

HONORING VONNY HILTON SWEENEY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to someone who has made celebrities while she stayed in the background. Her name is Vonny Hilton Sweeney.

She set high goals and obtained one of the most prestigious achievements by becoming the first black majorette while attending Brownsville High School in Pennsylvania. She was married to Howard James Sweeney and had one son. She worked at a community hospital in north Sacramento and received a B.A. in English and journalism from Sacramento State University. She was a contributing editor for the Sacramento Observer.

She moved to Los Angeles in 1966 to pursue her career in the entertainment industry where she was promotion coordinator for Sussex Records, vice president of promotion and publicity for Hugh Hefner's Playboy Records Company, and received her first gold record for the hit single "Falling In Love" recorded by Hamilton Joe-Frank and Reynolds. She was also a publicist for Janet DuBois and one of the first female managers for such acts.

She was the public directions director for over 25 years for James Brown entertainment including current editor of his Truth Magazine. As an icon in the James Brown organization, she was personally responsible for showcase venues worldwide, his biggest fan, as well as the dearest friend over many decades. In 1992, 1993 and 1994 she was listed in the "Who's Who" of entertainment.

As a mentor, one of her attributes was to become involved with other people's lives, and was instrumental in helping individuals achieve and reach their dreams. Her goal in life was to pursue the dreams and goals of others through her dedication and guidance in all aspects of the entertainment industry.

Vonny Hilton Sweeney was preceded in death by her loving parents James and Anna Rea Hilton and her brother James Thompson. She is survived by her son Howard James Sweeney, wife Jennifer, and granddaughter Jade Sweeney and step-grandson Justin McCarthy, brother Walter Thompson, his wife Jerri, sister Rose Alma King, sister Barbara Hilton Brown, her husband John L. plus numerous nieces, nephews and many friends.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORT THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind everybody there are only 119 days before the assault weapons ban goes back on our streets. As the Million Mom March begins its Halt the Assault tour beginning tomorrow, I think it is important to remember the support the assault weapons ban has across this country.

I want to remind people that in California, KSBW television said recently, "We call on the Congress to keep assault weapons where they belong, with our military and with our police." On the other side of the country, the Worcester Telegraph and Herald says, "Banning assault weapons in no way limits individuals' ability to buy, own, or sell legitimate sporting firearms." In the South, the New Orleans editorialized, "There's no justification for legalizing the 19 military-style weapons covered by the ban." In the Midwest, the Springfield Illinois State Journal-Register wrote, "No reasonable gun owner should oppose the Federal assault weapons ban."

All across the country, the Nation's leading newspapers are reflecting the opinion of the American people. They want the assault weapons ban renewed. Strip away the rhetoric and the polls and the focus groups, and gun violence is about destroying lives. How many more lives will we destroy by putting assault weapons back on our streets?

Each week, I get up and I say to the American people, you can make a difference. Each week, I get up and remind people that we need to have the assault weapons ban renewed. September 13 is coming up soon.

When you start talking to our police officers across the country and how involved they are in this issue, people have to remember why we passed the assault weapons ban in the first place, because our police officers were being mowed down. Assault weapons were used in killings in our schools.

We can stop this, but we need the American people's help. You can make a difference. You can make a difference. I have always said one person can make a difference, because first it is one, and then two, and it multiplies across this Nation. But we need to hear your voices. We need to have you contact your Members of Congress, the Members of the Senate.

We need to hear your voices. That is the only way we are going to get that bill up here on the House floor. The President has promised to sign the bill if it gets on his desk. We have to make sure that the bill is passed here through the House. We know we can

pass it in the Senate and have it put on the President's desk.

I personally believe it should be made permanent. I also believe that copycats of the guns that were used, say in the D.C. sniper shooting, which was the Bushmaster, should not be allowed to be copycat. I saw in the paper the other day that one of our gun manufacturers just got a very large contract for the military so that the people in Iraq, their soldiers, will have our guns. So I think we can see where the guns are going for war.

Let me remind people: AK-47s and Uzis, these are the guns you see every night on TV; these are the guns we see our young men and women use to go fight the war in Iraq. And that is where they belong, in a war, not on our streets. They should not be allowed in our communities. They certainly should not be allowed to be bought and sold by the drug gangs we have throughout this country today.

This is what we need to do. I am asking the American people for help. I will do my part here in Washington, but I need your voices across the country to make sure we have the bill come up for a vote. That will be your job: contact your representatives. Do your part. Do not always say, let them do it; you have to get involved in this issue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MOMENTUM CONTINUES ON DRUG IMPORTATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I am not certain I can do this Special Order without my charts. It is different for me to be down here without charts, but I am going to talk about prescription drugs. And for those of us who believe that Americans ought to have access to world-class drugs at world-market prices, last week was a very good week.

In fact, let me just review some of the things that have happened just since May 4. On May 4, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said, "I think it is coming," referring to the legislation to legalize the importation of prescription drugs.

On May 5, the CEO of CVS Pharmacies, one of the largest in America, Tom Ryan, said, and I quote, "Millions of Americans have already opted to import drugs because they cannot afford not to. To do otherwise," referring to the importation legislation, "would be to ignore the millions of Americans who, as we speak, are forced to go outside our existing system, which is intended to ensure drug safety, in order

to preserve their pocketbook." That is what Tom Ryan said, who as I say, is president and CEO of CVS Pharmacies.

On May 6, Walgreen's, their CEO, came out and said essentially the same thing. Through a written statement, they said, "If importation is legalized, we will actively participate in filling prescriptions for patients. It is a way to provide some relief to those we see every day in our pharmacies."

