

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF WENDY
WILLIAMS

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in praise of the talented and accomplished radio personality, Ms. Wendy Williams. Wendy stands as a testament to all that can be accomplished through hard work, dedication and the ability to relate well to others. Born in Ocean Township, New Jersey, Wendy earned her Bachelor's Degree in Communications with a minor in Journalism from Northeastern University in Boston. Throughout college she interned at Boston's Kiss 108 radio station, while working various shifts at her college radio station.

Two weeks after graduating college, Wendy started working at WVIS, St. Croix, USVI. After successful stints at various radio stations across the mid-Atlantic region, including 3 years at POWER 99- where she took the morning show from number 15 to number one, Wendy settled back in New York City and has been the hugely successful and popular host of The Wendy Williams Experience. Her afternoon talk show, which airs on WBLS, attracts a large audience as well as countless celebrity guests. Her candid and straightforward interviewing style is often cited as a major contributing factor to her success.

Recently, Wendy has expanded to other media industries, including television and books, which include, Wendy's Got the Heat and The Wendy Williams Experience. In addition, Wendy covered the 2003 Grammys for the entertainment show, Extra, and has also appeared on Entertainment Tonight, Access Hollywood, E!, BET, MTV and Celebrity Justice. With her radio show expanding through syndication, we can be certain that Wendy's charismatic personality and unmistakable style will reach millions of others.

Once again, I praise Ms. Wendy Williams, not only for her accomplishments and the talent that she has shared with us, but for being a role model to so many women, particularly African-American women. Wendy's work and career offer us a mere glimpse of the extraordinary abilities of minority women that many times, go unrecognized. Today, I applaud Wendy for all that she brought to the field of entertainment and I thank her for being a trailblazer for the many women that will inevitably follow in her footsteps.

IN HONOR OF RUTH KESLER

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ruth E. Kesler, whose lifelong dedica-

tion to San Benito County consists of many volunteer and local government positions. Ruth will be stepping down as the San Benito Supervisor for District 2, where she has served for 12 years.

A longtime resident of San Benito County, Ruth has always taken an active interest in the problems facing senior citizens and the homeless. In addition to her time on the County Board of Supervisors, she has also served as Director and Chair of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District Board. Furthermore, Ruth has been the county's representative on the California State Association of Counties Board of Directors for the past two years.

In addition, Ruth has served on the Child Care and Development Council, Emergency Medical Care Commission, Mental Health Advisory Board and over a dozen other local government and volunteer committees. She has been a strong advocate of slow growth policies for the county and wishes to insure clean water for all citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Ruth on her long and honorable career and thank her for her contribution to our society. Ruth has consistently gone above and beyond the roles bestowed upon her, and has left a legacy of community leadership. I wish her all the luck in her future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING MR. JOHN M.
TURNER ON RECEIPT OF THE
LILLIAN C. MCGOWIN OUT-
STANDING VOLUNTEER CIVIC
LEADER AWARD

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise to honor Mr. John M. Turner, President of Whitney Bank in Mobile, Alabama, on the occasion of his being honored with the Lillian C. McGowin Outstanding Volunteer Civic Leader Award.

This annual award is presented by the Alabama Gulf Coast Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The local chapter of AFP represents nearly fifty fundraisers in the Alabama Gulf Coast region and encourages the growth and development of professional fundraisers, as well as promoting the maintaining of high ethical standards in this profession.

John Turner is certainly quite deserving of this recognition, having been extremely involved in the life of the Mobile community for many years. For many years, he has championed numerous educational and non-profit organizations in south Alabama, all of which have been the beneficiary of his efforts and those of his fellow fundraisers. These groups include St. Paul's Episcopal School, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, the Mobile Infirmary Foundation, Leader-

ship Mobile, and the Mobile Education Foundation.

