age forty-seven is a great loss to music lovers worldwide, but those who knew him will not forget the joy and zest he had for life.

Robert was a natural leader who brought success and renown to the organizations he directed. In his early twenties, he served as vice president and general manager for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. By the time he was thirty-three, he took over the AMFS as president, and switched it from a fledgling event to one of the premier cultural festivals in the country. Most recently, he served as artistic director for Carnegie Hall, adding a new venue for more progressive performances.

During his twelve years with AMFS, Robert quadrupled the size of its endowment. This allowed for his undertaking the building of the Harris Hall and the Benedict Music Hall. He also established the American Academy of Conductors at Aspen, which provides opportunities for up and coming conductors from around the world.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Harth's death is a great loss to the Aspen community and for music lovers worldwide. It is my honor to pay tribute before this body of Congress and this nation to the life and legacy of Robert Harth.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SARAH SWORDS ON RECEIVING THE MARY P. OENSLAGER SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate one of this years Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Award winners, Sarah Swords, who I am proud to say attended Princeton University in my district. The award is presented annually to college seniors who are blind and who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, enterprise, and service to others.

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic is a non-profit organization based in Princeton, which has as its sole mission opening the pages of books to all people who cannot read standard print because of visual, perceptual or other physical disability.

Mr. Speaker, over the years RFB&D has worked hard to live up to the philosophy of its founder, Anne T. Macdonald, who believed strongly that ''education is a right, not a privilege.'' Currently Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic has almost 240,000 titles available to its members worldwide. I commend Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic on the wonderful work they do, and I am so honored that they are located within my district.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege today to congratulate Sarah Swords one of the 2003 Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Award winners. Having lost her sight when she was in the sixth grade due to a serious illness, Sara was fortunate enough to join Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic.

With the audiotapes RFB&D provided to her, Sarah was finally able to enjoy reading for the first time. ''At last, I could read all the books I had always wanted to read'' she recalls. ''All the classics, novels, poetry and even magazines. I ordered a plethora of literature and have kept right on reading countless books.'' Sarah entered Princeton University in 1999 after finishing first in her class at Stoneman Douglas High School. During her time at Princeton University, Sarah was a member of student government, served as vice president of Delta Delta Delta Sorority, volunteered at the University Crisis Ministry, and helped out at the Trenton Animal Shelter. Sarah also worked as an advocate and speaker for disability rights for the Nassau Club, Princeton Alumni Organization.

Mr. Speaker, Sarah is a wonderful person whose talents and leadership have blossomed despite her disability. She is a role model for others in her community and a gifted scholar. I am so glad that through the good work of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Sarah Swords will continue to be able to make significant contributions to our country and to the world. She is a wonderful example of why RFB&D motto, that ''education is a right, not a privilege,'' is an essential truth.

Again Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Sarah Swords upon being selected as one of the 2003 Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Award winners and I wish her the best in all that the future holds for her.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very important issue to me, and to the veterans in my district. As you may know, the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission recently issued its report to Secretary Principi. While the goal of the CARES Commission is to improve the health care services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to our veteran population, I do not believe this report takes into account the legitimate concerns expressed by veterans in my District.

Specifically, the CARES proposal calls for the closure of acute medical care beds at the Aleda E. Lutz Medical Center in Saginaw, Michigan. The loss of these beds would be detrimental to level of care provided in the region.

Veterans in the northern portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan currently have only one VA facility that is accessible to them for inpatient care, the Saginaw VA Hospital. For veterans traveling from the rural portions of Michigan, getting to Saginaw can already be a difficult task. If the proposal is put into place, veterans seeking immediate care will face an unnecessary strain of two hours worth of additional travel.

I certainly understand that the VA is undergoing a change and trying to better fit its facilities with veterans' needs. However, it must do so in a manner that does not establish new barriers for veterans seeking care. Every remedy we propose must ensure that veterans know exactly where to go when they need medical care. Simply put, the solution cannot be worse than the problem. The VA hospital system was established to provide veterans, who have made great sacrifices for this country, with direct access to the care they deserve. We must not back down from that promise.

