

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING WYANDOTTE COUNTY, KANSAS, DISTRICT ATTORNEY NICK TOMASIC

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a tireless, dedicated public servant of long standing, who recently stepped down as District Attorney of Wyandotte County, Kansas, after 32 years of service in that office.

As a former District Attorney of neighboring Johnson County, Kansas for only 12 years—from 1977 to 1989—I worked closely with, and got to know well; Nick Tomasic. First elected in 1972 and re-elected seven times, Nick Tomasic retires as the longest serving district attorney in the history of Kansas. More importantly, however, he leaves a legacy of incorruptible dedication to public service and to the rule of law in our society. As the Kansas City Star article I include with this statement details, Nick Tomasic served the public with integrity and determination, in an environment where holding to such standards was often difficult. As his friend and former colleague, I congratulate him on his well-earned retirement and wish him well in his future endeavors with family and friends. As a fellow former prosecutor, in particular, I commend him on his outstanding record of accomplishment as Wyandotte County District Attorney. He leaves a legacy which I am confident will never be equaled by his successors.

[From the Kansas City Star, Jan. 8, 2005]

TOMASIC IS PRAISED FOR 32 YEARS OF SERVICE

(By Robert A. Cronkleton)

Wyandotte County District Attorney Nick Tomasic pulled out one of several scrapbooks of newspaper clippings that he has kept over the years.

Thumbing through the pages on Friday, he recalled facts of cases he prosecuted decades ago. The details are as fresh as if he had been in court the previous day. In one book he paused at a picture of himself and ran his fingers over it.

"That's the day I was first sworn in as district attorney," Tomasic said, chuckling at his horn-rimmed glasses and youthful appearance.

On Monday, Tomasic's reign as the county's first and only district attorney will end. He has held that position for 32 years. His successor, Assistant District Attorney Jerome A. Gorman, will be sworn in at 10 a.m. in Division 1 at the courthouse. Gorman, a Democrat like Tomasic, was unopposed in the November general election.

"When you look ahead, 32 years is a long time," Tomasic said. "But when you are looking back, it doesn't seem that long."

Tomasic, 72, was first elected in 1972 and re-elected seven times. He is the longest-serving district attorney in Kansas history, dating to when the post was created in the early 1970s. Before being elected to the post, he had served six years as an assistant county attorney.

Tomasic came to the position when machine politicians held sway at the courthouse and Kansas City, Kan., City Hall. He said he tried to be apolitical and rid his office of special-interest influences.

He recalled that early on, people with political ties would send hams, turkeys, whiskey and beer to the district attorney's office around Christmas time. He put an end to that.

"It was not right to do it," Tomasic said. "The right thing was to stay out of politics."

But that didn't mean he wasn't willing to take on political corruption. In an early skirmish, Tomasic ousted two Board of Public Utilities members after a state investigation revealed widespread corruption.

One of the most difficult cases he faced was the prosecution of former Kansas City, Kan., Police Officer John Cheek, who was convicted of voluntary manslaughter in the 1994 shooting death of Milton Foster Jr.

One exception to his rule of keeping the district attorney's office out of politics came in the mid-1990s when he strongly urged voters to approve the consolidation of the Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., governments.

Tomasic announced in 2003 he would not run for re-election to the post.

"I think he has been a great district attorney," said Wyandotte County District Judge Thomas L. Boeding. He said Tomasic established himself early on as a district attorney who intended to do what he believed was right.

"He sometimes filed cases that raised eyebrows in people's eyes," Boeding said. "He was determined that he was going to do what the rule of law required and not be fixed on favoritism."

Kansas City, Kan., Police Chief Ron Miller said Tomasic is well respected in the community, including among law enforcement.

"He represents the public very well, and he supports law enforcement," Miller said. "He has had, unfortunately, to prosecute police officers for criminal conduct in his tenure, but those were decisions he had to make, and he made the tough decision."

Tomasic, who lives on Strawberry Hill in Kansas City, Kan., said he doesn't have much planned yet, except to spend time with his family, including 12 grandchildren and two more on the way. He expects to do volunteer work.

He will miss his staff as well as the job.

"I never had a day where I hated to come to work," Tomasic said. "Not one day. There might have been days where I was not particularly happy about something, but I never hated to come to work."

THE HON. ROSA L. DELAURO OF CONNECTICUT HONORS ELIZABETH A. DEMIR FOR HER OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DELAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join family,

friends, colleagues, and the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital in recognizing an outstanding member of our community, Elizabeth A. Demir. After more than a decade of leadership, Ms. Demir will step down as chair of the Parenting Support Programs at the Children's Hospital.

