

abroad took him to the former Soviet Union, Africa, Europe, Latin America and Asia.

The time he spent covering politics in Michigan and beyond placed him among the prestigious Who's Who in America list and served as valuable knowledge as he transitioned to Press Secretary for Michigan Governor William G. Milliken. After beginning with Governor Milliken in 1969, Mr. Weeks went on to serve as a member of the Governor's special council and then as his chief of staff.

The opportunity to work in the Milliken administration would serve as a foundation later for one of his greatest literary works. In the meantime, Mr. Weeks went on to be a Kennedy Fellow in 1981 attending Harvard University Institute of Politics. His research led him to conduct a study and subsequently write a published paper on outstanding governors of the 20th century.

Mr. Weeks then found his way back to his home state of Michigan when he took a job as the political columnist for the Detroit News in 1983. His written works on topics ranging from public affairs to political developments earned him the Outstanding Alumni Award of MSU's College of Communications Arts.

In his limited time, Mr. Weeks wrote several books on a range of topics close to his heart. These literary works included: *Stewards of the State: The Governors of Michigan* (1987; revised 1991), which won the Michigan Small Press "Book of the Year Award" and the achievement award from the Greater Michigan Foundation; *Sleeping Bear: Its Lore, Legends and First People* (1988; fifth printing in 2000); *Sleeping Bear: Yesterday and Today* (1990; expanded edition 2005) and *MEM-KA-WEH: Dawning of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians* (1992). He also co-authored *The Milliken Years: A Pictorial Reflection* (1988) and *A Handbook of African Affairs* (1964) and also contributed to *Michigan: Visions of our Past* (1987) and *The Royal Cookbook* (1969).

As if writing a column as a foremost expert on politics in the state of Michigan or authoring a number of books as a foremost expert on the history of our fascinating state weren't enough, Mr. Weeks also invested time in organizations committed to causes he cherishes. Mr. Weeks has served on the Board of Directors for the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Council, and on the planning committee for the annual observance of Michigan Week. Michigan Week, started by his father Don Weeks, is an event aimed at promoting pride throughout the state.

Mr. Speaker, George Weeks and his wife Mollie, have also raised two wonderful children, Julie and Don, along their exciting and unique journey thus far in life. Now residing in Glen Arbor, Michigan, I understand that he plans to continue his writing by imparting his wisdom and knowledge through columns in small hometown papers in northern Michigan. It also seems fitting that he plans to do what George does best by turning his endless quest for knowledge on issues he's passionate about into written works that serve as learning tools for others.

Today, I join a long list of individuals, including the Michigan Congressional Delegation, who have had the opportunity to work with, learn from or even know Mr. George Weeks in saying "Thank You". Many of us have been on the other end of the phone line with

George waiting to see if his modest voice would invite a robust conversation about topics in which we shared alike thoughts or if he would ask a question that required careful and considerate thought in answering. Whether you have agreed with him or not on a topic he wrote, you respected his integrity and his ability to be fair in cracking though rhetoric to the truth of the matter.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Mr. George Weeks for his commitment to the value of a profession that has often been equated to the fourth branch of government, for his dedication to fair and balanced reporting, for the integrity he brings to this sometimes volatile political world and for his deep, genuine appreciation for the great state of Michigan. Thank you, George!

I certainly wish George Weeks and his wife Mollie the best in retirement and I look forward to our future conversations.

#### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE WEEKS

#### HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 8, 2006*

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor George Weeks, who is retiring from his position as political columnist for the Detroit News.

In 1954, Mr. Weeks commenced his career with the Detroit News as a campus stringer at Michigan State University. After honorably serving 18 months in the United States Army, he worked for the United Press International bureaus in Lansing and Detroit; subsequently, in 1967 he became UPI's diplomatic correspondent in Washington D.C. Then, in 1969, he left journalism to serve as the press secretary and then chief of staff to Gov. William G. Milliken. After a stellar stint in public service, Mr. Weeks returned to journalism with the Detroit News as the paper's political columnist.

Mr. Weeks earned many honors and awards for his fair and balanced coverage of Michigan politics and, in 1996, he was inducted into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations and appreciation for the excellence and integrity Mr. Weeks has displayed throughout his distinguished career, and ask my colleagues to join in honoring him.

#### TRIBUTE TO MR. RICHARD A. RYAN

#### HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 8, 2006*

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Richard A. Ryan, who is retiring from his post at The Detroit News, after 40 years as a distinguished news reporter, 37 of those years a Washington correspondent.

