

HONORING REV. C.W. NEWSOME ON HIS RETIREMENT AND RECOGNIZING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORTH RICHMOND MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today before my colleagues in Congress and this great Nation to honor a wonderful friend and true warrior in my district upon his retirement after serving 38 years as a pastor in Richmond, California.

Rev. C. W. Newsome, pastor of the historic North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church in the humble community of North Richmond, California, is a steward in the fight for social justice and economic equality. He has dedicated his life to the service of God, extended the doors of his church to provide economic and educational opportunities to the residents of Richmond, and bravely supported our country during World War II.

I am also proud to join the rest of our community in recognizing this year the 85th anniversary of the establishment of his church.

I can remember as a child attending events in North Richmond with my father, the late California State Senator George Miller, Jr., that a young Rev. Newsome would hoist me up on his shoulders to enable me to have a broader vision of my surroundings. More than 25 years later, in the 1970s, I stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Rev. Newsome and other African American faith and labor leaders on the steps of the Social Security building in Richmond. We assembled to protest discriminatory employment practices against African American workers by companies receiving Federal contracts, and I supported their demands that the Nixon Administration pay African American laborers 2 weeks in back pay owed to them for work that they performed on the Federal building project.

Acting as spokesman for the African American carpenters, Rev. Newsome was successful in receiving \$18 million for the workers. In September 1975, I proudly stood at the side of Rev. Newsome as we attended the opening ceremony for the newly constructed Frank Hagel Social Security Administration building on Nevin Street in Richmond.

Prior to his path in the ministry, C.W. Newsome proudly served in the segregated United States military where he fought for equality at home and freedom abroad. When World War II began in 1937, there were fewer than 5,000 black enlisted men in the United States army. In 1943, Rev. Newsome joined more than a million black men who had voluntarily enlisted in all branches of the armed forces to join in our country's war against Nazi fascism in Europe. While serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, he sustained an injury and was honorably discharged.

Despite widespread opposition to hiring African American and women workers in the civilian defense industry, Rev. Newsome answered President Franklin Roosevelt's call for civilians to join the country's effort to produce large numbers of "Liberty Ships" and "Victory Ships" for the war industry.

He and millions of other African Americans migrated westward to California to find work in

the shipyards. In 1944, Rev. Newsome settled in Richmond and worked as a clipper in the Kaiser Shipyard. His job was to groove steel for welding so that ships could withstand storms on harsh seas. The national westward migration of African Americans from the south to work in the shipyards during War II, and the contributions made by Rev. Newsome and other migrants, including thousands of women laborers, helped establish California as one of the leading industrial hubs in the world, and their efforts helped Richmond to become part of what is known today as the Rosie the Riveter National Historical Park.

Rev. Newsome received his Associate of Arts degree from Contra Costa College in San Pablo, California, and later completed studies at the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Drug and Alcohol Abuse. He studied theology at Bishop College in Dallas, Texas, and he earned his doctorate degree from Reeds Christian College—Western Theology Seminary in Los Angeles, California.

In 1954, Rev. Newsome served as organizing pastor of Holy Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church in Richmond and he later headed Community Baptist Church in Santa Rosa. In 1975, Rev. Newsome was recognized by then California State Senator James Mills for his studies and contributions in Christian education.

Rev. Newsome's relationship with the North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church formally began in 1966 when he became the church's interim pastor under the direction of the late Rev. F.W. Watkins. After Rev. Watkins' unfortunate passing, Rev. Newsome assumed the pastorship of the church and has served at its helm for 38 years. While assuming his responsibilities as pastor of North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church, Rev. Newsome also worked as a custodian in the Richmond public schools until 1967.

While working in the schools, Rev. Newsome witnessed first-hand how illegal drugs were being brought into high schools and the devastating effect that drugs were having on young people and their families. He understood that drugs and poverty were obstacles to learning for many children attending public schools in Richmond. Therefore, Rev. Newsome began a mission to keep students safe by fighting to close school campuses to drug dealers, and, in 1977, he successfully convinced the Richmond school district and the community to designate Kennedy High School as a closed campus.

For his valiant leadership on behalf of Richmond's children, he was named "Man of the Year" by the Richmond Unified School District.

Rev. Newsome's church has a proud and long history that I also rise to honor. Back in 1921, a small group of parishioners laid the cornerstone for what was to become the very first "Negro Baptist Church" in Contra Costa County. Today, North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church is a lighthouse for residents living in the City of Richmond as well as the unincorporated community of North Richmond. Rev. Newsome opened the doors of his church to the community in many ways. Under the leadership of Rev. Newsome, North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church has amply opened its doors to serve the community.

Identifying the need to provide job training to residents in North Richmond, an economically depressed community, the church opened the North Richmond Career Center.

The church served as a national model by providing residents with job skills and successfully putting over 200 young people into meaningful jobs. Several years ago, Rev. Newsome and his congregation helped to establish the North Richmond Clinic and the North Richmond Senior Apartments. Recently, church leaders are working with other faith-based groups to end blight by constructing affordable housing for low-income residents living in North Richmond and other areas of the City of Richmond.

Rev. C.W. Newsome's wife, Alice, serves as first-lady of North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church and is a great member of our community. Rev. Newsome is a loving husband and father and a beacon in our community.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and my privilege to call him a friend and a colleague in our shared struggles on behalf of the people of North Richmond and Richmond. I rise to show my respect and offer my heartfelt appreciation to the Rev. C.W. Newsome for his lifetime of service to the ministry, to our community, and to our Nation, and to recognize the 85th anniversary of the remarkable community church in which he has served, the North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church.

HONORING DR. YOSEF A.A. BEN-JOCHANNAN: A PIONEER OF BLACK HISTORY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Yosef A.A. Ben-Jochannan: professor, author, and educator of black history to troubled children. I would like to ask the members of the House to join in paying respect to an outstanding intellectual.

Educated in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Spain, "Dr. Ben" as he is affectionately called, is a true scholar, earning doctoral degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Moorish History. He is not only a historian but also a trained lawyer, engineer, and Egyptologist. Dr. Ben has been devoted to the exploration of ancient African civilizations and the emphasis of Egypt's importance towards the understanding of religion and African history. He moved to Harlem in 1942 and later began teaching troubled children at Harlem Prep about black history. He has also served as a professor in Cornell University's African Studies and Research Center. Since 1941 Dr. Ben has visited Egypt twice a year and hosted more than 30 educational tours of Egypt focusing on the roots of ancient Nile civilizations and religions. At 85 years old, he has published 42 books, one being the world renowned "The Black Man of the Nile and His Family".

Dr. Ben's scholarly work in the illumination of Africa's role in present "Western" religions has broken new ground for historians. His exceptional educating and tours have inspired many. His work in Harlem has especially touched me and it is with great admiration that I and other Members of Congress shall look upon this brave innovator of African historiography.