

# HONORING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE LATE OSSIE DAVIS

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 69) honoring the life and accomplishments of the late Ossie Davis.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 69

Whereas the late Ossie Davis, actor and civil rights leader, was born Raiford Chatman Davis, the oldest of five children born to Laura Cooper and Kince Davis, on December 18, 1917, in Cogdell, Georgia;

Whereas Ossie Davis graduated in the top 5 percent of his high school class, received a National Youth Administration scholarship, and walked from Waycross, Georgia, to Washington, D.C., to attend Howard University, where he studied with Alain Leroy Locke, the first black Rhodes Scholar;

Whereas Ossie Davis began his career as a writer and an actor with the Rose McClendon Players in Harlem in 1939;

Whereas during World War II Ossie Davis served in the Army in an African-American medical unit, including service as an Army surgical technician in Libya, where he worked on stabilizing some of the 700,000 soldiers wounded in that war for transport back to State-side hospitals;

Whereas Ossie Davis made his Broadway debut in 1946 in *Jeb*, where he met his wife, actress Ruby Dee, who he married in 1948;

Whereas Ossie Davis went on to perform in many Broadway productions, including *Anna Lucasta*, *The Wisteria Trees*, *Green Pastures*, *Jamaica*, *Ballad for Bimshire*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Zulu and the Zayda*, and *I'm Not Rappaport*.

Whereas in 1961, he wrote and starred in the critically acclaimed *Purlie Victorious*;

Whereas Ossie Davis' first movie role was in *No Way Out* in 1950, followed by appearances in *The Cardinal* in 1963, *The Hill* in 1965, and *The Scalphunters* in 1968;

Whereas Ossie Davis made his feature debut as a writer/director with *Cotton Comes to Harlem* in 1970 and later directed *Kongi's Harvest* in 1971, *Black Girl* in 1972, *Gordon's War* in 1973, and *Countdown at Kusini* in 1976;

Whereas Ossie Davis held numerous leading and supporting television and motion picture roles throughout his distinguished career;

Whereas Ossie Davis was a leading activist in the civil rights era of the 1960s when he joined Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the crusade for jobs and freedom and to help raise money for the Freedom Riders;

Whereas Ossie and Ruby Dee Davis, having protested the injustices of the McCarthy Era House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1950s, were blacklisted from Hollywood;

Whereas Ossie and Ruby Dee Davis raised their voices for numerous causes, including support for the United Negro College Fund, vocal opposition to the Vietnam War, and participation in the August 28, 1963, March on Washington, D.C., at which the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Whereas Ossie Davis served for 12 years as master of ceremonies at the annual National Memorial Day Concerts on the grounds of the United States Capitol and was an advocate on behalf of the Nation's veterans;

Whereas Ossie Davis eulogized both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X at their funerals;

Whereas Ossie Davis was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 1994 and received innumerable honors and citations throughout his life, including the Hall of Fame Award

for Outstanding Artistic Achievement in 1989, the United States National Medal for the Arts in 1995, the New York Urban League Frederick Douglass Award, NAACP Image Award, and the Screen Actor's Guild Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001;

Whereas Ossie Davis and his wife, Ruby Dee, are the parents of three children and have recently published their joint autobiography, *With Ossie and Ruby: In This Life Together*; and

Whereas Davis enjoyed a long and luminous career in entertainment along with his wife before he died in Miami, Florida, at the age of 87 on Friday, February 4, 2005, where he was making a movie called "Retirement": Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the extraordinary contributions to the Nation of the late Ossie Davis for his service to the Nation in the military, as a civil rights leader, and as an actor;

(2) honors him as a great American and pioneer in the annals of American history; and

(3) expresses its deepest condolences upon his death to his wife Ruby Dee Davis, his other family members, and his friends.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, America was dealt an awful setback over the weekend in Miami, Florida. The distinguished actor, director, producer and advocate Ossie Davis passed away at the age of 87. He died doing what he loved most: he was shooting a movie.

Mr. Speaker, Ossie Davis stood out both in the fields of theater and human justice. We have enjoyed all of Davis's regal performances in recent movies like "Grumpy Old Men," "The Client," "Do the Right Thing," and "Jungle Fever," and in television programs like "Evening Shade."

Mr. Speaker, Ossie Davis was also a powerful social advocate. He was a tireless worker on behalf of the civil rights, and particularly voting rights, for all Americans.

It is remarkable to note that Ossie Davis was also half of one of the most revered couples of American stage and screen. Mr. Davis's wife, Ruby Dee Davis, appeared in more than 20 films and scores of theater productions herself. In December, the Kennedy Center here in Washington honored both Ossie and Dee Davis as part of the 27th Kennedy Center Honors for their extraordinary contributions to the arts. The

two were married for 57 years. Ossie Davis is survived by his wife.

If my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), would indulge me, I would wish to offer the most sincere condolences of all Members of the House to Ruby Dee and the Davis family during these heart-rending days.

Mr. Speaker, the president of the Screen Actors Guild, Melissa Gilbert, made this fitting statement last week following the death of Mr. Davis, who was a Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award recipient: "Along with his remarkable wife, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis's impact on America can be seen not only in his rich body of creative works, but equally so as a passionate advocate for social justice and human dignity."

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for proposing this resolution to the House. I am proud to be a cosponsor of House Resolution 69 that honors the life of Ossie Davis. I urge adoption of this resolution.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), the originator of this legislation.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. First, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from California (Leader PELOSI) and the gentleman from Texas (Leader DELAY) and the members of the Committee on Government Reform; the gentleman from Virginia (Chairman TOM DAVIS), the gentleman from California (Ranking Member WAXMAN), my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), as well as their staffs, for helping to move this important resolution, H. Res. 69, to the floor as quickly as they did. Let me also thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), who represents Georgia's first district which includes the town of Cogdell, Georgia, the birth place of Ossie Davis and, Waycross, Georgia, where Mr. Davis grew up, for his cosponsorship and for his efforts to bring this resolution to the floor in short order. Also, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND), for his efforts and his activity in helping to honor this great Georgian.

□ 1615

We are here today to honor a great American, a veteran, a civil rights leader, a social justice activist, and a tremendous talent, Mr. Ossie Davis. We lost him this past Friday, February 4, at the age of 87.

Ossie once said, "Struggle is strengthening. Battling with evil gives us the power to battle evil even more." Empowered and inspired by his own struggle, Ossie fought for what was right. He fought with his voice, with his example, with his art.

Above all, Ossie Davis was an artist. The eldest of five children, Ossie Davis

grew up with the gruesome realities of lynchings and the Ku Klux Klan, yet he was inspired by Shakespeare. At the age of 18 with nothing more than a \$10 bill and the dream of becoming a playwright, Ossie Davis hitchhiked from rural Georgia to Washington, D.C., where he studied at Howard University. He left school 3 years later only to live his dream of becoming a writer and an actor with the Rose McClendon Players in Harlem in 1939.