Veterans have come to rely on the services they receive at the Saginaw hospital, and they should not have to give that up. They have given enough already for this country, and I am unwilling to ask them for more.

I want to be clear: improvements can be and need to be made. Alternatives such as contracting with local hospitals is a promising solution. I also believe we need to pass H.R. 2379, the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act, introduced by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) and a bill I am a proud to cosponsor.

This legislation directs the Secretary of VA to ensure at least five percent of the funds for Medical Care are used to improve access to medical services for highly rural or geographically remote veterans. It also allows VA approved veterans to enroll in a program that gives them access to routine health care from a local provider.

In closing, I would like to commend the administration for their dedication to working with this Congress to improve health care for our veterans. The reform of government and the services it provides is a thankless task, but one that is necessary for the well being of this nation.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MAYOR WAYNE R. BROWN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay tribute to the life and memory of Marble, Colorado Mayor Wayne Brown who passed away recently at the age of seventy-six. Wayne was a true American patriot, and a beloved friend and colleague to many in his Colorado community. In his years spent in public service, Wayne embodied the ideals of integrity and courage that we, as Americans, have come to expect from our public servants. As his family and community mourn his passing, I believe it is appropriate to recognize the life of this exceptional man, and his many contributions to his community, state and country.

Mayor Brown lived an immensely rich and full life, always holding firm to his beliefs in serving his community and country. He worked for the Colorado Highway Department before he retired to Marble in 1983, where her served on the town board and later as mayor. His expertise in construction projects through his time spent with the Highway Department came to good use as mayor. Mayor Brown saw that the town had two needed bridges built across the Carbonate Creek and Crystal River, and most recently obtained the funding to pave the main road through town.

Mr. Brown's commitment to Marble extended to his involvement with numerous civic organizations. He was an active member of the Marble Community Church, the Association of State Highway and Transportation Organizations, the Colorado Mental Health Association, and the Elks Lodge.

Mr. Speaker, we are all at a great loss because of Mayor Brown's passing, but can be comforted in knowing he helped make Marble a better place for future generations. I would like to extend my heartfelt sorrow to his children, David, Daniel, Joseph, and Teresa; his

grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Mayor Brown's selfless dedication to Marble, the State of Colorado, and the United States has helped ensure a promising future for our great country and I am deeply honored to bring his life to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation. I am proud to have known such a great man who enriched the lives of his family, community and nation.

RECOGNIZING RABBI JAY STEIN

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rabbi Jay Stein, the newly installed Rabbi at Har Zion Temple in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania.

Rabbi Jay M. Stern received his ordination, an M.A. in Jewish Education and a B.A. in Jewish Philosophy from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In addition, he received a B.A., Sociology from Columbia University. From 1990–1991, he served as an Alef-Alef Fellow in Jewish Education at Tel Aviv University. In 1993, Rabbi Stein was awarded The Lowenfeld Prize in Practical Theology from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In 1995, Rabbi Stein was named a Wexner Rabbinic Fellow. He served as Rabbi at Temple Beth Ahm and currently serves as Senior Rabbi of Har Zion Temple in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania. He is also the Vice President of and has written the constitution for, the New Jersey Region of the Rabbinical Assembly. He has co-published articles on the subject of domestic violence in the Rabbinical Assembly Newsletter and Outlook Magazine, as well as authored a chapter in the Resource Guide for Rabbis on Domestic Violence published by Jewish Women International. Rabbi Stein serves as a national consultant in the area of Jewish supplemental high school education, as well as the Rabbinic Advisor to the Israel's Ministry of Tourism. Currently, he heads up a regional think tank for rabbis serving as spiritual leaders in Solomon Schechter Day Schools, and is a certified counselor in chemical dependence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues join me today in recognizing Rabbi Jay Stein and wish him the best of luck in his new position.

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF MR. RICHARD HART AND PROJECT WELD

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Mr. Richard Hart—teacher, mentor, guide and source of strength and inspiration for countless young men and women at Max S. Hayes Vocational High School.

Mr. Hart, a Certified Welding Educator, created Project WELD several years ago, intent on energizing the school's welding program. The acronym stands for Worthy Employment, Leadership Development—which is exactly what students take away from the program. Mr. Hart is so deeply committed to this project that he initiated the program on his own personal time, using his own personal funds.