On May 9, the Chicago Tribune editorialized and said in their headline: "The Drug Import Juggernaut," and they highlighted the growing momentum for drug importation. They said in that editorial, and I quote, "Simply relying on the American consumers to pick up the slack is indefensible."

And on May 10, a Minnesota District Court judge granted our State Attorney General's request to compel GlaxoSmithKline to produce documents related to the company's efforts to cut off Canadian drug imports to the U.S. This is a landmark decision, and it is the first time a judge has stated, and I quote, "Not only drug importation is illegal."

Mr. Speaker, the momentum continues to grow to allow Americans to have access to world-class drugs at world-market prices. As I have said here many times with my charts, I think we as Americans live in a blessed country. We should be willing to pay our fair share for the prescription drugs which help save our lives. But it is really unfortunate that we are forced to subsidize countries around the world. I think we ought to pay our fair share, but we should not be forced to subsidize the starving Swiss.

And there are several other solutions people have proposed; but ultimately, I, like Ronald Reagan, believe markets are more powerful than armies. The time has come to open up those markets, allow Americans to have access to those drugs at world-market prices.

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments to remember the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education. May 17, 1954, became a history-making day.

I was 14 years old, in the ninth grade, when the Brown decision was issued. I rode to school on a broken-down school bus. I was taught in a dilapidated schoolhouse. I had hand-me-down books and sat in an overcrowded classroom. When the word of the Brown decision reached me outside of Troy, Alabama, I thought the very next school year I would be able to attend an integrated school. But it did not happen for me. It did not happen for many African American children for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, laws set the standard in America, but that is

only one important part of the so-called contract in a democracy. Courts can hand down the law, but the people must be willing to abide by the law before it has power. So it took some time before school integration came to many parts of the American South. But the Brown decision was the first powerful step in the modern-day civil rights movement. It set the tone and laid the groundwork for what was to come. It said once and for all that segregation was dead. It said separate could never ever be equal.

So it was only a matter of time before the whole system of American apartheid would come to an end. But perhaps most important, Mr. Speaker, the Brown decision was an inspiration. It gave hope to so many throughout the South. It was the first time we had ever had an indication that anyone in the Federal Government knew about the injustice we suffered, and it was the first time we had ever heard any government agent agree that it was wrong.

The Brown decision strengthened the resolve of people already involved in the struggle for civil rights, and it encouraged hundreds and thousands of young people like me to believe a new day could come in America. And that is why the Brown decision is so important to remember.

Many people never dreamed that they would ever see the end of segregation, but the Brown decision helped them to see that a persistent call for justice in America can bring change. That is why we cannot give in, we cannot give up, and we cannot give out, Mr. Speaker, until the promise of the Brown decision is fully realized in America.

We have come a long way in 50 years, but we still have a great distance to go before we lay down the burden of race in America. But our struggle is more than one decision, more than one vote, one congressional term, or Presidential election. Ours is a struggle of a lifetime, and that is why we must not get lost in a sea of despair, Mr. Speaker. We must not lose faith in a dream of an integrated society promised by the Brown decision.

Here, in the United States Congress, we must hold fast to the struggle for peace, the struggle for equality, and the struggle for justice for all, until the dream of a truly interracial democracy is fully realized in America, until we see the dawn of the beloved community, a Nation at peace with itself.

We cannot be satisfied, we cannot rest until that day comes, until the true meaning of Brown is a living reality for all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HUNTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PERSECUTION OF HINDUS IN BANGLADESH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my deep concern over the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh. The coalition government of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP, which came to power on October 1, 2001, has initiated a violent campaign. And since the BNP's parliamentary victory nearly 3 years ago, a campaign of terrorism, murder, and religious cleansing has been unleashed on Hindus living in Bangladesh. I had written a letter to Bangladesh's Prime Minister Zia in 2002 about this violent persecution, but I have received no response to date; and it is a fact that unabashed violence has continued freely.

Although the latest wave of violence has been ensuing since the BNP took power in 2001, Hindus have been a disappearing minority in Bangladesh at the hands of Bangladeshi forces that have employed human rights abuses, atrocities, and ethno-religious cleansing tools. In 1941, Hindus comprised 28 percent of the population; but by 1991, the Hindu population dwindled to a meager 8 percent. A large part of this decrease in the Hindu population can be attributed to the 1971 genocide by the then-Muslim East Pakistan Party, whereby 2.5 million Hindus were murdered and 10 million Hindus fled to India as refugees.

Reminiscent of the Jewish Holocaust, Hindu homes were marked by a yellow H, which in fact guided the pillagers to their homes. Over the following 30 years, thousands of Hindu temples were destroyed, Hindus were systematically disenfranchised from holding political power, and prejudicial legislation ensured an unstable existence for Hindus. In fact, Islamic extremists have routinely dispossessed Hindus and, for that matter, Christians and Buddhists, of their ancestral properties and land, burned down their homes, and desecrated and razed temples, which has resulted in forcing many to flee as refugees.

Mr. Speaker, I have reviewed numerous reports that attest to the current violent persecution in Bangladesh. These reports have been written by the International Federation of Bangladeshi Hindus and Friends, Amnesty International, the U.S. State Department's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, CNN, BBC, and multiple Bangladeshi newspapers that reflect the testimonies of the Hindu victims.

This campaign of minority cleansing in progress in Bangladesh has to be stopped. Since 1971, when Bangladesh was born as a secular democratic country out of Islamic Pakistan, all minority populations have declined, and this Islamization must be put to an end through the government's leadership. In an effort to uphold pluralistic democracy in Bangladesh and protection