His acting career was interrupted in World War II when the Army sent him to Liberia, where he served at the Army's first black station hospital before being transferred to Special Services to write and produce stage shows for the troops.

He returned to the States committed to the power of art and its capacity to make viewers more human, to teach them to live.

He was a trailblazer for African Americans on stage. He debuted on Broadway in 1946 in "Jeb," and while the show ran for only 9 days, it was during that production that he met his wife, actress Ruby Dee. I would be negligent if I did not recognize and highlight the importance of this event as it inspired the marriage of one of the most revered and important couples ever to appear on stage and screen.

Ossie appeared in dozens of TV programs and more than 30 films, beginning with the 1950's "No Way Out," with Dee and Sidney Poitier, and culminating with last year's "She Hate Me." As a playwright, he was most famous for the 1961's controversial send-up of racial stereotypes, "Purlie Victorious," a production which would inspire his relationship with Malcolm X.

Believing that art and activism can go hand-in-hand, Ossie Davis never shied away from roles that took on the status quo. Rather, he sought them out on stage and in life.

When singer-actor Paul Robeson was targeted by the anti-Communist witch-hunts of the 1950s, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee were steadfast in their support even as they were blacklisted themselves. They were brave.

They were at the forefront of the 1963 March on Washington, and when their friend Malcolm X was assassinated, Davis delivered a moving eulogy for the controversial leader, whom he praised as "our own black shining prince" and "our living black manhood," words that at the time took courage to deliver.

Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee raised their voices for numerous causes, including support for the United Negro College Fund and vocal opposition to the war in Vietnam. But above all, Ossie Davis was an artist, his roles ultimately too numerous to count, yet all were memorable; and we take comfort that he left this world doing what he loved.

As Spike Lee said, "For an actor, if you've got to go, that's the way to go out, still working, still ready to go."

I know that my colleagues will now join me in recognizing the tremendous

achievements and body of work that Ossie Davis has left as his legacy. Our sincerest condolences go out his family and all who knew and loved him.

But this is why we today in the United States House of Representatives join in consideration of H. Res. 69, which recognizes the extraordinary contributions to the Nation of the late Ossie Davis, for his service to the Nation in the military, as a civil rights leader and as an actor, and honors him as a great American and pioneer in the annals of American history, and expresses its deepest condolences upon his death to his wife, Ruby Dee Davis, his other family members and all of his friends and fans across the world.

Thank you, Ossie. We will miss you.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM).

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Members on both sides of the aisle. Ossie Davis was more than just an actor. All of us benefited from Ossie Davis as more than just an actor.

I once heard him say that in every role that he played it was important to serve as a positive role model, and I think he did that. He held high standards. His family should be proud. He went about his work of activism very quietly, but yet he was very, very effective because when you do that, most people listen. And I think he was effective in more ways than as someone who stood up and beat on his chest. He served at a positive role model.

I want to thank Ossie Davis for his role in supporting this country and for being a role model.

Earlier today I wanted to also speak on the Tuskegee Airmen because they also served as a role model. I have been honored by being with the Tuskegee Airmen on several occasions. They fought for their country. They never lost a single bomber that they escorted, and they served this country proudly and also served as positive role models. Many of those role models are still alive today.

So I would like to thank again Members on both sides of the aisle. Let us honor Ossie Davis for the man that he was, for the activist that he was, for the actor that he was, and the father that he was.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what a sad occasion. We come to pay a great tribute to a great American. And I want to join with my colleagues who are all here in recognition of this.

Ossie Davis personified all that is good and what is right about America. Coming out of the backwoods of Georgia, Cogell, Georgia, he soon became recognized as a renaissance man, to do so many things so well, actor, playwright, writer, civil rights leader, humanitarian, all of these things.

I happened to know and got to know him through his work in the Alliance

Theater in Atlanta and on the trips he made down to Florida A&M University. And on so many occasions when he spoke, everybody listened. And one of the things he enjoyed most was a poem that I think best personifies Ossie Davis. And he would use this poem at the end of everything that he would say.

He would say, "Well, son, I'll tell you, you know, life for me ain't been no crystal stair. It's had tacks in it and splinters and boards torn up, no carpet on the floor, bare. But all the while I's been a climbing on and reaching landings and turning corners and sometimes going in the dark where there ain't been no light. So, boy, don't you stop. Don't you sit down on the steps because you find it's kinda hard. Don't you fall now. For I's still climbing. I's still going on, honey. You see, life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

Life was no crystal stair to Ossie Davis. And, you know, the Lord works in strange and mysterious ways; this is Black History Month, and He chose this month to bring Ossie Davis home.

We salute you, our shining black prince.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this moment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARROW).

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to have the opportunity to pay my respects to a fellow native Georgian, especially a man like Ossie Davis.

On the stage and on the screen or in the public spotlight, Ossie Davis used his art and his talent to open America's eyes, exposing the inequality and injustice of racial segregation, fighting the witch-hunts of the 1950s, and providing a voice of strength and honor for those Americans struggling just to gain their basic freedoms.

Those of us who grew up during the turbulent times of the 1950s and 1960s will remember the challenges our country faced, and we will never forget those individuals who led our country through those years.

Ossie Davis was an activist and an artist, but he was also a leader whose life we should celebrate. Without question, Ossie and his wife of 56 years, Ruby Dee, are role models for all generations to remember.

I urge all my colleagues to pay our respects and extend our condolences to Ruby Dee and the entire Davis family by supporting H. Res. 69.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Ossie Davis, a civil rights advocate, a celebrated actor, dedicated family man, upstanding resident of Westchester County, and my dear friend. I feel very fortunate to have known Ossie and to have represented him and his wife, Ruby Dee, for the last 16 years.

Ossie Davis will be remembered by millions of Americans as an outstanding actor. From his very first movie role in the 1950s "No Way Out" to roles in such classics as "Raisin In The Sun," "Roots: The Next Generation," "Miss Evers' Boys," Ossie's accomplishments as an actor were truly amazing. He well deserved the many honors and awards he received, most recently as a Kennedy Center Honoree along with his wife, Ruby Dee.

But Ossie's legacy goes well beyond all that. His advocacy or civil rights is legendary. At a time when such activism would cost an actor his career, he refused to be silent in the face of injustice and he used his celebrity to draw attention to the plight of African Americans. From his eulogy at the funeral for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to his memorable voice-overs for the United Negro College Fund, uttering the now-famous words, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," Ossie continued throughout his life to fight for civil rights and he became one of the towering figures in that struggle.

I have so much admiration for all that Ossie Davis did for my community, for Westchester County and the Nation. I am proud to have represented him in the Congress.

I join my constituents, all his friends, his fans and the world in mourning his passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ruby and his entire family. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution to honor the legacy of Ossie Davis.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his leadership and for yielding me time and also to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) for this resolution.

