

roadside bomb. Nearby there was another soldier whose spine had been severed by shrapnel. He was unconscious when I was there, but his doctor told me that he will be a quadriplegic for the rest of his life.

We have asked so much from the young people we send into battle and they have the right to expect that if they are wounded that we as a nation and as a people will be there for them. That is the covenant that we have made with them.

The vast majority of our most severely wounded will receive cutting-edge medical care; many will convalesce right here in the Washington area at Walter Reed or the Bethesda Naval Hospital. During my visits to Walter Reed I have been impressed by the work of the doctors, nurses and therapists who are doing a marvelous job for the troops there, many of who stay for months as they recover from their wounds and begin a new life—often with prosthetic limbs.

Many of the troops who are treated at Walter Reed or Bethesda are discharged from the military shortly after leaving the hospital. As they continue their recovery most of these former soldiers will still require medical treatment, physical therapy, and counseling. Some will need care for the rest of their lives.

For many veterans, especially the severely wounded, navigating the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the Department of Veterans Affairs is a frustrating challenge in itself. Yet, even as the VA is taking on thousands of newly disabled veterans, the largest such group since Vietnam, three VA hospitals are slated for closure, while another eight will be partially closed.

The backlog of disability claims is growing and now exceeds 330,000, while the backlog of veterans claims pending before the Board of Veterans Appeals has nearly doubled in the last four years. Even though it now takes the VA about 160 days to process a claim—more than 5 months, the Administration wants to cut 500 claims processors in FY 2005.

I see no reason why, at a time when we should be adding to the VA's 162 medical facilities, we are shutting them down. In a survey released in March of last year by the American Legion, patients wait an average of seven months to see a primary care physician at VA facilities and more than half reported that they had an appointment postponed by the VA, with an average wait of an additional 2½ months.

When they finally receive care at VA facilities, some of our veterans receive substandard care. In April of this year, an ABC News aired investigation of two VA facilities in the Cleveland area, found dirty bathrooms, halls filled with dirty linens, unclean examination rooms, and memos discussing broken sterilization machines. Former patients spoke of insensitive staff who often ignored patient needs; one woman spoke of patients begging for food and water.

As bad as conditions were before, they are likely to be worse now as the influx of wounded from Iraq grows. In August alone, more than 1,100 U.S. troops were wounded.

The treatment of those wounded in battle is a good measure of a nation, and Congress, and the president must take corrective action now. I realize that fixing a problem of the magnitude of that facing our veterans cannot happen overnight, but we can begin now. The House should do is to pass immediately H.R.

5057, which will expand the Army's innovative Disabled Soldier Support System to all of the military services. The bill was introduced by my colleagues, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. HOYER, and Mr. JONES, and enjoys support on both sides of the aisle. The DS3 program has helped more than 200 severely wounded soldiers to adjust to their new lives, but there are thousands more who need help.

We must also rely on the generosity of the American people to help wounded soldiers. Local communities, service clubs, religious congregations, schools and individuals can pitch in to help new veterans. Medical professionals, social workers, and therapists can volunteer to help until we can get the VA medical system into shape. Contractors can donate their services to remodel homes for soldiers who are paralyzed or have lost a limb. Automobile dealers can donate vehicles that are modified for the needs of their new owners. Students can volunteer their time to run errands, do laundry or just visit with these heroes, many of whom are only a few years older than they are.

Mr. Speaker, no American who has served this Nation in the armed services and been grievously wounded should ever be left to stare out a window and dream of a life that could have been. We are a stronger, prouder and more grateful nation than that.

IN HONOR OF MIM KELBER

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 9, 2004

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mim Kelber once again. When Mim passed away this summer, we lost a woman whose clear vision and verbal acumen helped change the world. A brilliant writer, Mim used her facility with words to inspire supporters of the feminist, labor and environmental movements, among others.

Mim became friends with Bella Abzug when they were still in high school, and they attended Hunter College together. At Hunter, Mim became editor of the Hunter Bulletin while Bella was elected president of the student body. From 1943 to 1955, Mim was national news editor and Washington Bureau Chief of Federated Press, a national syndicated labor news service. She covered the founding meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco, and the labor movement, as well as Congress and the White House. She was an editor/writer for Science and Medicine from 1958 to 1970, leaving that position after Bella was elected to Congress (1971–78).

Mim served as Bella's executive assistant and chief speechwriter, co-edited Bella's Congressional newsletter and was her policy adviser on women, foreign policy, urban affairs and civil liberties. Family life was always of paramount importance to Mim, and she insisted on working out of Bella's New York office, so she could remain in her Brooklyn apartment with her husband, Harry Kelber, a labor journalist and educator, and their two daughters.

In 1974, Mim chaired the Media Committee of the National Women's Political Caucus and directed a national media campaign, Win With Women, a major effort to elect more women to

Congress. She was a policy consultant/writer for President Carter's National Advisory Committee for Women (1978–79) and co-authored the official report of the committee's Houston conference. She also co-authored Gender Gap: Bella Abzug's Guide to Political Power for American Women (1984); Women and Government: New Ways to Political Power (1994), and Women's Foreign Policy Directory (1988). In 1990 she co-founded Women's Environment and Development Organization with Bella, and remained involved with WEDO until her death. Mim leaves her beloved husband, Harry, two daughters, Karli and Laura, and five grandchildren.

