

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honor and remembrance of Carl T. Brancatelli, whose kindness, energy and compassion for others will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him well, especially his family and friends. I extend my deepest condolences to his children, Robert, Wanda, James, Tina, Carl, and Tony; to his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and also to his extended family and friends. Mr. Brancatelli lived his life with great joy, energy and with a loving focus on his family and friends, and he will live on within their hearts and memories forever.

TRIBUTE TO FRED CUSIMANO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Fred Cusimano, a life long resident of Chautauqua County and a truly remarkable man.

COUNTY REMEMBERS FRED CUSIMANO

(By Manley J. Anderson)

Friends and associates of the late Fred J. Cusimano of 190 Linwood Ave., Jamestown, who died Monday morning in the WCA Hospital emergency room have expressed their thoughts about him.

"He was a man for all seasons," said Joseph Trusso Jr., longtime friend, fellow Democrat and veteran member of the Chautauqua County Legislature. "He worked on an oil rig, he owned a gas station, he was a tree farmer. We planted Christmas trees. I helped him plant some of those trees."

Cusimano had a lengthy career in the voting machine industry, first as sales manager of Voting Machine Service Inc. owned by the T.H. Huhn Agency. He also worked as sales representative for the former Automatic Voting Machine Company from 1960-1990, and in the later part of his career was named vice-president of Automatic Voting Machine. He had also worked for the Voting Machine Service Center in Gerry, until his retirement in 1992.

Voting machines weren't Cusimano's only foray into politics, however. Trusso said Cusimano was respected by both local Republicans and Democrats while being invited to President John F. Kennedy's 1960 inauguration.

"He worked for Automatic Voting Machine and became vice president," Trusso said. "He was a member of the Board of Supervisors when there were only about seven of them. He was par excellence about elections. He knew everything about election law and wrote most of the election laws in New York state. He was a strong Democrat who believed in the democratic way and he wished at times we could go back to it. Fred's predecessors were all Republicans. You can call him a man for all seasons. You can call him a Renaissance man. He advised the city's Democratic and Republican mayors. He worked very hard for the parks in the county. He had a trail named after him."

Trusso also noted Cusimano's dedication to the Bemus Point rest stop and Chautauqua Lake overlook even when he wasn't feeling well.

"You never see a Fred Cusimano come along very often," Trusso said. "He's a great loss to the city, the county and the state and especially to the Democrats. This man should and will be honored. He devoted a good part of his life to the parks of Chautauqua County. He also helped Allegany

State Park. He was a member of the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) that helped build it. He was in the Army before and after the draft and before and after the war (World War II) for about five years."

Trusso said that at their traditional breakfast meeting Tuesday he brought a toast to the little restaurant where the faithful gathered with an empty chair for Cusimano who was remembered by his surviving comrades.

Trusso concluded with, "I owe him a lot. I don't see anyone who can take his place. What a wonderful person."

He was influential in returning the City of Jamestown from a "non-partisan" to the "party" system for local elections. He was a past member of the Jamestown Area Chamber of Commerce and served on its Governmental Affairs Committee and its Greater Jamestown Industrial Development Committee. Cusimano was a past member of the city Planning Commission and served as chairman of the county Economic Development Commission. He also served several years on the Advisory Council to the state Legislature's Joint Legislative Committee on Election Law, and for many years served as a consultant and honorary member to the Election Commissioners Association of New York State.

"He was considered the father of the Chautauqua County Parks System," said Anthony M. Teresi, a longtime Cusimano friend and former county legislator. "He was very active with the parks until the end. The West Side Trail was named for him. He helped everyone who asked for help and it was good help. With me, he was a good and loyal friend who helped me a lot with some of the county issues when I was a legislator. When he believed in something he pursued it until it was done. I consider him the brother I never had. I miss him dearly."

John C. Cheney of Belleview, Bemus Point, a longtime member and former chairman of Chautauqua County Parks Commission, said of Cusimano, "He was with us for years. He was one of the founders of it. He's a real loss. We've named one of the trails after him. He had a lot to do with getting those trails organized and started."

Fred was a man who fully understood how to live to its fullest and that Mr. Speaker is why I rise to honor him today.

THE GRACE ALICE CAMPBELL FOUNDATION

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this week is Congenital Heart Defects, CHD, Awareness Week. Across America, over 1 million families face the challenges and hardships of raising children with congenital heart defects. Roughly 1 in 125 children are born with 1 of approximately 35 different congenital heart defects in the United States. Some of these are treatable with medications while others require surgeries or even transplants. Heart defects are the No. 1 birth defect in the United States, affecting 32,000 babies in the United States every year. They are also the leading cause of birth defect related deaths worldwide during the first year of life, and while genetics or environmental factors are assumed to be the cause for congenital heart defects, it will take more research to help uncover their cause.

The Grace Alice Campbell Foundation, founded by her parents Brenda and Chris Campbell of Mansfield, MA, which is in my district, has been established to raise public awareness of these birth defects, assist in the treatment of these children, and raise research funds to help doctors discover the cause of congenital heart defects and find a cure. Grace Alice was born on September 4, 2003, with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, and by the time she was 5 months old, she had already had two open-heart surgeries. Now as a toddler, Grace Alice's perseverance is a wonderful example of love and courage for others every day. The foundation, launched by her parents, serves as a support group for the families of those affected, encouraging these families to celebrate life, remember loved ones lost, and to honor dedicated health professionals.