It is with truly a deep sense of sadness and sorrow that I come to the floor today to say a few words about a truly great American. Ossie Davis also is a true American patriot. He was called to serve in Liberia during World War II. He later transferred to the Special Services where he wrote and produced stage shows for our troops.

Ossie was a trailblazer whose courage extended far beyond the stage and screen into the civil rights movement and the fight against racial discrimination. He truly was a man for all seasons.

□ 1630

Ossie always spoke truth to power. During Senator McCarthy's anti-Communist witch hunts of the 1960s, Ossie Davis sued for voting rights and spoke out in support of the singer and actor, a great hero, Paul Robeson, though it resulted, of course, in him getting blacklisted.

Ossie not only was at the forefront of the march on Washington in 1963, but he courageously delivered a moving and memorable eulogy at the funeral of Malcolm X.

I have known Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee for many years and love them very much and will cherish many, many memories of this great and humble man. They were personal friends and supporters of my predecessor, Congressman Ron Dellums, who loved them very much.

I must thank Ossie Davis for his phone calls during very controversial and challenging moments for me personally after casting difficult votes. I will always remember and cherish his wisdom, his concern and his support; and I am deeply grateful for his words of encouragement.

My condolences go out to his beautiful and intelligent and brilliant wife, his life companion, Ruby Dee, and his entire family. The world has lost a great man of distinction who will be sorely missed.

May his soul rest in peace.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), another contemporary and friend and colleague of Ossie Davis.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for me to accept the fact that Ossie Davis has passed. I am deeply saddened by his departure, and I will truly miss him. I loved Ossie Davis and I love Ruby Dee, his wife of over 50 years. They are my friends, and whenever I had the opportunity to be with them, I chose to spend my time that way.

His death is an incalculable loss to the world of arts and entertainment, but more importantly, to the legions who for more than 60 years were inspired by his intense commitment to social justice and improving life for African Americans.

Ossie and Ruby were pioneers who opened many a door previously shut tight to African American artists and planted the seed for the success that artists of color enjoy today. A towering figure as a playwright, screenwriter, director and producer and actor, Ossie Davis's career spans more than half a century, and his enormous body of work includes award-winning performances on stage, television, and more than 50 motion pictures.

Many times he put his career on the line and took the heat for supporting our campaigns and events. He and Ruby sued in Federal court for black voting rights and risked their careers revisiting McCarthyism. Yet because Ossie was a man of integrity and conscious, the labels did not stick and attempts to discredit him all failed.

In 1982, Ossie Davis joined the Congressional Black Caucus and other groups from the black leadership community to develop "the Plan," which still guides us today in the work that we must do in order to reach racial and economic equality.

At the time, Ossie said when he was developing the plan, "Give us a plan of action, a 10 black commandments, sim-

ple, strong, that we can carry in our hearts and in our memories no matter where we are and reach out and touch and feel the reassurance that there is behind everything we do; a simple, moral, intelligent plan that must be fulfilled in the course of time, even if all of our leaders, one by one, fall in battle."

I am going to miss him.

Mr. Speaker, these are wise words from a truly remarkable man.

I never thought of Ossie as 87 years old, Mr. Speaker. The fact that young artists continued to seek his advice and counsel until his final days is proof that he remained young in spirit. I will dearly miss my friend Ossie Davis. My thoughts and prayers are with Ruby Dee and his family.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. MCKINNEY).

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of knowing Ossie Davis. I met him during my 2-year hiatus from Congress, and after learning of my story, he joined the thousands of Americans who, too, were outraged at my treatment by the dominant political personalities of the day and the media. He and his wife were committed to my return to Congress and acted on that commitment. The Dee-Davis family mourns but all of America mourns, too.

Ossie Davis is of particular note because he utilized the platform of an arts icon as a part of his struggle against injustice in this country.

Ossie Davis could have led a comfortable life. Ossie Davis could have led a quiet life, but Ossie Davis chose to stand and stand again when doing so invited discomfort and controversy.

I was honored to have had the opportunity to meet him personally. My condolences go out to his family and admirers, and I am pleased to make this statement from the floor of the United States House of Representatives for all America and for history to know the stalwart warrior legacy left to us by the late great Ossie Davis.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, could I indulge my colleague to yield to us maybe 6 minutes?

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Yes, I yield.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Detroit, Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK).

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me 2 minutes.

I, too, want to add my appreciation for the soul of Mr. Ossie Davis: courageous, king, gentleman, warrior, friend. We honor him today and his memory, for when he walked in a room, we knew that the strength of African American men was being represented wherever he went.

When he spoke, when he gave his time, when he reached out to all of us to let us know that we could be whatever it is that we wanted to be and with God in us, as he was in Mr. DAVIS, we knew that we would overcome.

To Ruby Dee and her family for over 50 years, thank you for sharing him with us. Mr. Ossie Davis, he lives today and he will always live because he is an example to all of us how we should live with dignity and pride, face challenges head on, and speak the truth.

Thank you, Mr. DAVIS, and may you rest in peace.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the energetic gentlewoman from Houston, Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for his leadership in managing this very special tribute that a very distinguished Member of Congress, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), has allowed us to be able to join him on. I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) for letting us acknowledge to the world our appreciation and respect for Ossie Davis and for Ruby Dee.

Ossie Davis belonged to the world, and he belonged to those of us in America, regal, tall, forthright and honest and certainly an enormous story teller. I understand now that he is a son of Georgia, the red soil of Georgia; but in fact, he was a hero of America.

Thank you, Ruby Dee, for sharing him. Thank you for the exemplary commitment that two people showed to the world of 50-plus years and how pleased we were that we were able to give in 2004 to Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee the Kennedy Center Honors.

I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, not so much to chronicle all of the attributes and contributions that Ossie Davis made. When he was willing to stand tall in the midst of the civil rights era, when he could use his talents simply to enhance himself, he decided to use that eloquent voice to fight for justice and equality and stand alongside of A. Philip Randolph, to stand alongside of Martin King, to stand alongside those who could not speak for themselves.

Growing up in nearby Waycross and Valdosta and being born in Cogdell, Georgia, in 1917, one would think that he would succumb to being just a rural country boy; but he took those beautiful and wonderful roots and made them the strength of America and the strength of himself.

I will just simply say, may he rest in peace. God bless him and God bless Ruby Dee and his family.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to recognize the extraordinary contributions of the late Ossie Davis for his service to the Nation in the military, as a civil rights leader, and as an actor. I would like to express my deepest condolences upon his death to his wife

Ruby Dee Davis, his other family members, and his friends.

Ossie Davis, the actor distinguished for roles dealing with racial injustice on stage, screen and in real life, died last week at the age of 87.