Many people spoke movingly at a memorial service held for Mim on August 17, 2004, and I have already included some of their tributes in the RECORD. To honor Mim's memory, I am pleased to offer some additional statements given that day:

Robin Morgan: "I wrote down a few thoughts, because I could almost hear Mim saying, 'Don't wing it,' and adding, 'Quote me every chance you get.'"

When Harry kindly asked me to say a few words today, the first thing I thought of was Mim's lifelong love affair with words. Others have noted—as history will—the many details of her early, continued, consistently principled life, starting with political engagement even as a young girl and intensifying across the decades: the social-justice and labor and civil rights and peace and feminist and environmental organizations she founded, cofounded, and participated in with never-lessening commitment—and always more than slightly ahead of the curve.

Of course, just as it was difficult to speak of Bella Abzug without speaking of Mim, so the reverse is true. They met in the 1930s: young girls in high school. As Mim herself wrote: "Bella was class president and already a fearless leader, and I was shy and hung out in the library. She was an active young religious Zionist—I was an atheist marching in radical May Day parades." Later, they were both in the first class to enter tuition-free Hunter College's new Park Ave. building where—Mim's words again: "Bella majored in political science and was president of the Student Council—I was a journalism major, news editor of the Hunter Bulletin—and still shy." Over their lifetimes, Mimi and Bella loomed as giants in virtually every progressive movement of the time and—with all due respect to their beloved husbands (Harry; and the late Martin)—they were like a 20th-century version of a "Boston marriage": joined in political creativity and dedication, their relationship illuminated by laughter, trust, incredibly hard work, dauntingly long hours, the familiarity and ability to finish each others' sentences, HUGE fights, and makings-up. In sum, a lasting political and personal dynamic duo, an historic—and certainly odd—couple. It's no exaggeration to say that they were the Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony of our time. Personally, I never fully realized, just how challenging it had been for Mimi to write speeches or statements for Bella—for years—until I tried it for the first time myself. I just about killed myself, draft after draft, revision after revision. Finally, Bella approved the text. "It's OK," she shrugged, "but it sure ain't Mimi."

Nor were speeches all Mim penned, with and for Bella—but also on her own. Books. Articles. Manifestos. Reports. Position papers.

Drafts of legislation. Journalism and analysis and rousing rhetoric. Always intelligent, well-crafted, powerful. "Power," Mim once wrote to me, "is a word for which women should never apologize." It was one of many words she loved, in a life passionately dedicated to ideas and the language for expressing them. My only regret is that the world's sufferings and her resolve to alleviate them left too little time for her to write all the novels that shy girl in the library had dreamed of writing.

Because her passion was not confined to politics, Mim was one of two or three American political activists I have ever known to read serious literature—even poetry, even contemporary poetry—for pure pleasure. We sometimes snuck away for a quiet coffee at various conferences, and could be seen whispering secretly, almost guiltily, in corners. Were we discussing conference takeovers, purges, devious amendments? No. We were talking about Milton and Donne and Seamus Heaney; about Kafka, Mann, the Brontës, Mary Shelley, Aphra Behn, Hawthorne, Wolfe, Twain, Faulkner—and especially and always, Mim's greatest favorite, Jane Austen. That taste for understatement was reflected in Mim's own sharp wit—which was sometimes so dry it could pucker. She could get depressed, yes, and be bitter, too—at the state of the world, at stupidity, cruelty, cupidity, violence, hypocrisy, and at, as she growled once, "A bit too much so-called pragmatic compromise." But her anger and even, at times, despair was rooted in a brilliant grasp of history, and a too-rare capacity for irony. This surfaced again during the one of the last conversations I had with her, when she was in the hospital. We were talking by phone about the framers of the Constitution, and I made a passing reference to the familiar quote of Abigail Adams to her husband John, to "remember the ladies." Then, out of nowhere—or, rather, out of pain, fragility, and that fading memory we're all prone to—Mim sighed, "Yeah, but," then suddenly snapped back with John Adams' far-too-little known response to Abigail's plea: "Depend upon it we know better than to repeal our masculine systems."

In a culture cheapened by relentless commercial cheer and prone to instant, superficial fixes and fake spiritual grace, her acerbic intellect was bracing in its integrity. Even when discouraged, though, she never stopped pushing boundaries throughout her rich, full, consistently principled life. Perhaps because she had already been a fierce, uncompromising atheist when so young, she knew early on that there was no need to hope for any better heaven—and no need to fear any worse hells—than what life itself offers. So she deliberately faced into it and lived it utterly, in all its bleakness and all its glory. About this Mim was never shy.

She leaves a trail of light behind her, for us to read by and see our way by, in her political legacy, and in her cherished, well crafted words.