The Gulf Coast AFP Chapter undoubtedly received numerous worthy nominations for men and women from throughout Mobile who in their own way also make significant contributions to their friends and neighbors on a daily basis. I am certain it is difficult to make the final selection for this award, but as in the past, this year's winner has shown a tremendous level of community support and charitable giving. I have had the privilege of knowing John for many years and can personally attest to his deep concern for his neighbors and for so many in Mobile who have benefited from his tremendous generosity.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no higher praise than that received from professional colleagues, and this award is certainly strong testimony to the esteem in which John M. Turner is held by so many in Mobile. Along with his many family, friends, and colleagues throughout south Alabama, I wish to extend to him my warmest congratulations on the receipt of the Lillian C. McGowin Outstanding Volunteer Civic Leader Award. Likewise, I can only imagine how proud John's great-grandfather, the late Congressman John McDuffie, would be knowing that John has continued in the family's strong and proud legacy of dedicated community service and charitable giving.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS.
LYNN HAMTIL

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Lynn Hamtil, a friend, colleague and an indefatigable advocate for improving the quality of education in Orange County. She was a civic leader devoted to raising student standards and to nurturing our youth for responsible citizenship. Lynn passed away on September 21, 2004. Her recent death is a great loss to her community, her family, and this great nation.

Born in Wisconsin, she came to Orange County while in high school. Lynn later graduated from Fullerton High School and later attended Santa Ana College.

Lynn lived her life serving her community in every capacity imaginable. Lynn was a 40-year resident of Garden Grove, and was a Governing Board Member of the Garden Grove Unified School District. She was also known for her passion and involvement in her community serving as a six-term member of the Garden Grove Unified School District Board of Education, residing as a past president and vice-president. Lynn also is a recipient of the PTA Honorary Service Award and two Continuing Service Awards.

Lynn Hamtil was a role model for us all, a woman who worked hard and did her best to give back to her community. Her contributions

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

have left a legacy that will last for years to come. On behalf of the Congress, I extend sympathies to Lynn's family, and gratitude for all she did to make our community a better place.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004, the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 2004, and the Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004. These three pieces of legislation are critically needed. Our men and women in uniform exemplify the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of the American people to securing freedom and democracy throughout the world. We owe it to our Armed Forces and veterans to ensure that their benefits are protected.

The Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004 sets forth new pay provisions for physicians and dentists employed by the Veterans Health Administration that will increase their income. This bill requires, among other provisions, that base pay be uniform nationwide and that performance pay be linked to individual achievements. This bill further provides for pay that is tailored to several variables, such as geographic region, area specialty, the nature of the assignment, and individual experience.

The Veterans Benefit Improvement Act of 2004 increases the maximum housing loan guarantee amount for which veterans are eligible and also increases the voluntary contribution amount that active duty members of the Armed Forces may make in order to receive increased monthly educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill.

The Veterans Health Programs Improvement Act of 2004 allows the principal office of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to be in the Washington, D.C., and metropolitan area instead of restricting it to the District of Columbia. The bill also expresses the sense of Congress that a courthouse and justice center should be provided for the Court, if feasible, by the Pentagon.

Mr. Speaker, these three bills will improve the services available to our country's armed services personnel and veterans. Those who put their life on the line to fight for the continued freedom this country enjoys should be entitled to a support system that meets their needs. These three pieces of legislation do just that. I urge my colleagues to support all three bills.

HONORING PATRICK RYAN ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as Patrick Ryan, Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, retires from government service, I rise today to pay tribute to his extraordinary career and accomplishments. After more than two decades working for the Committee, and a decade before that working for the Veterans Administration, Patrick is ending his public service career to pursue new personal and professional challenges.

Mr. Speaker, one of the first actions I took when I was elected chairman 4 years ago was to name Pat the chief counsel and staff director for the committee. Having been a member of the committee for 20 years, I was already familiar with the expertise, knowledge, judgment, compassion, and devotion that Patrick had displayed throughout his career.