He was the longtime husband and partner of actress Ruby Dee. Ossie Davis wrote, acted, directed and produced for the theater and Hollywood, and was a central figure among black performers of the last five decades. He and Dee celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1998 with the publication of a dual autobiography, "In This Life Together."

In 2004, Ossie Davis and his wife Ruby Dee were among the artists selected to receive the Kennedy Center Honors.

When not on stage or on camera, Davis and Dee were deeply involved in civil rights issues and efforts to promote the cause of blacks in the entertainment industry. They nearly ran afoul of the anti-Communist witch-hunts of the early 1950s, but were never openly accused of any wrongdoing.

Ossie Davis was the oldest of five children of a self-taught railroad builder and herb doctor, was born in tiny Cogdell, GA, in 1917 and grew up in nearby Waycross and Valdosta. He left home in 1935, hitchhiking to Washington to enter Howard University, where he studied drama, intending to be a playwright.

His career as an actor began in 1939 with the Rose McClendon Players in Harlem, then the center of black culture in America. There, the young Ossie Davis met or mingled with some of the most influential figures of the time, including the preacher Father Divine, W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, Langston Hughes and Richard Wright.

Along with film, stage and television, the couple's careers extended to a radio show, "The Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee Story Hour," that ran on 65 stations for 4 years in the mid-1970s, featuring a mix of black themes.

Ossie Davis, you will be missed.

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

I believe that all of our speakers who are here have had an opportunity to speak. I will use the rest of our time to close.

I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding a portion of the time, and I want to thank all of those who came over to speak. There were a number of additional individuals who had signed up but were not able to get here, people like the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON), the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS), and unfortunately, they were not able to come.

I simply want to indicate that Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee were as much a part of being activists as they were being actors, and I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) for giving us all the opportunity to share in his life today.

In November of 2003, we launched something called the State of the Afri-

can American Male, and Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee were the luncheon speakers. Of course, the luncheon had standing room only, people trying to get in; and it was at that gathering where Ossie Davis stated that it was his personal mission to reverse the trends affecting young black males, such as drug tradition, high dropout rates and criminal issues.

Ossie Davis will forever live in our hearts and minds through his community outreach, his talents on and off camera, and as a loving father and husband. He will also be recognized on the world stage as a pioneer of the civil rights movement, fighting for justice, equality and what he knew were the right things to do.

Ossie Davis felt a collective effort of change was needed in our community and our country, but as he once said, "It's not the man, it's the plan."

Today, we honor the man, but we will never forget the plan, the life and the influence of Ossie Davis.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of our time to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), for our final words, as she has just dashed in, another contemporary and friend of his.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time; and I hasten to add, he did not mean that I was 87 years old, but he is right that I regard myself as a good friend of Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and if I may say so, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee are the most remarkable couple in the history of arts and letters in the United States, ever; and now we have lost one half of that couple, and America across this land mourns the passing of a great artist.

Mr. Speaker, Ossie Davis was a renaissance man. A renaissance man is not a Jack of All Trades. One definition says: a man who has broad intellectual interests and is accomplished in areas of both the arts and the sciences.

The notion of the renaissance man comes from the great Renaissance era, the Italian Renaissance, the English Renaissance. Out of the English Renaissance came such new talents as William Shakespeare.

Ossie Davis merits the title Renaissance man. There is no area of the arts in which he did not excel, and he did not start with the arts. He insisted upon being a man of his time and a man of his race. To have been a renaissance man in your time, no matter who you were, whatever your advantages, is to live up to an impossible standard, but to have been born in the worst years of segregation and lynching and mob violence in our country, in the South of the United States and to have risen to be a man of letters and of the arts who, of course, most recently was honored with the greatest honors of our country at the Kennedy Center is to give new meaning to the very words Renaissance man.

Who are the men who are understood to be Renaissance men? To give my

colleagues a cross-section of them, Leonardo Da Vinci, Paul Robeson, Thomas Jefferson.

□ 1645

We use that word when we think of men whose talents are so broad and so wide, as evidenced in the works they have produced, that there is no other word for them. We cannot simply call them an artist. We cannot simply call them a producer. We cannot simply call them a playwright. We cannot simply call them a stage actor. Because they are all those things.

And then, of course, to have been the kind of artist who understood that without compromising his art he could become a leader in the greatest revolution of our time, the civil rights revolution, is to have set a standard that all of us must admire.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that this resolution has come from the whole House, and I ask the whole House to join me and the country in celebrating the fact that Ossie Davis proves that if you let a man's talent shine, he will overcome whatever you have to throw up and whatever you have to throw out.

We are blessed, we are honored that a renaissance man of his immense talent lived among us and gave so much of his talent to his country and to his world.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to urge all Members to vote for House Resolution 69.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the life and accomplishments of a monumental figure in our history.

Ossie Davis was one of our most prominent and active civil rights leaders. He was a voice of freedom. A voice that would not falter in the face of danger. A voice that could not be silenced in a time of injustice. He stood with Martin Luther King, Jr. in the fight for equality and participated in the March on Washington in 1963. He was even blacklisted from Hollywood in 1950s for his political beliefs.

I had the honor of meeting Ossie Davis and his wife Ruby Dee last year at a 25th anniversary gala for Crossroads Theater in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Ossie and Ruby were being honored for their long-time support of the historic African-American theater. They generously donated their time to participate in fundraisers for the theater and played a key role in helping Crossroads thrive.

During the 87 years of his life, Ossie Davis demonstrated the true definition of a role model. He graduated in the top 5 percent of his class in high school. On a quest for higher knowledge and education, Ossie hitch hiked from his home in Cogdell, Georgia all the way to Washington, DC to attend Howard University. Ossie also dutifully served his country for 4 years in World War II as a surgical technician.

Ossie Davis was a man who frequently chose the path less traveled and broke down barriers, especially on Broadway and in the entertainment industry. Using the arts, he capitalized on every opportunity to build awareness about the racial injustices occurring in this country. He wrote several screen plays,

including the critically acclaimed "Purlie Victorious" and "Cotton Comes to Harlem". Ossie even had a radio show with his wife, "The Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee Story Hour," which ran on 65 stations for four years in the mid-1970s. Ossie has received numerous honors for his work including being inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 1994 and being among the artists to receive the Kennedy Center honors in 2004.

Ossie Davis will always be remembered as one of our most cherished civil rights leaders. In celebration of his life and accomplishments, I strongly urge that we pass this resolution.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of an extraordinary, artist, activist, and American, Ossie Davis. Just two months ago I made remarks to the House about Ossie and his wife Ruby Dee, on the occasion of their acceptance of Kennedy Center Honors. It is with great sorrow that I know make remarks on his passing.

I am consoled only by the fact that Ossie leaves behind a life of great achievement. Along the way he established himself as one of Black America's greatest ambassadors to the arts, and one of this country's major contributors to human and civil rights. Born and raised in Georgia, he would lived the cruelties of the Jim Crow South. He also saw how his parents endured the struggles of that period. It aspired in him a desire to write. As he once said, "I decided to become a writer so that I could tell their stories."