Our deep gratitude to Harry, their daughters, and the rest of her family, for having shared Mim Kelber with us—and with history."

Blanche Wissen Cook: "Modest and too often anonymous, Mim Kelber had the best ideas, wrote the best speeches, the most searching essays, the most valuable political analyses.

Mentor and guide, I learned something important from Mim every time we spoke on the

phone, every time we were together. Brilliant and precise, she was a great journalist, a splendid organizer, a peerless leader, a caring, considerate teacher, a warm and generous friend.

Perhaps best known publicly as Bella Abzug's partner during and after the congressional years, she was for most of us the person to consult with on the most difficult questions of political strategy on war and peace, women and policy.

One depended on Mim, who never asked anything for herself. Wise, discerning, informed, Mim was above all a great writer and editor. She turned the most difficult issues into the clearest arguments, the most vivid paragraphs.

She did not (so far as I know) finish her book, *Women and War*, but Harry, her devoted husband, beloved ally and champion, also our guide, gave us the gift of her publications, *The Bella Abzug Reader*, and also her novel, *A Pride of Women*.

We will miss her every day, and have forever the legacy of her bold vision, her steadfast commitment to goodness, justice, environmental sanity, and complete respect and love for the people she loved, all the people of earth.

June Zeitlin: "I had the good fortune to work with Mim over a period of almost 30 years—first, as a young lawyer working in Bella's Congressional office in Washington. We would always send our statements up to New York for Mim to look at—I didn't know her well then but I knew the work better be up to her high standards!

Inside the Carter Administration, I watched Bella and Mim and others transform the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year into a radical force for change. We still cherish its publications, which Mim not only wrote but infused with such far ranging ideas, we could go back to them today.

Their active involvement in international women's year activities and the nascent global women's movement led Bella and Mim to focus more of their attention on both US foreign policy and global policy in general. Seeing that it was mostly men who were making foreign policy and the policies that even at that time weren't working so well (at least if you were female or happened to be poor), they formed the Women's Foreign Policy Council to show the news media and foreign policy community that there were many women with expertise to draw on as well.

Mim and Bella saw the 1990s and particularly the Earth Summit at Rio as an opportunity to bring women—with their unique and diverse experiences, perspectives and voices to the critical issues of war and peace, environmental degradation, social and economic justice and of course women's rights. Together, they founded a new organization—the Women's Environment and Development Organization—WEDO and We Do!

This is not an organization about the environment in the traditional sense. To Bella and Mim, it was the planet! And their goal was a peaceful and healthy planet and human rights for all. Joining with amazing women leaders from around the world—Wangari Mathai, Peggy Antrobus, Vandana Shiva, Chief Bisi Ogunleye, Thais Coral and many others, they brought 1500 women from 83 countries to Miami in 1991 for the World Women's Con-

gress for a Healthy Planet. There, the participants formulated and adopted the Women's Action Agenda, a comprehensive global vision that articulated women's leadership and empowerment as catalysts for change.

Women's Action Agenda was a direct challenge from the world's women to government officials, the UN, and the World Bank to shape the official Rio platform and subsequent global policy documents. To lobby for this comprehensive agenda, WEDO established the Women's Caucus, bringing together women from North and South, East and West, in a systematic and participatory mechanism for bringing women's experiences and voices into UN processes. The results were extraordinary—a whole chapter devoted to gender equality and, for the first time, formal recognition of women's central role in achieving sustainable development.

By the time I joined WEDO in the fall of 1999, more than a year after Bella's death, the burden and responsibility for ensuring the ongoing work of the organization had fallen to a very committed core of the Board of Directors and the staff—all of whom were guided on a day to day basis by Mim. But Mim was already experiencing severe hearing loss and other physical ailments. And the world, too, had changed—despite her great and steadfast faith in the United Nations, she kept saying—"We have so many words on paper—we don't need any more words—we need actions!" But she herself was unable to join in the "actions" which left her deeply frustrated and sometimes discouraged.

Yet Mim was a giant—we have all drawn inspiration from her lifetime commitment to activism and her prodigious work. We have lost several of our giants in recent years—Bella, Patsy Mink, earlier this year Millie Jeffries, and now Mim. As she wrote in her novel, "God-dess help me!" But these were women and Mim was a woman "who would never give up and never give in." We at WEDO will continue their work and their fight—and make it our fight—and we are committed to never give up and never give in until we have achieved a peaceful and healthy planet with human rights for all."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Mim Kelber, a remarkable woman whose words will continue to inspire future generations.

ARMY 1ST LIEUTENANT TYLER BROWN

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, October 9, 2004

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pay homage to the life of a fallen American hero, U.S. Army 1st Lieutenant Tyler Hall Brown of Atlanta, Georgia. Lieutenant Brown was killed by sniper fire on September 14, 2004 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, a town 70 miles west of Baghdad. Tyler was leading his unit on a reconnaissance patrol in the Iraqi town when he and his unit were ambushed by insurgents. He was a heroic leader to his men even until his passing as he, though mortally wounded by the sniper's shot, was able to give a warning to his men, preventing any others from being injured.