Project WELD provides students with a real insight and understanding into the profession of welding by bringing industry employees and employers into the classroom. Additionally, students are exposed to the latest in welding technology through funds and equipment donated from local welding companies. Beyond his scholastic and professional contributions, awards and accolades, Mr. Hart's greatest accomplishment continues to be the impression he makes on his students, through his method of teaching by example that offers each student the promise of a bright future.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Mr. Richard Hart, whose leadership, commitment and belief in the students at Max S. Hayes Vocational High School continues to uplift the lives of countless students.

TRIBUTE TO PEDRO PIETRI

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of Pedro Pietri, a fine Puerto Rican poet, who passed away on March 3, 2004, just weeks short of his 60th birthday.

Pedro was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico on March 21, 1944. He moved to Harlem in New York at the age of 3. Under the influence of his aunt, Irene Rodriguez, Pedro became very interested in poetry and as a teenager began to compose his own poems. After graduating from high school, Pedro worked a variety of jobs before being drafted. He served in a light infantry brigade in Vietnam. His experience in this war, he claimed, further radicalized his beliefs. Upon his return, he began to seriously pursue his interest in poetry in order to address the social ills that plagued not only his community but America as a whole.

In 1969, a Puerto Rican activist organization named the Young Lords briefly took control of the church Pedro attended as a child. It was during this takeover that Pedro gave the first public reading of what has arguably become his most notable poem, ''Puerto Rican Obituary''.

Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga, Manuel
All died yesterday, today and will die again tomorrow passing their bill collectors on to the next of kin
All died waiting for the garden of eden to open up again under a new management
All died dreaming about america . . .

This powerful poem, published in 1973, traces the lives of five Puerto Ricans who came to the mainland hoping to fulfill their dreams of a better life, but whose dreams soon become nightmares as they found themselves shut out of America's economic opportunities and lifestyle. All of Pedro's works, though at times humorous, contain a powerful political message.

Mr. Speaker, Pedro was not special because he was a gifted writer, he was special because he used his gift to inspire his community to rise above the oppression they had endured. In his countless poems and plays Pedro defined the Nuyorican (Puerto Rican New Yorkers) experience, inspiring a new generation of Nuyorican poets to take up the cause he dedicated his life to. In addition, his works have inspired poets of oppressed peoples in the United States and abroad since the 1960's.

Pedro's publications include Illusions of a Revolving Door: Plays (1992), The Masses are Asses (1984), Traffic Violations (1983), Lost in the Museum of Natural History (1980), Invisible Poetry (1979), and Puerto Rican Obituary (1973). His work has also been included in anthologies such as The Prentice Hall Anthology of Latino Literature (ed. Eduardo del Rio, 2002); The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry (ed. Alan Kaufman, 2000), The Latino Reader (eds. Harold Augenbraum and Margarite Fernandez Olmos, 1997), Inventing a Word: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Puerto Rican Poetry (ed. Julio Marzan, 1980), and The United States of Poetry. He was the recipient of several New York State Creative Arts in Public Service grants and a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Mr. Speaker, for his invaluable contribution to American literature and his commitment to addressing issues of great importance to our nation; I ask that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Pedro Pietri.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRIS CHOCOLA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, March 2nd, and Wednesday, March 3rd, I was on official government travel in Libya and missed several votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall votes 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37.

CONDOLENCES ON TERRORIST ATTACK AGAINST SPAIN

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my sincere sadness at the extreme loss of life suffered today by the people of Spain after the worst terrorist attack in that nation's history. The people of central New Jersey know what it feels like to lose loved ones to an act of terrorism. We lost so many of our neighbors on the attacks of September 11, 2001. On behalf of my constituents, I stand now in solidarity with the people of Spain.

We are reminded by today's carnage that senseless acts of terror continue to afflict innocent people around the world whether they live in Madrid, Istanbul, New York, or Baghdad. We are reminded today that no nation is immune to the threat of terrorism.

I hope that today's attack will send a signal to all of us that we must remain vigilant in the face of terrorism and that we must continue to work closely with all nations around the world