

Southern California. Her long-standing tenet is that learning is a life-long process.

Alice was inducted into the Los Angeles African American Women Political Action Committee's Political Hall of Fame in April 2002 for her outstanding achievements as a social activist in the minority community. Ms. Huffman is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and also the Sacramento Branch NAACP. The Los Angeles Times called her one of the most powerful people in California. The California Journal listed her as one of the top 50 individuals who had the greatest impact on California over the past 25 years and her local African American newspaper, The Sacramento Observer, annually includes her in its 100 most influential citizens.

Finally, as we honor Ms. Huffman today, I want to thank her for being an exemplary role model, hero, and friend. I take great pride in joining Alice's family, friends, and colleagues to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of the marvelous Alice Huffman.

HONORING THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association as the organization celebrates its 50th anniversary. I take great pride in the fact that two companies from my home district, Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative in Gainesboro, Tennessee, and North Central Telephone Cooperative in Lafayette, Tennessee, are among the founding members of NTCA.

Forming soon after the Rural Electrification Administration (REA)—now known as the Rural Utilities Service—was granted authority to make loans to telephone companies, the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA), along with Twin Lakes and North Central, has evolved from providing basic multi-party telephone service to offering a full array of advanced telecommunications services.

The idea of expanding the scope and authority of the REA began in the late 1930s when REA Administrator John Carmody wrote: "Personally, I have long felt there was a real opportunity for constructive assistance to rural people in the idea of Federal financing of farm telephone lines. It seems to me that the rural people have just as much right to up-to-date communication as they have to modern power. There's no question in my mind but that Government assistance will be required if the job is ever to be completed."

This idea remained just an idea until 1944 when Senator Lister Hill (D-AL) introduced legislation calling for the formation of the Rural Telephone Administration, modeled after the REA. Senator Hill was soon joined in his effort to bring telephone service to rural America by Representative W.R. "Bob" Poage (D-TX), who introduced similar legislation granting the REA the authority to make loans for the extension and improvement of rural telephone serv-

ice. President Harry Truman signed the telephone amendments to the Rural Electrification Act into law on October 28, 1949.

Soon after, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) created a telephone committee, composed of representatives of newly-formed joint electric-telephone cooperative organizations. By 1954, representatives from these co-ops, with the encouragement of NRECA, decided that the time had come to form a separate national organization to represent telephone cooperatives. On June 1, 1954, eight companies—BEK Mutual Aid Corporation (Steele, North Dakota); Buggs Island Telephone Cooperative (Chase City, Virginia); Mark Twain Rural Telephone Company (Bethel, Missouri); Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative Inc. (Circle, Montana); Pineland Telephone Cooperative Inc. (Metter, GA); Winnebago Cooperative Telephone Association (Lake Mills, Iowa); and my constituents at Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative and North Central Telephone Cooperative—formed the National Telephone Cooperative Association, which was later renamed the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association.

One of the first recipients of telephone loans from the REA was Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative, which was founded on March 13, 1951. With its \$25 membership fee and a REA loan approved in November of that same year, Twin Lakes was able to purchase an existing telephone company and expanded telephone service to Clay, Overton, Pickett and Fentress counties in northern Middle Tennessee. Soon, Twin Lakes was serving twelve exchanges and had customers stretched over 1,150 miles of line. By 1959, Twin Lakes was able to lower its membership fee to \$10, which finally put the luxury of a telephone within reach of many who considered the initial membership fee of \$25 out of reach. Inundated with new customers, Twin Lakes soon had a backlog of close to 700 requests for service. People in rural Tennessee soon found that telephone service was not a luxury, but rather a necessity. Today, Twin Lakes has more than 40,000 access lines serving fifteen exchanges spread over Jackson, Clay, Overton, Pickett, Fentress, Smith, and Putnam counties in Tennessee.

Like Twin Lakes, North Central Telephone Cooperative formed in the shadow of the expansion of the REA. Like REA Administrator Carmody, then Lafayette Mayor Hugh Butler understood the importance of telecommunications in rural America. As he stated in the Macon County Times on Nov. 29, 1951: "The installation of modern dial telephone service with adequate long-distance facilities will put Lafayette on par with any rural county seat in Tennessee and will do much to insure continued progress and prosperity."