Too often, young pregnant women are alone and have very little support. Through the Friends of Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Ms. Demir founded the "Bright Beginnings" program as a way to reach out to these young women to ensure that they stayed in school, held onto jobs, had a safe home environment, were protective of their health care, and developed good parenting skills. "Bright Beginnings" is a volunteer-based program which pairs young pregnant women with mentors who can help them share their concerns about parenthood. While its primary goal is to make sure that the women and babies receive regular medical care, it also includes education about how to detect and prevent health problems and childhood accidents as well as the importance of early intellectual stimulation of infants and toddlers. The program also teaches young mothers how to set personal goals and increase confidence. It has been an invaluable tool to many young women facing the often daunting challenges of becoming a parent.

Building on the "Bright Beginnings" program, Ms. Demir is also responsible for its expansion into three additional parenting programs—Home Visiting, Nurturing Connections, and Parenting Group. Each of these programs is uniquely designed to meet the needs of young, under-served families—making a real difference in the lives of both mother and child. Ms. Demir has long been the driving force behind the success of these programs. Her enthusiasm and energy is unparalleled. Program developer, chief photographer, truck driver or board chair, Ms. Demir has done anything and everything to ensure that each of these invaluable programs are available to those in need.

From leading a board meeting to getting down on the floor with a room full of six-month old children dressed like pumpkins, her deep commitment to young mothers and their children has left an indelible mark on our community. In recognition of her tireless efforts, generosity, and compassion, I am proud to stand today and extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Elizabeth A. Demir. Though her departure marks the end of her tenure as chair of the Parenting Support Programs, I have little doubt that Ms. Demir will continue to make a difference in our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to state that it was my intention to vote

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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

against the objection raised against the electoral vote count in Ohio. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the vote, the short notice of the vote, and various weather related issues, I was unable to fly back to Washington, DC in time to cast my vote in the afternoon of January 6th. I am however, hand-delivering this message to the Clerk of the House in Washington, DC, today January 7th, in order to make my voice heard and to explain my absence. I wholeheartedly support the election results of 2004 and do not believe that this objection was the right course of action. Congress has repeatedly looked at the issue of election practices and fairness and has taken action where it sees fit; most recently with the Help America Vote Act. We will continue to look at these issues from the 2004 election and take necessary steps to ensure that our election process is a free, fair, and open one. I regret the fact that I was unable to cast my official vote, but it is my hope that these words will convey my strong beliefs on this issue and that by hand-delivering this message, my intent to personally partake in this debate will be reflected.

TRIBUTE TO BARNEY KARBANK

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the Kansas City metropolitan area lost one of its leading entrepreneurs and supporters of community development with the death of Barney Karbank. And I lost a friend. One of Kansas City's premier industrial developers, he helped assemble the ground for the Truman Sports Complex and developed more than 100 Kansas City area properties, mostly warehouses and production plants that he rented to other companies.

As a 2000 Kansas City Star profile of Barney Karbank noted: "For five decades, Karbank has survived the booms and busts of real estate with a simple strategy: build and hold. Karbank occasionally buys a building, rarely sells and never refinances a property once it's paid off. He has never lost a parcel to foreclosure, he said, nor has he sold one to avoid a creditor's noose. . . . 'He's at the top of the industrial real estate market heap in Kansas City', said Roger Cohen, a former Karbank partner who now heads his own firm."

A dedicated participant in the civic life of our community, Barney Karbank was always active in local charitable, religious and service organizations. But most important to him were the relationships he developed throughout the community in his business activities: as the Star quoted him in 2000: "'Instead of lending people dollars, we're lending bricks and mortar,' Karbank said. While other developers borrow money against properties, Karbank has used his leverage to build relationships with tenants. 'We're not merchant builders,' Karbank said. 'If you're going to come to the dance with us, you're going to leave the dance with us.'"

Mr. Speaker, I join with all of Kansas City in mourning the passing of this giant among our

community who literally changed its skyline. I was privileged to call him my friend and supporter, and our family shares the sense of loss that I know his family now feels. I am placing into the RECORD a profile of Barney Karbank carried by the Kansas City Star in recognition of his death.

[From the Kansas City Star, Jan. 18, 2005]

BARNEY KARBANK DIES AT 80—LEADING DEVELOPER LEFT HIS MARK ON KC REAL ESTATE

(By Dan Margolies)

Barney Karbank, one of Kansas City's premier industrial and commercial developers, died Sunday after a long illness. He was 80.