Dick Ryan has spent most of his life in journalism, reporting for the Muskegon Chronicle and Toledo Blade before establishing his position at the Detroit News in 1966. Ryan was at the News for the tumultuous Watergate period, ending with the historic 1974 resignation of

President Richard Nixon and subsequent elevation of former Michigan Congressman Gerald Ford to the nation's highest office. Ryan watched as Ford was sworn in as the nation's 37th President, announcing the end of what he called "our long national nightmare."

In all, Dick Ryan covered the highs and lows of seven presidents, from Nixon to George W. Bush, traveling overseas with Ronald Reagan for his memorable speech in West Berlin, urging the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. He witnessed the first official visit of an Arab leader to Israel, watching a tenuous peace process initiated by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, whose nations had been at war for decades. He viewed the talks that culminated in the signing of a historic peace agreement between the two nations before the world at the White House.

In addition, Dick Ryan served as President of the Washington-based National Press Club in 2000, elected to that post by his peers in journalism. After a career that has placed him in the front row of some of this country's most fascinating events, he will enjoy his retirement enjoying the company of his five grandchildren, golf, travel, and the endless pursuit of every true journalist: writing.

Mr. Speaker, I have known Richard Ryan to be a person of great professionalism and absolute integrity. He has truly brought credit to a profession which he has served so well. The Michigan Congressional delegation will certainly miss the integrity, dedication and professionalism which drove Dick to always get the story right, and the people of Michigan will miss his insightful reporting from Washington. And I will miss Dick Ryan because not only is he a consummate professional journalist, he is a very dear personal friend.

#### HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF RICHARD RYAN

#### HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 8, 2006*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to my dear friend, Richard (Dick) Ryan, on the occasion of his retirement from the Detroit News after 40 years of distinguished service.

A Michigan native, Dick graduated from Wayne State University in 1963 with a major in journalism. Prior to joining the Detroit News in 1966, he worked at the Muskegon Chronicle and the Toledo Blade.

Over the span of his career, Dick has been an eyewitness to four decades of national politics, covering the White House, Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court. He has covered seven presidents, reporting on such historical events as the Watergate scandal, Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel and President Reagan's famous "tear down this wall" speech in Berlin. Because of Dick's reporting skills, Detroiters were always well-informed on some of the most important events in the world.

Currently, Dick is president of the Gridiron Club, an organization of 65 Washington-based journalists. He was also the 2001 president of the National Press Club.

For all that Dick has done in Washington, he has never forgotten about where he is from

and who is reading his stories. While he has become a familiar face here in Washington, he has stayed committed to the people of Detroit and southeastern Michigan.

His many accomplishments serve as a lasting example of excellence in journalism. Michigan has been well-served by Dick Ryan, his insight and knowledge of Michigan politics will be deeply missed.

I would like to thank Dick for his dedicated service both to the Detroit News and the Michigan Community. As he enters his retirement years, I would ask that my colleagues join with Deborah and I to wish him and his wife, Dorothy, a very happy, healthy and relaxing future.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO RICHARD RYAN ON HIS RETIREMENT**

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments of Richard (Dick) Ryan on his retirement from the Detroit News where he has spent nearly 40 years reporting on Washington, writing about Presidents, politics and the people who make this Nation tick.

For the people of Michigan, Dick Ryan was the observer and scribe of many of America's most momentous national events, and many with international impact.

Dick was there when President Reagan called on Gorbachev to "tear down" the Berlin Wall, and when President Nixon stepped down and Michigan's own, Gerald R. Ford, was sworn in as President of the United States.

It was through Dick's eyes and with his words that Detroit News readers learned about more than 36 years of Presidential political campaigns, the visits of world leaders to the White House, America's part in world events, including the peace agreement signed at Camp David in the late 1970s, and of the demise of one President under impeachment and the survival of impeachment by another.

Highly respected by his readers and his peers, Dick leaves the Detroit News with a legacy that is unparalleled. His time as, in his own words, "an eyewitness to history," is a remarkable record.

Dick Ryan's years of service to his readers and our Nation are legendary and we wish him well as he undertakes a new mission: retirement, enjoyment of his family, and an opportunity to write at his leisure.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Richard (Dick) Ryan as he begins this new adventure in life. He is truly deserving of our respect and admiration.

**HONORING DETROIT NEWS SENIOR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT RICHARD A. RYAN UPON HIS RETIREMENT**

**HON. PETER HOEKSTRA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor The Detroit News Senior Washington

Correspondent, Richard A. Ryan upon his retirement.

Dick Ryan is a dedicated professional who devoted his career to journalism, beginning with the Muskegon Chronicle, a daily newspaper located in Michigan's Second Congressional District.

Dick Ryan went on to acquire nearly four decades of experience with The Detroit News, including serving 37 years in the Washington bureau as a correspondent.