Prior to 1951, telephone service, if available, could only be described as sporadic. On March 8, 1951, Will Hall Sullivan, who served as North Central Telephone Cooperative's first general manager, was successful in joining 17 home-owned mutuals to form North Central Telephone Cooperative. By 1954, North Central had connected its first exchanges in Green Grove in Hillsdale. In just two years, North Central had expanded to serving 2,600 customers spread over ten exchanges: Lafayette, Hillsdale, Oak Grove, Green Grove, Bethpage, Scotsville, Pleasant Shade, Red Boiling Springs, Defeated and Westmoreland. Like Twin Lakes, North Central also faced rapid ex-

pansion as folks in rural America understood the necessity of a telephone and the importance of telecommunications. Today North Central serves in excess of 21,000 customers. As part of its commitment to providing advanced telecommunications services to its customers, North Central, in 1989, went beyond the then-standard copper cable and analog switches that were still heavily used. The innovative cooperative instead opted to install digital switches and fiber-optic cable, and soon the rest of the industry was following. Some 15 years later, these technologies are still widely considered the top of the line. This record of providing state-of-the-art technology continues today with its provision of high-speed Internet access, long distance and digital satellite services. As North Central's general manager, F. Thomas Rowland, said: "Providing state-of-the-art technology has always been one of our main priorities. It's our way of giving the community what it needs to be a great place to live, work and raise a family."

Twin Lakes and North Central are indicative of the membership of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association. NTCA's membership has expanded from eight members in seven states to 558 members across 45 states. These small rural telecommunications systems provide voice services to approximately 3,270,000 subscribers over a combined territory comprising about 40 percent of the geographic United States. On average, NTCA member-companies serve rural areas with a population density averaging between one to five customers per square mile, a sharp contrast from the average of 130 customers per square mile for larger companies. Today, NTCA member-companies on average serve 5,100 subscribers. In addition to their traditional voice offerings, they provide rural customers with Internet, wireless, long distance, paging, and cable or satellite television services. Through it all, NTCA members have maintained that local touch which can only be found by folks serving their friends and neighbors. With the financial assistance of the Rural Utilities Service, the Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative and CoBank, NTCA members remain on the cutting edge of technology by expanding broadband opportunities through fiber-to-the-home projects in communities across this country. As committees examine the issue of broadband availability across the nation, NTCA rural telephone companies continue to connect the heartland of America to the world. NTCA and its 558 member-companies should be commended for their ever-present commitment to rural America. Happy 50th Anniversary, NTCA.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, in his State of the Union address on Tuesday night, President George W. Bush proposed new job-training grants for community colleges. This Member is extremely pleased with this proposal, as the initiative would allow America's community colleges to train workers for the industries that are creating the most new jobs.

Nebraska community colleges are certainly encouraged by the President's proposal, as evidenced by the November 22, 2004, Omaha World-Herald article entitled, "Nebraska Educators Like Sound of Bush Proposals." Mr. Jerry Moskus, President of Metropolitan Community College in Omaha was quoted in the article saying, "The great part about this was seeing the Members of Congress stand up and applaud for community colleges. I think that was the high point of my month."

Job training programs are essential, according to Mr. Barry Kennedy, President of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "Those of us involved with economic growth have been talking about this for the last year or so," Kennedy told the World Herald. "We still have people who say they would hire more people if they could just find people with the skills they needed."

The President's proposal would also encourage students to take more rigorous courses in high school. As an incentive for students to take more demanding high school courses, the President's proposal would provide larger grants for college under the Pell Grant program. This program is said to be consistent with Nebraska's P-16 Initiative, an initiative that integrates a student's education beginning in preschool and ending with a 4-year college degree.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this Member is intrigued and enthusiastically supportive of the President's proposal. Also, this Member would like to express his support for community colleges and the quality education they provide.

HONORING JENNIFER HUNTER

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jennifer Hunter, one of my remarkable young constituents who had an outstanding accomplishment.

Jennifer is a 12 year-old little leaguer in my hometown of Tarpon Springs, Florida. In April of last year, she used her 60 mile per-hour fastball to throw a no-hitter against one of her team's opponents. She had a 6 and 3 record and a 2.10 Earned Run Average in 54 innings last season. Baseball fans know that these are tremendous accomplishments. They are especially impressive considering Jennifer is playing against boys.

Jennifer, you see, loves baseball and wanted to test her skills against her peers, both male and female. Her teammates were unsure about having a girl on their team at first, until they saw her play. Jennifer recently told Sports Illustrated that "they thought I wasn't going to be any good." However, she says, they became closer once they saw her play, particularly after her no-hitter. Jennifer wants to play in the Women's Professional Baseball League next year, and though the league has no players younger than 18, I am confident that she will give the older women all they can handle.

