

genre or type of music. In 1962, Ray Charles spit in the eye of conventional wisdom, as well as his producers, and recorded one of the great country albums, "Modern Sounds in Country and Western." Billboard Magazine listed it as the number one-selling album for 14 weeks in a row, a feat that has not been duplicated since then.

Ray Charles's accomplishments were all the more profound when we consider that the races in America were still largely segregated, particularly in the South. Ray Charles's revolutionary approach to music was also reflected in his politics and his deep and abiding commitment to Martin Luther King and the plight of the African Americans.

Ray Charles may not have been on the front lines, but he put his money where his mouth was. In his autobiography, Ray Charles wrote about his life-long love affair with music. "I was born with the music inside me," he wrote. "That is the only explanation I know of. It was, of course, already with me when I arrived on the scene. It was a necessity for me like food or like water."

Ray Charles has provided comfort to millions of Americans from all races and backgrounds and made their lives brighter with the genius of his music.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would note that this legislation, to name a post office in honor of Ray Charles, is but a small tribute to a man who started from nowhere and ended up as a national treasure and a global phenomenon. God bless, Ray Charles.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers at the moment and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume to close for our side.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Government Reform Committee, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 504, legislation naming a postal facility in Los Angeles, California, after the legendary Ray Charles.

H.R. 504 was introduced by my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON), on February 1, 2005, and unanimously reported by our committee on April 13, 2005.

The bill enjoys the support of the entire California delegation. As we have already heard, Ray Charles was born in Albany, Georgia, on September 23, 1930, and moved with his family to Greenville, Florida.

And like later in his life, Charles's childhood was one marked by tragedy and hardship. At age 5, he watched helplessly as his brother drowned to death in the family bathtub. That same year he became afflicted with glaucoma and lost his sight altogether by the age of 7.

By age 15, both of his parents had died. Displaying courage far beyond his years, Ray Charles persevered during this time of unimaginable hardship. Determined to make something of his

life, Ray Charles turned to music. After playing in local clubs, Charles decided that Florida was not the place for his budding music career.

So at age 17 he decided to move to Seattle and sing in a band playing Nat King Cole-style music at area nightclubs. In Seattle, Ray Charles's unparalleled skill drew rave reviews, and he had his first hit at age 19 with the rhythm and blues hit, "Confession Blues."

In all, Ray Charles would win an astounding 12 Grammy Awards, including three in 3 consecutive years for "Hit the Road Jack," "I Can't Stop Loving You," and "Busted."

Once when Ray Charles was asked if he ever considered taking it easy following all of the success he had had, Charles quickly responded, for what? Music is like a part of me. It is not something I do on the side. It is like my blood line, like my breathing apparatus.

Tragically, Ray Charles did not live long enough to witness the success of the movie hit "Ray" that told the story of his life. He died on June 10, last year, shortly before the movie's release. Jamie Foxx did an exemplary job portraying Ray Charles.

The story of Mr. Charles's life is so compelling that it is hard to imagine the American public not becoming engrossed in the story of his life. Ray Charles was truly a man for all seasons, and an incredible gospel, jazz, blues and big band artist, all rolled in one.

He has his own star on Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame. He is the recipient of a bronze medallion presented by the French Republic. His version of Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia on My Mind," was named the Georgia State song, and he was one of the original inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) for introducing this legislation. Ray Charles was and will always be an American hero and icon. He has given the American people and the entire world the everlasting gift of his beautiful music.

I commend my colleague for seeking to honor the legacy of Ray Charles in this manner. Mr. Speaker, I know that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) who are both great patrons of the arts and tremendous lovers of music had intended to be here to make some comments.

Unfortunately, they could not. So I would urge swift passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 504.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of naming the 4960 West Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, California post office after one of America's great

musical artists, Ray Charles. As an international icon who mastered many styles from blues and jazz to rock 'n' roll and gospel, Ray Charles deserves this recognition

Born Ray Charles Robinson in Albany, Georgia on September 23, 1930, he would later shorten his name to Ray Charles to avoid confusion with boxer Sugar Ray Robinson. Ray's inspirational life story is well known but deserves retelling.

Blind since childhood and orphaned as a teenager, Ray Charles lived a life that traveled from despair to fame to redemption. He had been playing piano since he was three years old. In 1937, he entered the St. Augustine School for the Deaf and Blind as a charity student, studied classical piano and clarinet, and learned to read and write music in Braille. Both his parents died by the time Ray turned 15.

At that age, Ray Charles left school and joined dance bands in Florida, then moved to Seattle, where a talent content appearance led to work playing at the Elks Club. He formed the McSon Trio with two other musicians—a group modeled on the Nat King Cole jazz group—and they soon moved to Los Angeles where they recorded their first single "Confession Blues," which Charles wrote.

Throughout his life, Ray Charles overcame racial prejudice, drug addiction and other setbacks to forge a singular life in music and popular culture, and as a media celebrity. Charles' intense renditions of classic songs earned him the nickname "The Genius."

Charles' litany of awards is numerous. He was an original inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame, the Blues Hall of Fame, the Songwriters' Hall of Fame, the Grammy Hall of Fame, the Jazz Hall of Fame, the Florida Artists Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Music Hall of Fame to name some. His definitive version of Hoagy Carmichael's 1930 classic "Georgia on My Mind" (1960) became the official state song of Georgia.

Ray said once, "Music's been around a long time, and there's going to be music long after Ray Charles is dead. I just want to make my mark, leave something musically good behind. If it's a big record, that's the frosting on the cake, but music's the main meal."