Karbank, chairman of B.A. Karbank & Co., developed more than 100 properties in the area, mostly warehouses and production plants he rented to other companies.

"It's a real changing of the guard," said Olen Monsees, president of B.A. Karbank. "He was just such a legend in this business. The world will go on, but we'll miss him."

The son of a fish-market operator, Karbank walked with a cane all his life following a childhood bout with polio. He started out as an unpaid clerk for James B. Welsh Realty in 1946 before joining Charles F. Curry Co. the following year. Deciding that pushing brooms, running errands and selling houses wasn't for him, he began B.A. Karbank & Co. as a real estate brokerage firm in 1950 at the age of 26.

He constructed his first building, at 2615 Holmes St., for Borg-Warner Corp. after paying a cold call on Borg-Warner. More than five decades later, his company controls more than 5 million square feet of industrial and commercial space in the metropolitan area, as well as buildings in other cities.

Settling for a build-and-hold strategy, Karbank described his business in a 2000 interview with The Star as lending people bricks and mortar instead of money.

Karbank rarely sold the projects he developed, focusing instead on ownership. Among his major projects in Kansas City and elsewhere were buildings for dozens of companies, including General Electric Co., Sunkist Growers Inc., the U.S. Postal Service, Southwestern Bell, Chevron Chemical Co., Westinghouse Electric Co., Whirlpool Corp. and General Motors Corp.

"He took great pride in never defaulting on a loan, never giving property back to a lender, never putting a project in bankruptcy, never asking for a loan workout and never refinancing a property," said his son, Steven Karbank, president of Karbank Development Co., the operation's development arm.

Barney Karbank left his mark on almost every major industrial park in the area. He also assembled a major portion of the land for the Truman Sports Complex and undertook land assemblages for other clients, including sites for the area's first cellular phone system.

A Kansas City native, he attended Paseo High School and Kansas City Junior College. Outspoken in his views, he resigned in 1969 from the City Plan Commission after criticizing it for doing "practically no planning as such." For years, he inveighed against Missouri's redevelopment laws, which he said gave private developers too much power to subvert public purposes.

"The survival of the city is in direct proportion to its ability to rebuild itself," he told The Star in a 1969 interview. "Everyone is for new development and new buildings and growth. But in what way should it come?"

Barney Karbank served on the boards of numerous business and professional organi-

zations, including First Federal Bank, Mercantile Bank and La Petite Academy Inc. He was treasurer for the Committee for County Progress in the 1960s and a member of both the City Plan Commission and the Jackson County Board of Zoning Adjustment.

He was a director of many civic and charitable organizations, including the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City, the Jewish Community Foundation, Congregation Beth Shalom and Menorah Medical Center.

Barney Karbank is survived by his wife of 55 years, Rose Karbank; their four children, Marcia Karbank, Diane Davidner, Neil Karbank and Steven Karbank, and their spouses; his brother Joe Karbank; 15 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

FREEDOM FOR ALFREDO RODOLFO DOMÍNGUEZ BATISTA

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Alfredo Rodolfo Domínguez Batista, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Domínguez Batista is a member of the Christian Liberation Movement and a peaceful pro-democracy activist attempting to liberate the people of Cuba. Because of his actions to bring freedom and democracy to Cuba, Mr. Domínguez Batista was targeted by the tyrant's machinery of repression. In March 2003, as part of the despicable crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy activists, he was arrested. In a sham trial, Mr. Domínguez Batista was sentenced to 14 years in the totalitarian gulag.

Despite the depraved conditions and the threat of confinement in punishment cells, described by the U.S. Department of State as "semi-dark all the time, had no water available in the cell, and had a hole for a toilet," Mr. Domínguez Batista has continued to fight for basic human rights. According to Amnesty International, he has bravely participated in multiple hunger strikes to protest the abhorrent conditions in the gulag and the depraved treatment of fellow political prisoners.

Today, January 20, 2005, marks another milestone in the peaceful continuation of representative democracy in the United States of America. President George W. Bush was elected in free and fair elections that were conducted with transparency and guided by the rule of law. On a day that celebrates the freedoms enshrined in our national documents and imbedded in the national character of the United States, we should never forget those brave men and women, like Mr. Domínguez Batista, who languish in hellish gulags because they believe in the same freedoms that we celebrate today.

Mr. Speaker, on this day of commemoration, let us not forget those who yearn to celebrate political and human rights in their own countries. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate release of Alfredo Rodolfo Domínguez Batista and every prisoner of conscience languishing in the dungeons of tyrants.