Mr. Speaker, Jennifer Hunter has shown me, my friends, and neighbors that hard work, determination, and perseverance can help us achieve what many, if not most, thought impossible. I congratulate her and her family and

urge our colleagues to wish her luck in her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO DR. CECILIA COTA-ROBLES SUAREZ

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I pay tribute today to the life of Dr. Cecilia Cota-Robles Suarez, a longtime political and educational leader. She passed away last week after a courageous battle against breast cancer. This is why I have fought and continue to fight tirelessly on behalf of breast cancer research, through such legislation as H.R. 1385 which recently passed the House. Without proper funding, it will become increasingly difficult to save the lives of people like Dr. Suarez, whose remarkable and inspirational life touched the lives of countless people. So I join today with family and friends in honoring her memory.

To all those who knew Dr. Suarez, she exhibited love of life, generosity of spirit, and compassion for her fellow man. She was a dedicated teacher who challenged those around her to strive for a better life through educational opportunities, never being satisfied with the way the world is but instead questioning what it could be.

After receiving her Doctorate in education from U.C.L.A., Dr. Suarez went on to fight for early childhood and bilingual schooling. As President of the Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE) and member of the National Chicana Foundation, as well as the Tri-Counties Mexican American Political Association, she was a passionate advocate and leading activist for Hispanic education. Her tremendous selflessness led her to her role as community leader and respected member of her community.

I join today with family and friends in paying tribute to Dr. Cecilia Suarez, beloved wife, mother, and friend. She is survived by her three children Francisco, Mike, and Laura, and her four grandchildren Arnado, Michelle, Christine, and Victoria. Her generous and gregarious spirit will be deeply missed by all.

CELEBRATING THE RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR THE 3D MEDICAL COMMAND AT THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE CENTER AT FORT GILLEM

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of a very special occasion. The United States Army Reserve 3d Medical Command will conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Fort Gillem United States Army Reserve Center on Friday, the sixth of February, 2004 at Fort Gillem Georgia located in the 13th district of Georgia.

During my tenure as the Representative of the 13th District of Georgia, the support of Fort Gillem continues to be my top priority.

Not only is the installation a vital element to our country's defense, but is the third largest employer in the largest county in my district. The United States Army Reserve Center provides a 1,600 person, two story training and storage facility, medical warehouse, and vehicle maintenance to the multi-mission, multi-service component functions of Fort Gillem. As the logistical base for the United States Army, Fort Gillem consists of 142 buildings and 77 tenants spread over 1,427 acres, with the First U.S. Army as the senior occupant.

The First U.S. Army trains, mobilizes and deploys Army Reserve and National Guard units in the eastern United States, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands, and as directed, conducts Homeland Defense, in support of national objectives. The installation is also the home of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group Headquarters, responsible for two medium company operational facilities and a Battalion Headquarters. The 2d United States Army Recruiting Brigade Administrative facility and Army Medical Department detachment also provide operational readiness as major tenants of Fort Gillem.

Soon, an 88,000 square foot special design forensic Criminal Investigation laboratory that includes labs, administration, evidence storage and training and conference rooms will join Fort Gillem. With the opening of this new facility on Fort Gillem, the United States Army Reserve 3d Medical Command is now better equipped to continue its critical missions in support of our great Nation, and on behalf of the constituents of the 13th district of Georgia, welcome.

RECOGNIZING BERNHARD "BARNEY" MAYRSOHN ON HIS SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Purchase, NY, resident Barney Mayrsohn for his life of service to our country, from the snowy forests of the Battle of the Bulge in WWII to the snowy streets of Moscow today.

In 1943, Barney Mayrsohn was hard at work in college, but with the world at war, he would enter the U.S. Army, joining his father and two brothers, who were also serving. In September of 1944, he was shipped aboard the Queen Mary, with 1,500 of his fellow soldiers, to the European Theater. A member of the 106th Infantry Division, Mr. Mayrsohn would find himself thrust into the largest land battle of WWII in which the United States participated: the German offensive in the Ardennes in the winter of 1944-1945 that would come to be known as the Battle of the Bulge.

During the fighting, Mr. Mayrsohn would prove a brave and resilient soldier, getting wounded twice and earning two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, and a Combat Infantry Badge. As the battle continued unrelentingly, the 106th would lose half of the division, and Barney would be taken captive in December 1944.

He was taken by train, along with other Allied prisoners-of-war, to the Stalag 4B prison camp. Along the way, he narrowly escaped