owe a lot to Msgr. McMurtrie," Burch said. "He saw it was my dream to keep coaching, but he saw something in me that maybe I didn't see."

While Burch was assistant principal, coaching three sports and raising three kids, he went back to school to get a master's degree in education at American University. "And I still haven't slept well since then," Burch said.

His coaching career ended in 1977, when he was named principal of O'Connell by former Arlington Bishop Thomas J. Welsh.

In the first 10 years Burch was at O'Connell, the school grew from 1,000 students to 1,600 students, with a wait list 200 students long. In 1982, Bishop Welsh opened Paul VI Catholic High School to ease the strain on O'Connell.

Now, in a diocese with three diocesan high schools and three private Catholic high schools, Burch said, "The chemistry of O'Connell is what makes it different." With more than 110 teachers, 12 are Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 18 are retired military personnel and 28 are O'Connell graduates. Burch said he has prided himself by being able to "put talent where they belong."

"Surrounding myself with great people has been the key to my success," he said. "Sitting back and watching them work has been a joy."

To Burch, O'Connell's teachers are all first draft teachers. He has organized his school much like he would a baseball or football team. Only the best are good enough for him.

"That chemistry, and people who want to be here, I'm proud of that," Burch said. "We've been able to maintain that we are a Catholic school." Burch said O'Connell has had more than 65 alumni who have pursued religious vocations.

Dr. Timothy McNiff, diocesan superintendent of schools, said that Burch's leadership "epitomizes the uniqueness required of those individuals who have been given the task of ensuring our Catholic schools are institutions of both academic success and Christian values."

O'Connell was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in 1993 as a Blue Ribbon School and Burch was honored by The Washington Post in 1997 when he was named a "Principal of Excellence."

In his retirement, Burch said, he will miss the students above all else. "I enjoy seeing them," he said. "I think O'Connell comes closer to that term, family. People return to O'Connell. They're very happy here."

Burch looks forward to continuing his relationship with Bishop O'Connell High School and working with the alumni. In ongoing renovations at O'Connell, he still hopes to see an Alumni of Distinction hall. "There are people out there doing great things," O'Connell has over 15,000 graduates. "They're really making a positive impact on society. I hear good stuff."

All three of Burch's children—Kenny, Karen and Kristy—are among those graduates. Burch hopes that one day, his five grandchildren, "if they study and work hard," will go to O'Connell too, and become members of the O'Connell family.

"I consider myself blessed and fortunate," Burch said. "It's been a great job. I didn't have to work to make O'Connell classy. It's always been a class act."

TRIBUTE TO DR. FREDERICK S. CONLIN, JR., DDS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor today to pay tribute to Dr. Frederick S. Conlin, Jr., DDS. Dr. Frederick S. Conlin, Jr., DDS will retire this June from both politics and his practice in dentistry after more than 30 years. Dr. Conlin has had a general practice in dentistry for 38 years in West Springfield, MA, and has been a model citizen in our city. He held many honors in both of these fields, including being