His reporting on public policy and politics includes covering Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, multiple foreign assignments and seven Presidencies beginning with President Richard Nixon.

He witnessed firsthand President Ronald Reagan's speech in 1987 at Brandenberg Gate that two years later led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, as well as Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat's historic journey to Jerusalem in 1977 to initiate a peace process.

Dick Ryan's peers have recognized his accomplishments and dedication by appointing him to such positions as president of the National Press Club and president of the legendary Gridiron Club.

Mr. Speaker, please let it be known on this eighth day of February in 2006, that the U.S. House of Representatives acknowledges the contributions and achievements of Dick Ryan and wishes him well upon his retirement.

**A VOTE FOR MERCHANT MARINERS**

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, my bill, H.R. 23, the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act" will correct the injustice that has been inflicted on a group of World War II veterans, the World War II United States Merchant Marines.

Senator LARRY CRAIG has posted on his Web site his views of S. 1272, the Senate companion bill to H.R. 23. His views have been addressed by the co-chairs of the Just Compensation Committee of the U.S. Merchant Marine Combat Veterans. They have requested that the Senator's views and their letter be placed into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

What is Senator Craig's position on S. 1272?

Without question, the service provided by members of the U.S. Merchant Marine was invaluable to America's victory over the Axis powers during World War II. Merchant Mariners in oceangoing missions served alongside active components of the Armed Forces as they braved the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans to deliver vital supplies and manpower to the warfront. Undaunted by their difficult missions, Merchant Mariners suffered heavy casualties from enemy naval forces and land-to-sea artillery fire. To all members of the U.S. Merchant Marine who put themselves in harm's way, I say "thank you" for your service.

Civilian groups like the U.S. Merchant Marine have frequently performed the equivalent of military service throughout our nation's history. In recognition of that fact, Congress, through the enactment of Public Law 95-202 (established in 1977), a process by

which civilian groups could be recognized for their service and be classified as "veterans" for purposes of all benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Secretary of the Air Force was chosen to be the Executive Agent of the Defense Department in making decisions about granting that status. And the Air Force Secretary's decisions are informed by a review process conducted by the Civilian Military Service Review Board. Since 1977, 30 groups have been recognized as having attained veteran status. In 1988, members of the U.S. Merchant Marine who served between December 7, 1941 and August 15, 1945 were recognized.

The criteria for having civilian service equated with military service are necessarily stringent. That is as it should be; we should never water down what it means to be a veteran of the United States Armed Forces.

With that perspective in mind, I turn now to the merits of S. 1272. S. 1272, among other things, would entitle certain members of the U.S. Merchant Marine (or, if deceased, their surviving spouses) who served between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946, to a \$1,000 monthly payment. The \$1,000 monthly payment would be in addition to any other VA benefits. The following are the reasons why I do not support S. 1272:

(1) The cost of S. 1272 is considerable. Senate rules would require the Committee to identify offsets for the new entitlement spending. Assuming that just 3,000 Merchant Mariners and surviving spouses are alive today (the lowest estimate I have heard), the Committee would have to find \$36 million of offsets in the first year alone. And the Committee would be limited to finding those offsets within other veterans' benefits programs and services, a task that I and other Senators undertake only under extraordinary circumstances.

(2) The precedent set by enacting S. 1272 would likely result in additional spending. For example, the Congress would have very little justification to not extend the same \$1,000 monthly payment to the 29 other groups who have been recognized since 1977 as having attained veteran status. Furthermore, Congress has often granted benefits to veterans long after their service. For example, Congress did not establish presumptions of service-connection for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange until 20 years after the herbicide spraying had ceased. S. 1272 might create an expectation that retroactive payments for these, and other veterans is owed.

(3) While service in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II was extremely dangerous, there is little precedent for conferring a VA benefit (on top of all other benefits) on the basis of casualty rates, danger of duty, or acts of gallantry. Only Medal of Honor recipients receive such a payment. To use a similar justification to award Merchant Mariners a \$1,000 monthly payment would rightly lead to claims from others who served no less valiantly than they.

(4) As previously mentioned, members of the U.S. Merchant Marine who were in active oceangoing service between December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945 are already veterans, entitled to full veterans' benefits from VA. However, S. 1272 would confer a veterans' benefit on individuals who served (in addition to the dates above) between August 16, 1945 and December 31, 1946. In effect, the bill seeks to grant a veteran's benefit to individuals who are not veterans.

For all of these reasons, I cannot support S. 1272. I want to make clear however, that my opposition to S. 1272 does not mean that I do not share a profound respect for the service rendered to the country by members