

HONORING AND RECOGNIZING UNC
CHARLOTTE CHANCELLOR EMER-
ITUS DEAN WALLACE COLVARD

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor and recognize UNC Charlotte Chancellor Emeritus Dean Wallace Colvard. On February 24, 2004 he will receive an award that recognizes his lasting impact on our nation. Dr. Colvard, 90, is the 2004 recipient of The Echo Award Against Indifference, given by the Echo Foundation in honor of his lifelong commitment to equity and justice.

Dr. Colvard is best known for his courageous stand against racial discrimination in 1963 as president of Mississippi State University, when he challenged an unwritten state policy and allowed the basketball team to travel to Loyola of Chicago to compete in the NCAA tournament against African American players. Although his team lost, 61–51, Colvard and Mississippi State won national respect for their quest to end segregation—and opened doors of opportunity for future generations.

Forty years later, in 2003, Mississippi State made national news for earning its second trip to the NCAA, and Colvard's actions were chronicled in a Sports Illustrated story looking back on the historic event. To this day, Colvard downplays the significance of his decision, saying he only did what was right.

Dr. Colvard was born in the Appalachian Mountains in Grassy Creek, N.C. in 1913—in a home with no electricity, indoor plumbing or running water. He was the first member of his family to go to college, entering the work-study program at Berea College in Kentucky with \$100 in his pocket. Those humble beginnings instilled in him a lifelong commitment to equity and justice.

He went on to earn a Master of Arts degree in animal physiology from the University of Missouri and a doctoral degree in agricultural economics from Purdue University. He has served as superintendent of North Carolina Agricultural Research Stations; professor and head of the animal science department and later, dean of agriculture at North Carolina State College; president of Mississippi State University; and first chancellor of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He played an instrumental role in shaping the new university by securing regional and national accreditation for its programs and building a campus to accommodate enrollment that swelled from 1,700 to 8,705 students during his chancellorship.

Dr. Colvard was also instrumental in creating University Research Park and Discovery Place Science Museum in Charlotte, and the North Carolina School for Math and Science in Durham—the nation's first public, residential high school that emphasizes a science and mathematics curriculum. Among Colvard's many honors are the United States Department of the Army Outstanding Civilian Award (1966); the University of North Carolina University Award (1989); the North Carolina Public Service Award, presented by Gov. James Martin (1990); and honorary degrees from

Purdue University, Belmont Abbey College, UNC Charlotte and Berea College.

HONORING SARA BERLIN: A
YOUNG AND TRULY INSPIRING
COMMUNITY LEADER

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of Miami's youngest community leaders, 11-year-old Sara Berlin, a 6th grader from Jacobson Sinai Academy Bergman Upper School in Miami. On Friday, February 13, 2004, Sara was honored by community leaders and organizers of "Do The Right Thing of Miami, Inc.," a program under the auspices of the City of Miami Police Department.

Although I have not had the opportunity to meet Sara yet, I feel as though I know her after reading her book about the agonizing plight of Haitian children. I do reserve the utmost respect for her recent and compassionate work.

It is my understanding that Sara was genuinely inspired to write her book after researching the plight of Haitian children and learning about my bill which would allow alien children to be transferred from the Department of Homeland Security to the Office of Refugee Resettlement within 72 hours of apprehension, and to be released from custody and placed into the community with a qualified relative or caretaker within 15 days of such apprehension. I am delighted to know that Sara included me in her book.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, our quest for simple justice and fairness for newly-arrived Haitians evokes the storied stance of our Nation as the defender of due process and human rights, particularly when the beneficiaries of our action are helpless children.

I am so grateful that Ms. Sara Berlin, a magnificent advocate in her own right, has added her own brave words to ours. We are strengthened yet again by her timely voice to the cause that calls attention to the cruel disenfranchisement of Haitians and their children.

Sarah writes,

Everyone should help kids. They shouldn't be locked up. Everyone should donate or do something to help out. It is really not fair. Kids should be able to live freely.

With her book on Haiti and specifically Haitian children, we are inspired by a greater appreciation of their struggles. I am moved by the inspiring description written about Sara's work of compassion thus: "I'm proud that Sara has taken an interest in helping others. The feelings she expressed, and the desire to help, are genuine and spontaneous."

I join our community in honoring Sara and her parents, classmates and teachers as they come together at the city of Miami Police Department. It is without a doubt that we will long remember this wonderful day as Sara inspires those of us who continue to care for the voiceless children of the world. We are comforted by her words in articulating their struggles to be free and living in a democratic country like ours.

Indeed, I am privileged to have been encouraged and inspired by her work, and I thank her for giving me the honor of representing her in the U.S. Congress.

IN HONOR OF AMERICA'S
FIREFIGHTERS

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, Please allow me to extend my thanks and gratitude to a class of extraordinary Americans who put their lives on the line daily for the security of our nation and its citizens—our firefighters. Yesterday marked National Firefighter's Day, and it is important for us to realize that in almost any emergency, the first agency called is the fire department—putting America's firemen and women among our nation's first lines of defense.

Every hour of every day, the 21,000 fire companies across the nation stand ready to answer the call. In my home state of Louisiana, nearly 20,000 firefighters in 592 departments are prepared to encounter any threat. While we may not see these men and women every day, their importance is unquestioned when an emergency arises.

Not only do firefighters provide our citizens with dependability in security, but their record of civic duty is long withstanding. Firefighters dedicate much of their free time to volunteer in their local communities. We've seen them at the grocery stores and intersections, encouraging citizens to "Fill the Boot" to contribute to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, for which they've raised nearly \$200 million over the past 50 years. When off-duty, a firefighter will often stop to help a stranded motorist, render aid at an accident, or just stop whatever they are doing to help. Our quality of life in America is better thanks to the services of our law enforcement, first responders and firefighters.

The security role our firefighters retain has evolved beyond just putting out fires. Our firefighters now deal with hazardous material response and medical emergencies. They train to be first responders and paramedics, comprise search and rescue squads to retrieve trapped victims in burning or collapsed buildings, and extract injured persons from car accidents. Some departments also have SCUBA teams and high angle rescuers.

The role of our firefighters changed forever when we witnessed 343 of them give their lives just two years ago. On 9/11, hundreds of firefighters rushed up the stairs of the burning World Trade Center, as everyone else was rushing down and out of the building. They saved thousands with their selfless bravery.

Now, after 9/11, we see more than ever the vital role firefighters play in our nation's security and preparedness. There should be no doubt that our firefighters remain squarely on the front lines of homeland security; and if terrorists strike again, they will be the first ones on the scene risking it all for our well being.

On National Firefighter's Day—and everyday—let's remember to say "thanks" to all of our brave and selfless firefighters.