In 1935 he would hitchhike to Washington DC, to study at Howard University. There he would study drama, with the intent of being a playwright. During his time in Washington he would witness the great African America opera singer Marian Anderson perform on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, after she barred from performing at Constitution Hall. The beautiful and inspiring performance solidified his decision to pursue a career in the arts so that he would be able to share his culture with the world.

In 1939 he came to Harlem—at that time the culture center of Black America. There he would begin to hone his craft as a member of the Rose McClendon Players, an African American acting company. He would also meet and be influenced by some of the great Black figures of the time, such as, W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, and Langston Hughes.

World War II would soon interrupt Ossie's stay in Harlem. In the war, he served as an Army surgical technician in an all African American unit. Shocked by the Nazis' treatment of Jews and frustrated by the inequities he saw in the Army, he returned to America in 1945 determine to bring about change through his work.

In 1946, Davis made his Broadway debut in the play *Jeb*, winning rave reviews. It was on the set of that play that he would meet his wife and life partner Ruby Dee. He went on to perform in many Broadway productions, including *Anna Lucasta*, *The Wisteria Trees*, *Green Pastures*, *Jamaica*, *Ballad for Bimshire*, *The Zulu* and *the Zayda*, and the stage version of *I'm Not Rappaport*. He is probably best known on stage for his role in *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), a role he would reprise again in the play's film version.

He starred in numerous film and TV roles throughout his career. Though a veteran of the movie biz, he continued to star in some of the

most cutting-edge films of the last few years. He has been a staple in almost all of director Spike Lee's films including, *Jungle Fever*, *Get on the Bus*, *School Daze* and the classic *Do the Right Thing*.

Ossie also distinguished himself as writer and director. He wrote or directed many numerous films and plays, the most well known being the 1970 film *Cotton Comes to Harlem*. In particular he wrote frequently about the civil rights struggle of African Americans. One of the plays Davis wrote and directed was *The People of Clarendon County*, about one of the cases that led to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision prohibiting school segregation. He also wrote dramas about the brutal 1955 killing of the black teenager Emmett Till, the Montgomery bus boycott, and Martin Luther King.

He was a two-time Tony Award nominee, first nominated in 1958 for Best Featured Actor in a Musical for his performance in *Jamaica*. He was again nominated in 1970 for the musical *Purlie*, based on his 1961 play *Purlie Victorious*. Ossie would go on to receive many honors and citations, including the Hall of Fame Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement in 1989; the Theater Hall of Fame in 1994; the U.S. National Medal for the Arts in 1995; and the Kennedy Center Honor in 2004.

Outside of the stage and screen, Ossie spoke out on some of the most controversial issues on the day—moves that were extremely risky to his career. With wife Ruby by his side, he would stand up for victims of the McCarthy-era witch-hunts, including the famous Black entertainer and activist Paul Robeson. He also openly embraced the great leader Malcolm X, at a time when many prominent African Americans feared doing so. Whether through his participation in the March on Washington, to his suit in federal court to guarantee Black voting rights, to his arrest for protesting the wrongful killing of African immigrant Amadou Diallo, he remained an activist. A February 9, 2005 op-ed in the New York Post attests to this fact.

It is said that on the day that Ossie passed, the Broadway stages dimmed their lights in his honor. There is a sweet irony to this, because the impact that he had on this country will never dim. Through his work and deeds, the legacy of Ossie Davis will shine bright forever.

[From the New York Post, Feb. 9, 2005]

BEING OSSIE

HE NEVER FEARED A RIGHTEOUS FIGHT

(By Leonard Greene)

The irony in the death of actor Ossie Davis, of course, is that the person most qualified to deliver his eulogy is sadly unavailable.

If you ever led a people's movement, or spoke out against war, or empowered the underclass, or fought for freedom, or made men stand up straight or took a bullet while speaking for voiceless garbagemen, there was no better man to speak at your memorial than the man who married Ruby Dee.

Just ask anyone who crowded into Harlem's Faith Temple Church on that cold day in February, in 1965, when the masses said goodbye to one of their many martyrs.

Malcolm X had died in a hail of angry bullets, and those who were also wounded needed to hear just the right words.

"Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood," Davis said to the sad assembled crowd. "This was his meaning to his people. And, in honoring him, we honor the best in ourselves."

Three years later, after another bullet rang out, and another strong black leader was silenced, Davis again searched within, and found more words to soothe. Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated the day before in Memphis, and tensions in New York were running high.

"How much, America, do you expect us to bear?" Davis said at a memorial rally in Central Park. "There is not time left. For every Martin they cut down, there must be a hundred Martins to step into his shoes."

Davis never did find his hundred. He never even found five or 10. There could only ever be one Martin. So Davis did the next best thing.

He continued being Ossie.

Often, being Ossie meant lending his name, voice and body to a cause when others were silent or invisible.

Whether he was organizing the historic 1963 March on Washington—where King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech—or trying to save the famed Apollo Theater, Davis was as dedicated to a righteous outcome as he was to getting his lines right.

"I've known Ossie since I was a teenager, and he has supported my efforts, sometimes alone, in the struggle for civil and human rights," said the Rev. Al Sharpton, an activist in his own right. "Ossie was always gentle, committed and supportive."

Sharpton recalls the months after Amadou Diallo, an unarmed immigrant, was shot to death by police on the Bronx street six years ago.

Many prominent rappers, who had decried police brutality in the lyrics they spat out over sampled beats, wouldn't step outside their studios to actually protest against it.

But when Davis, 81 at the time, and his wife were asked to participate, they wasted no time getting arrested.

For Davis, "action" meant something more than a word from a director.

In the end, the Rev. James Forbes and the Rev. Calvin Butts, two community icons, will share officiating duties at Davis' funeral Saturday.

Despite the challenge, their task will be somewhat easier because their subject—unlike Malcolm and Martin—lived to see 40 years. Twice.

And therein lies the answer to the hypothetical that has intrigued us for a generation: What would have become of Malcolm and Martin if they had been allowed to grow old? Chances are they would have gotten gray, and moved a little slower—two fires that still burned, but would not go out.

They would have been dismissed by some as past their prime. Yet they would have kept on walking, and kept on talking, and kept on fighting for justice and good schools until the very last breath escaped from their dying lips.

Just like Ossie.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, America has lost more than an entertainer. We have lost one of the most committed and dedicated citizens that I have ever known. We grew up with Ossie Davis. During the March from Selma to Montgomery, during the struggle in Birmingham he was one of the people that the Civil Rights Movement depended on to help mobilize people and support for our efforts.