A graduate of the University of Maryland, Pat went to work for the Veterans Administration in 1974 as a benefits counselor at the D.C. regional office. In this job, Pat learned firsthand about the challenges facing our Nation's veterans, especially those returning from the conflict in Vietnam. He also learned in detail about the programs and services that VA provided to help improve their lives. Among those Pat worked with at that time was a DAV benefits representative named Jesse Brown, who later became Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the 1990s.

Shortly after Pat went to work for VA, he also enrolled in the evening program at Georgetown University Law School. Over the next 4 years, he continued to work at VA, moving up to the position of budget analyst, while attending law school at night, earning his law degree in 1978. He then moved to a new position in VA's Office of General Counsel, where he worked for the next 5 years.

In 1983, Pat Ryan began working for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, serving as counsel for the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care. He later served as counsel for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, as well as for the full committee. Over the years, Pat was promoted to serve as both deputy chief counsel and finally, as chief counsel and staff director.

For the past 22 years, Pat Ryan has made tremendous contributions to many of the most important new veterans laws approved by Congress. He worked on numerous bills to expand services for aging veterans and those in need of long-term care. He was instrumental in helping to establish domiciliaries for homeless veterans and was the principal drafter of legislation to authorize VA's transitional housing guarantee program to benefit homeless veterans. Pat played a central role in helping to establish the Department of Veterans Affairs and in creating the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

Pat has been deeply involved in numerous successful committee initiatives that have expanded and strengthened the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, DIC, program,

survivor health care services, and educational assistance benefits available to surviving spouses and children of servicemembers killed in action or who later die of a service-related cause. And over the past 20 years, Pat has played a role in increasing the Montgomery GI bill benefit for qualified veterans from \$300 when he joined the committee to over \$1,000 today.

Using his budget expertise, Pat has been invaluable in helping Congress ensure that VA's budget has been both appropriate and sufficient. His extensive knowledge of the law and the inner workings of VA has also greatly aided the committee in its work to provide exemplary oversight of veterans programs.

From managing the committee's professional staff, to drafting legislation, to overseeing VA's programs and services, Patrick Ryan is the consummate professional. During the four years I have served as chairman, he has helped draft and guide to enactment more than a dozen new laws to benefit veterans, including legislation to modernize the GI bill, expand veterans' health care programs, strengthen benefits for disabled veterans, and aid homeless veterans. I consider him to have been a partner in all that this committee has accomplished during our time together and it has been an honor to work side-by-side with him.

Throughout his tenure in the House, Patrick has earned and retained both the respect and the trust of Members and staff on both sides of the aisle. Pat was hired by Chairman Sonny Montgomery when the Democrats controlled the committee, and he went on to serve both the late Chairman Bob Stump and me while Republicans have controlled Congress. Pat is equally respected inside the Department of Veterans Affairs and by outside leaders of veterans service organizations.

Mr. Speaker, all of us who know Pat Ryan understand that he is driven to succeed, not for his own benefit, but to benefit his fellow man. What has made Patrick Ryan such a valuable public servant are his personal qualities of faith, hope, and charity. A leader in both his community and his church, Pat is well-known for his singing in the choir and for his love of music, especially his eclectic musical tastes.

On a personal level, Pat Ryan has lived his life in a way that has truly made a difference. He has walked to the beat of our Lord's drummer when He said "whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, you do likewise to me." For Pat, that means always looking out for the little guy. I have such respect and admiration for that character trait, and it is very strong in Patrick Ryan. What motivates Patrick first and foremost is devotion and love for his wife Kathie and their three children—Kerry, Dan, and Julia. For Pat Ryan, family comes first.

Pat is ever proud of his father who has passed, William Everest Ryan, a proud Marine who saw combat action during World War II in the South Pacific, where he was wounded and won the Purple Heart award. He later joined the Justice Department while continuing in the Marine reserves as an Officer in the JAG Corps, retiring with the rank of Colonel in 1964. After a distinguished career of government service, Pat's father retired from government service in 1977. In 1999, William Ryan died in the VA nursing home in Baltimore, 3 years after his wife, Pat's mother, Rosemary Ann Kelly Ryan, had passed away.