Mr. Speaker, we all can dine on his wide assortment of musical treats. Ray Charles' American legacy is well served by the naming of a public building after him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 504.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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SERGEANT BYRON W. NORWOOD
POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1001) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 301 South Heatherwilde Boulevard in Pflugerville, Texas, as the

“Sergeant Byron W. Norwood Post Office Building”.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1001

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SERGEANT BYRON W. NORWOOD POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 301 South Heatherwilde Boulevard in Pflugerville, Texas, shall be known and designated as the “Sergeant Byron W. Norwood Post Office Building”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Sergeant Byron W. Norwood Post Office Building”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT).

□ 1045

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1001.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1001 is an important piece of legislation that names this Pflugerville, Texas, Post Office as the Sergeant Byron W. Norwood Post Office Building.

I am proud the House is considering this bill today because Sergeant Byron Norwood is, without question, an American hero.

Mr. Speaker, Byron Norwood grew up in Pflugerville, a small town outside of Austin, and enjoyed playing the trumpet in the high school jazz band and marching band. He was a star in several high school theater productions. After graduation, he joined the Marines, following in the footsteps of both of his grandfathers who served with the Marine Corps during World War II. He ultimately became a sergeant assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division in Camp Pendleton, California.

Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Norwood bravely served two tours of duty in Iraq. During his second tour he was tragically killed by a sniper in the Anbar province of Iraq on November 13 of 2004. In the trying days that followed, Byron's mother, Janet Norwood, wrote a letter to President Bush to say how dedicated her son was to his country. Mrs. Norwood said in the letter that in spite all that the family had been through, they still supported the war. Afterwards, the White House in-

vited Mr. and Mrs. Norwood to the State of the Union speech.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL), for introducing this legislation and seeing it to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of the H.R. 1001, legislation naming a U.S. postal facility in Pflugerville, Texas, after Sergeant Byron Norwood.

H.R. 1001 was introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) on March 1, 2005 and unanimously reported by our committee on April 13, 2005. The bill enjoys the support and cosponsorship of the entire Texas delegation.

Sergeant Byron W. Norwood died on November 13, 2004, as a result of enemy action in Fallujah. Sergeant Norwood was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, in Camp Pendleton in California before being deployed to Iraq.

Sergeant Norwood was recognized by the President posthumously during his State of the Union address for his bravery and sacrifice to our country. The President also recognized Sergeant Norwood's parents, Janet and Bill, for the tremendous grace they displayed in the wake of their son's death.

A native of Texas, Byron was well liked by his fellow soldiers because not only was he an exemplary soldier, but he was also a terrific person. He was described by members of his regiment as a person who was not afraid to show his emotions, and was always there to listen and lend support to his friends during difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that during times of war we take time to remember its human cost, that people as loving and caring as Sergeant Byron Norwood are sacrificing their lives to protect ours.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) for introducing this legislation. It is a wonderful tribute to a great man and an extraordinary soldier. I urge swift adoption of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL).

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and fellow classmate, the gentleman from Coppel, Texas (Mr. MARCHANT), for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise in support of this bill which I introduced to name the Pflugerville Post Office after Marine Sergeant Byron Norwood.

I am honored to come before the House and the American people to tell

them of the sacrifice of the family and the heroics of a Marine who embodies all who are engaged in helping keep this world safe.

You may remember one of the high points of President Bush's State of the Union address is when he honored the memory of Sergeant Norwood, who was killed last November during the assault on Fallujah in Iraq.

There the President said, “We have said goodbye to some very good men and women who died for our freedom, and whose memory this Nation will honor forever. One name we honor is Marine Corps Sergeant Byron Norwood. Ladies and gentlemen, with grateful hearts we honor our military families represented here this evening by Sergeant Norwood's mom and dad, Janet and Bill Norwood.”

The President read from a letter Byron's mother wrote to him. She said, “When Byron was home the last time, I said that I wanted to protect him like I had since he was born. He just hugged me and said, ‘You've done your job, Mom. Now it's my turn to protect you.’”

He protected not only his mother, but the Nation.

President Bush honored Sergeant Norwood's parents, Bill and Janet, who stood up to represent all of the families who have found themselves paying the ultimate price for freedom. And we all remember the embrace between Janet and Safia from Iraq right here in the Chamber of this House, up there. It was truly the defining moment of the State of the Union.

The cameras panned towards the Norwoods seated behind First Lady Laura Bush. The Members of the Congress, the Cabinet and assembled dignitaries turned and recognized Mr. and Mrs. Norwood with applause. With the eyes of the Nation on the Norwoods, a woman seated next to Mrs. Bush named Safia, an Iraqi refugee and activist against Saddam Hussein's terrible regime, turned and embraced Mrs. Norwood. It was truly a remarkable moment of gratitude that was seen around the world. And it was one of the most emotional experiences in the long history of State of the Union speeches.

In some of the fiercest fighting since the fall of Saddam Hussein, Sergeant Norwood and his fellow Marines waged an assault to liberate Fallujah from the evil that impeded our efforts to free and liberate the people of Iraq. During the fighting, Sergeant Norwood found himself positioned outside of a house where seven of his fellow Marines were being held captive by the insurgents. A trained and experienced Marine, Norwood stormed the residence and freed his band of brothers from their captors. Tragically, during his efforts to liberate his buddies, Sergeant Norwood was mortally wounded.

But by his actions Sergeant Norwood embodied the verse found in the Gospel of John, Chapter 15:13, “Greater love