He was a fighter for civil liberty, for civil rights, for social justice, and for peace. Whether it was speaking out against violence abroad or violence here at home, he lent his voice. Whether it was narrating a film or serving as master of ceremonies at a civil rights rally, he was there. He dedicated his life and his art to the causes of justice and peace.

Ossie's career spanned the last five decades as a writer, and actor, director and producer for the theater and in film. He was a trailblazer for African Americans. He served our country in World War II as a surgical technician in the first black station hospital and also entertained his fellow soldiers as a writer and producer of stage shows. He came home from war and used his talents both on stage and off to make the world a better place.

He and his wife Ruby Dee shared their lives and their art and together received Kennedy Center Honors for their lifetime achievements in the arts, the National Medal of the Arts and the Screen Actor Guild's Lifetime Achievement Award.

He was a friend, a great talent, a leader, and a great American. He will be greatly missed.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, most of the world knows that Ossie Davis was the "Man with a Plan". He urged the African American leadership to unite behind a blueprint for liberation, progress and prosperity. Today I would also like to note that Ossie Davis was the man always available to support a just cause. His great fame and success never led him to succumb to the isolation of stardom. He was a natural superstar who never lost his touch with activists and the common man. Personally I owe many debts to Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. I first met him at civil rights rallies in the sixties. When he was called he showed up for rallies and demonstrations and never indicated any fear of reprisals at the box office. In 1982, as I campaigned for Congress, he responded to my call for help and hosted a fundraiser for MAJOR OWENS, the little known, underdog candidate for the district previously represented by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm. Some years later he responded to my plea for his presence at an "All-Night Teach-In" held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College to protest devastating budget cuts of education and social programs. My last face to face meeting with Ossie Davis occurred at a Brooklyn College "Rally for the Restoration of Democracy in Haiti". That was in October of 2004, just four months ago. Again, not worrying about the consequences of his public statement, Ossie Davis denounced the murder of democracy in Haiti by the Bush administration. To the very end he was a "Man with a Plan" available to promote truth, freedom and justice. His life and the record of his achievements will long endure to inspire millions in the future.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I join our Nation in mourning and remembering one of our finest citizens, Mr. Ossie Davis.

Born Raidford Chatman Davis or "Ossie" in Cordell, Georgia in 1917, Ossie Davis knew at an early age exactly what he wanted to do in life. He decided to attend college at Howard University to become a playwright.

Many of us knew Ossie as an actor and political activist but he also served in the United States Army during World War II, where he was stationed at the Army's first black station hospital before being transferred to special services to write and produce stage shows for the troops.

During the civil rights era, Ossie and his wife Ruby Dee fought tirelessly to promote equal rights and justice for African-Americans subjected to segregation. And although he suffered tremendous loss professionally, his career has been nothing short of stellar.

Besides an outstanding career on Broadway, Ossie Davis should also be remembered as a pioneer in the film and theatre world, including his performance in the movie classic, "A Raisin in the Sun."

I will fondly remember when the couple traveled in the early 1980s to my district of Dallas to shoot their show, "With Ossie & Ruby", a public television series produced by a local television station. They were also very generous to local charities, including the Black Academy of Arts and Letters.

His marriage of more than 50 years to actress, Ruby Dee is truly an inspiration to many people, young and old. Last year, they both received the Kennedy Center Honors for their lifetime of achievement in the arts.

Mr. Speaker, we should all learn by the example of the life of Ossie Davis. Our nation will remember his courage, determination, humility, and service to our country.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 69 that honors the life and accomplishments of the late Ossie Davis, an American actor and activist par excellence.

When you think about the importance of images, and the lives you can influence with images, you have to agree that Ossie Davis has stood tall as an image well respected by several generations of Americans, in particular African American youth.

As an actor, playwright, and filmmaker, Ossie Davis crafted images that reflect what is good about African American manhood. His tall stature, his deep voice, his choice of roles that successfully portrayed the lives, hopes and dreams of African American men from youth to senior, gave the world a view of the best that we can be.

As an activist, Ossie Davis did not fail to speak up for his fellow man, he was a vibrant part of the struggle for civil rights in this country. He lent his voice and his energies to those causes that benefited not only himself, but many of those around him.

Ossie Davis's legendary partnership with Ruby Dee as an artist, an activist and as a husband and father, was also a strong and enduring image for all American families.

I commend Ossie Davis at the culmination of his life, for contributing to the health of the African American community by providing us with healthy images of ourselves to treasure and to pass on to our children.

The Congressional Black Caucus has lost a friend in Ossie Davis. He helped to frame our mission all those years ago by emphasizing to us at the first Annual Legislative event that "it is not the man, it's the plan." Over the years we have been encouraged by his friendship and we will miss his counsel.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, most people will remember Ossie Davis as the deep-voiced actor who paved the way for African-American performers. He helped widen horizons for blacks on stage and screen while fighting for civil rights from Washington to Hollywood.

Born in Codell, Ga, in my district, Raiford Chatman Davis was known as "RC." This was later misunderstood to be "Ossie" and he kept the name his entire life.

Ossie Davis grew up in Waycross and Valdosta, Georgia. He later hitchhiked to Washington, DC to attend Howard University to study drama. Ossie Davis had intended to be a writer, but his fame came from his incisive and wide-ranging acting performances over five decades, even as he wrote plays and screenplays and directed and produced.



Ossie and his wife, Ruby Dee, were married in 1948. Their marriage was a true partnership, and during their decades together they worked to make America a better place. They entertained us in the films and theater productions they starred in together. They were tireless activists during the civil rights era. They persevered when blacklisted during the McCarthy era. Nothing shook their devotion to each other or to the causes that motivated them.

In December, when Ossie Davis was honored at the Kennedy Center, Sean "P-Diddy" Combs said that Davis helped pave the road for two generations of black performers.

Ossie Davis said that night, "We knew that every time we got a job and every time we were onstage, America was looking to make judgments about all black folks on the basis of how you looked, how you sounded, how you carried yourself. So any role you had was a role that was involved in the struggle for black identification. You couldn't escape it."

In an example of art imitating life, Ossie Davis delivered the eulogy in the film "Malcolm X." It was the same eulogy he had actually delivered at Malcolm X's memorial service. Davis was politically active, especially with the civil rights movement, and he was also an opponent to Senator Joseph McCarthy's Communist witch hunt of the 1950s.

[From the Ledger, Feb. 9, 2005]

OSSIE DAVIS WAS A TRAILBLAZER IN LIFE,  
ART

(By Wendell Brock)

Ossie Davis helped break the color barrier on Broadway, was a quiet but conscientious force in the civil rights movement and—late in his 65-year career in the entertainment industry—became a picture of cool among a younger generation of African-American artists, including filmmaker Spike Lee, pop mogul Sean P. Diddy Combs and Atlanta director Kenny Leon.

The tall, lumbering Davis and his wife, the actress Ruby Dee, were a luminous and nearly inseparable celebrity couple. Together, they received the National Medal of the Arts from President Clinton in 1995 and the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors last year.

But at the end of the day, Davis, who died Friday at 87, remained a generous, easily approachable senior statesman for the arts who never forgot his humble beginnings as the son of a South Georgia railroad worker who could not write his name.

"He was just a model of how you can be an artist and an activist, that one did not negate the other," Lee said Friday. "That one did not have to be scared that if you speak out, it would kill or wipe out your career. It is a great loss, but we will celebrate his life."

"Ossie and Ruby are like the godfather and godmother of American theater," said Leon, recalling how the couple attended previews of his Broadway production of "A Raisin in the Sun" last year and gave notes to stage newcomer Combs. "Ossie is certainly the soul of black theater."

Davis, who was in Miami Beach filming a comedy called "Retirement," was found dead in his hotel room early Friday morning. The passing of the tall, robust octogenarian with the rich baritone caught his family and colleagues by surprise.

At the time of her husband's death, Dee was in New Zealand working on her own film project. A family spokesman said Friday afternoon that the actress was en route to the couple's home in New Rochelle, N.Y., and that arrangements would be announced later.

Besides Dee, Davis is survived by three children: Nora; Hasna; and Guy, a blues artist; and seven grandchildren.

Dee and Davis were frequently in Atlanta, where she starred in "St. Lucy's Eyes" at the Alliance Theatre, and they were honored by the Atlanta Film Festival, both in 2003. They made frequent appearances at Spelman, Morehouse and Morris Brown colleges, as well as Clark Atlanta University.

"He and Ruby Dee were like the Lunt and Fontanne for African-Americans, and all of us as Americans," said Kent Gash, associate artistic director of the Alliance Theatre. "He was just always so real, and that was always so true about his work, both as an actor and as a writer. He just quietly pushed a lot of barriers out of the way and continued to do this amazing work for an incredible period of time. . . . He paved the way for so many of us in American theater."

C.B. Hackworth, the writer and producer of the special, said Davis told him he had been ill when they met him in early January to do filming.

"He said, 'I'm not at my best, but don't worry, I'll do it as many times as you need.' He was a consummate professional," Hackworth said.

The oldest of five children, the artist was born Raiford Chatman Davis in tiny Cogdell, Ga., on Dec. 18, 1917, and grew up in nearby Waycross and Valdosta. His mother's pronunciation of his initials R.C. was heard as Ossie. He left home in 1935, hitchhiking to Washington to enter Howard University, where he studied drama, intending to be a playwright.

By 1939, he'd made his way to Harlem, N.Y., where he got work as an actor and mingled with the likes of Langston Hughes, W.E.B. Du Bois and Richard Wright.

He and Dee first worked together in the 1946 Broadway play "Jeb." In December 1948, on a day off from rehearsals from another play, they took a bus to New Jersey to get married.

"They were so close that it felt almost like an appointment we finally got around to keeping," Dee wrote in their 1998 autobiography, "In This Life Together."

"I thought it was a pretty good use of a Thursday," Davis wrote with his trademark pithiness.

He appeared in dozens of TV programs and more than 30 films, beginning with 1950's "No Way Out," with Dee and Sidney Poitier, and culminating in last year's "She Hate Me."

But perhaps his most enduring film legacy is his six-picture run with Lee: "School Daze," "Do the Right Thing," "Jungle Fever," "Malcolm X," "Get on the Bus" and "She Hate Me."

"When he started working with Spike Lee, it revitalized his career," said film historian Donald Bogle. "I actually think he's better (in the Lee films) than he was as a younger actor. He's so powerful, so assured."

Davis and Dee often found themselves in the eye of social and political change.

With a voice as comforting and mellifluous as a country preacher, he gave eulogies at the funerals of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, whom he called "our own black shining prince—who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so."

Besides his extensive acting and directing credits for stage, film and TV, Davis was the author of eight plays, including 1961's "Purlie Victorious," a comedy lampooning racial stereotypes.

In 1970, Davis co-wrote the book for "Purlie," a musical version of the play. A revival of the musical is planned for Broadway next season.

The rousing gospel song, "Walk Him up the Stairs," is a highlight of that show. Sung at a funeral, it is likely to have a special resonance when Davis' story returns to Broadway.

"He took the hearts of millions with him, and I will never get over not having him to

talk to," said actor Burt Reynolds. "I'll still talk to him every night, I know he's sitting next to God, now, and I know God envies that voice, and I hope he listens when Ossie tells him his ideas of what brotherhood means."

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ossie Davis, an American legend. Ossie Davis was an actor and an activist who believed the function of art was to better society. He said he could not imagine art without struggle, and he could not imagine struggle without being knee deep in it. His worthy struggled ended on February 4, 2005, at the age of 87, while practicing the craft he loved so dearly on the set of the movie Retirement.

Mr. Speaker, throughout his life, Ossie Davis was knee deep in struggle. He was born in 1917, in Cogdell, Georgia, the heart of the segregated South. His mother named him Raiford Chatman Davis, RC for short. But when his mother pronounced his initials to the white nurse in attendance, the nurse misheard her, and recorded the infant's name as Ossie. Fearful of challenging the white nurse's authority, Laura Davis accepted her son's new name.

Mr. Speaker, Ossie Davis's childhood was not an easy one. His father oversaw the building of railroads in Georgia. A manager and supervisor, Kince Charles Davis was an anomaly in the segregated South. In fact, his esteemed position made the Davis family the target of racism and threats of violence. More than once, the KKK threatened to shoot Kince Davis "like a dog."

Mr. Speaker, from a young age, Ossie Davis took refuge from racism by plunging into his studies. He loved Shakespeare and dreamed of becoming a writer and an actor himself. In 1939 he followed his dreams to New York City, and joined the Rose McClendon Players. He befriended the intellectual giants of the Harlem Renaissance, basked in the glow of their brilliance, and was inspired by their passion for empowerment through the unity of arts and politics.

Ossie Davis made sacrifices for his craft. After an evening performance, he would often retire to a nearby park bench. But for Davis, the sacrifices were well worth it. Towards the end of his life, Davis recalled the moment he understood his mission as a black artist. In 1939, he heard Marian Anderson, who had been banned from performing in Constitution Hall, sing in front of the Lincoln Memorial. According to USA Today, he told students at Cornell University in the 1990s, "I understood fully for the first time the importance of black song, black music, black arts. I was handed my spiritual assignment that night."

Mr. Speaker, Ossie Davis believed he had a responsibility to his race and a responsibility to his country. In 1942, he enlisted in the Army and served as a surgical technician in Liberia. His patriotism, his heartfelt belief in what America could and should be, guided him throughout his life. He chose to perform in plays that showcased America's promise, while demonstrating its flaws. One such play was "Jeb," an American Negro Theater production about a black soldier returning from World War II only to encounter racism in the country for which he fought. "Jeb" was an important piece of social commentary. For Ossie Davis, it was doubly important, because it was in "Jeb" that he met his wife, his partner in love and life, as well as in art and activism, Ruby Dee.

Mr. Speaker, the union of Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee was among the most fruitful acting partnerships in American history. Together, they made well over 150 films and plays. They also made history. During the fiery days of the Red Scare, Davis and Dee, who were nearly blacklisted themselves, stood up for their friend Paul Robeson, and for America's key freedoms. Reflecting on those trying years, Davis told the Boston Globe in 2003, "I'm sure my wife and I suffered, but we never knew whether we were being punished for being black or being red."

Mr. Speaker, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee fought for an end to racism in American cities and in American film. They crusaded for civil liberties and protested for peace. They served as MC's during the 1963 March on Washington. They worked with black leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Fannie Lou Hamer. Upon their deaths, Davis eulogized Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ossie Davis understood the value of hard work, the potential for collective action, and the crucial responsibility of government. When President Reagan proposed a 50% cut in the National Endowment for the Humanities budget, Davis registered his dissent to the House Appropriations Subcommittee. He said, "I was able to pull myself up by my bootstraps—but only because the Federal Government provided the boots."

Ossie Davis was an actor and activist, a player and a poet, a husband and a father, an example to us all. Mr. Speaker, my words are insufficient to memorialize this great man. Instead, I leave you with Ossie Davis's wise words, from an interview with Tavis Smiley on National Public Radio. "We can't float through life, we can't be incidental or accidental. We must fix our gaze on a guiding star as soon as one comes up on the horizon. And once we've attached ourselves to that star, we must keep our eyes on it and our hands on the plough."

Mr. Speaker, let us let Ossie Davis's words be our guiding star. May he rest in peace.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 69, a resolution honoring the life and accomplishments of the late actor, director, veteran, and civil rights activist Ossie Davis.

Ossie Davis was born in Cogdell, Georgia in 1917. Davis realized his love for acting and writing while attending Howard University, here in Washington, D.C. After finishing his education, Davis moved to Harlem, New York on a quest to start his acting career. Before he could move into acting, Davis was drafted by the United States Army. He served in the Army medical unit during World War II.

Ossie Davis appeared in almost all forms of entertainment. He was brilliant to watch on stage and knew how to captivate an audience. On screen he made all the characters he played come to life right before our eyes. Even as great as he was on stage and film, Davis' passion was writing. He wanted to move audiences not just by his acting but by his written word.

Davis and his wife Ruby Dee, also an established actor, were very active in civil rights issues and promoting African-Americans in the entertainment industry. They sued for African-American voting rights, and when their friend, Paul Robeson, was blacklisted, they stood by his side only to become a victim themselves. Ossie and Ruby Dee were proud participants in the March on Washington in 1963.

Davis received several awards throughout his career, including the Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement award and the Kennedy Center Honor, which he received with his wife in 2004.

In particular, I will recall his powerful voice as host of the annual National Memorial Day Concert held on the West Lawn of the Capitol. As an eleven-time host of the concert, his appearance each and every year was an inspiring addition to our remembrance of those who served our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I was truly saddened upon learning of his passing this past Friday. I would like to express my deepest condolences to Ossie Davis' family. My thoughts are with his wife Ruby Dee and his three children Guy Davis, Hasna Muhammad, and particularly Nora Day, a proud resident of Montclair, NJ.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H. Res. 69, honoring the life and accomplishments of the late Ossie Davis.

Ossie Davis was a devoted African American, husband, father, actor, director, soldier, activist, and pioneer. He was born in 1917 in Cogdell, GA and was the son of a railroad worker. Ossie Davis was passionately involved in civil rights issues and efforts to advance the cause of African Americans in the entertainment industry. Known for taking roles that tackled racial injustice, he understood the importance of black song, black music, and black arts.

His career as an actor began in 1939 with the Rose McClendon Players in Harlem. It was there that he met and mingled with some of the most influential figures of his time, including Langston Hughes, A. Phillip Randolph and W.E.B. DuBois.

His acting career was interrupted when he was asked to serve in the Army during World War II. He served in Libya at an African American medical unit as an Army Surgical technician, where he stabilized some of the 700,000 soldiers wounded in that war.

In 1948, Ossie Davis debuted on Broadway in "Jeb," a play about a soldier returning home. His co-star was Ruby Dee, his wife of 56 years, whose stage career paralleled his own. The couple went on to write, direct, and star in several films, most notably "Cotton Comes to Harlem" in 1970 and "Countdown at Kusini" in 1976. Ossie appeared in over 80 productions and was honored by the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in 2004.

I had the unique opportunity to meet and spend time with Ossie Davis over the years, and cherished every moment. He was a man of character, wisdom, dignity, and excellence. He embodied a sly humor and genuine kindness that many will remember him by. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family, friends, and all who loved him. As we celebrate Black History Month, let us remember the life and accomplishments of the late Ossie Davis, a true pioneer and advocate of African Americans in the entertainment industry and in life.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 69.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

House Concurrent Resolution 6, by the yeas and nays;

House Concurrent Resolution 26, by the yeas and nays; and

House Concurrent Resolution 30, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

#### EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CONTINUE TO EXERCISE ITS AUTHORITY SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 6.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 6, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 7, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 24]

YEAS—418

Abercrombie	Boozman	Clay
Ackerman	Boren	Cleaver
Aderholt	Boswell	Clyburn
Akin	Boucher	Coble
Alexander	Boustany	Cole (OK)
Allen	Boyd	Conaway
Andrews	Bradley (NH)	Conyers
Baca	Brady (PA)	Cooper
Bachus	Brady (TX)	Costa
Baird	Brown (OH)	Costello
Baker	Brown (SC)	Cox
Baldwin	Brown, Corrine	Cramer
Barrett (SC)	Brown-Waite,	Crenshaw
Barrow	Ginny	Crowley
Bartlett (MD)	Burgess	Cubin
Barton (TX)	Burton (IN)	Cuellar
Bass	Butterfield	Culberson
Bean	Buyer	Cummings
Beauprez	Calvert	Cunningham
Becerra	Camp	Davis (AL)
Berkley	Cannon	Davis (CA)
Berman	Cantor	Davis (FL)
Berry	Capito	Davis (IL)
Biggert	Capps	Davis (KY)
Bilirakis	Capuano	Davis (TN)
Bishop (GA)	Cardin	Davis, Jo Ann
Bishop (NY)	Cardoza	Davis, Tom
Bishop (UT)	Carnahan	Deal (GA)
Blackburn	Carson	DeFazio
Blunt	Carter	DeGette
Boehlert	Case	Delahunt
Boehner	Castle	DeLauro
Bonilla	Chabot	DeLay
Bonner	Chandler	Dent
Bono	Chocola	Diaz-Balart, L.