I extend my congratulations and express my admiration to the Grace Alice Campbell Foundation for its hard work on behalf of those affected by congenital heart defects and their families. I also ask that, because of the resolve of the Campbell family as well as many others across the country, the article, "Heart Buddies," by Deborah Knight Snyder in the Norton Mirror, published on Friday, February 3, 2006, documenting the courage and struggle of these families, be printed here.

HEART BUDDIES

(By Deborah Knight Snyder)

One in every 100 babies is born with a heart defect.

February 7-14 is Congenital Heart Defects (CHD) Awareness Week, and a group of Massachusetts mothers agrees word needs to get out about the many children living with CHDs. For these mothers, that awareness is simply a way of life, because their children were born with heart defects.

"People know more about conditions like Down's Syndrome and spina bifida than they do about heart defects, when heart defects are actually the number one birth defect in the United States," said Lyn McPhail of Braintree during a recent support group meeting in Mansfield for mothers of children with CHDs.

Increased consciousness will hopefully lead to more help and, ultimately, to more funding, she said. There are approximately 35 different types of congenital—meaning present at birth—heart defects.

McPhail is the mother of 15-month-old Cameron, who was diagnosed with a CHD when he was just 1½ days old.

Cameron has had two heart valve operations already and still needs a valve replacement. The quandary, his mother explains, is what to do next. There is a small mechanical valve available for children who are at least 2 years old, but that valve will become too small as he grows and would ultimately require yet another operation. However, she said, there is clinical testing currently underway in Canada and Europe which could produce better options.

"You're just racing against time," she said.

McPhail is a member of Heart Buddies, a group of mothers and kids from all over the Boston area who get together every month at each other's homes to lend and provide support. The mothers initially met through literature from Children's Hospital and through Little Hearts, Inc., a Connecticut-based organization which lends support to families of kids with CHDs.

The children—who outwardly appear to be healthy, chubby babies and toddlers—play, while the mothers talk about their experiences.

The mothers—who sound like cardiologists to the untrained ear—discuss the children's progress and their setbacks, and about new medicines and treatments which could help their kids.

When the mothers are together, they share a special bond and code of understanding.

Parents of kids who are "heart healthy"—a term the mothers use to describe children without a CHD—just can't comprehend their daily lives.

"It's nice to be able to talk and not have to explain everything," said Brenda Campbell of Mansfield, whose daughter, Grace, now 29 months old, was born with a congenital heart defect.

"We can ask each other 'does she look blue to you?' That's our life now," Campbell said.

A bluish color could be an indicator that the child is not getting enough oxygen, and is a possible precursor to these parents' worst fear: that their child is going into congestive heart failure.

"That's certainly a daily worry," Lyn McPhail said.

Many of the mothers got their diagnoses while they were still pregnant, while others received the news—which they all called "devastating"—when their babies were just one or two days old.

Grace Campbell was born without a left ventricle in her heart. She had her first surgery when she was just six days old and her second surgery at 5½ months.

"They put in totally different plumbing to help her right ventricle do all the work," Brenda Campbell explained.

The Campbells have taken a proactive approach by organizing the Mansfield based "Grace's Run," which annually raises money for families with children with CHDs and for Children's Hospital.

Zachary Duong of Wilmington was born on the same day as Grace, and his mother, Sheila, met Brenda Campbell in the hospital. Zachary is now 2 years old. He was diagnosed with his CHD the day he was born and was rushed to Children's Hospital, where he spent the first three months of his life.

Megan Lea of Mansfield, now 18 months old, was born with a very rare set of CHDs. She has a condition known as Ebstein's anomaly, an abnormality in the tricuspid valve. She also has cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscle that can cause it to lose its pumping strength. With cardiomyopathy, doctors have told the Leas that about one-third of the kids get better, one-third stay the same, and one-third get worse, so Megan's parents have no choice but to wait that one out.

There is a possibility that she will need a heart transplant at some point. She will also probably need valve surgery for the Ebstein's anomaly. Right now doctors are trying to manage her conditions with medications, and she is currently on four different heart drugs. Megan was on oxygen for the first 10 months of her life but is now breathing well on her own.

"The progress they're making is unbelievable, but it's scary because we don't know what their future is," Ellie Lea said. "Her cardiologist said that Megan looks a lot better than expected. We just take it one day at a time."

"The mother's group is good, because we understand each other," she continued. "Friends who aren't 'heart moms' ask, 'So, is she all fixed?'"

"I hate it when people ask that!" exclaimed Delys Poynton of Braintree, the mother of 19-month-old Amy, who was born with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHP). Kids with HLHP undergo a total of three operations—known as the Norton procedure, after the doctor who discovered it—and then hope for the best. Like some of her

friends in Heart Buddies, Amy has undergone two of those three operations already.

"These little kids have already experienced things most people never have to experience in their whole lives," Delys Poynton said. "They get so used to seeing doctors, they get stranger fatigue" which affects the way they react to other people.

Ellie Lea recalled taking Megan to a hospital to visit a friend, and Megan "freaked out" as soon as she got into the hospital. Though just a baby, Megan understood exactly where she was, and she wasn't happy about it.

There's a name for the babies' reaction: "white coat syndrome." The children are so used to being poked and prodded by doctors that they develop an aversion to them.

Also, Delys Poynton said, many of the CHD kids develop eating problems.

"When you have tubes up your nose for so long, you don't want anything in your mouth," she said.

Liz Bogoyo of Chelmsford is the mother of 14-month-old twins: Allison, who is heart healthy, and Andrew, who was born with a CHD. Andrew was diagnosed when Liz was 17 weeks pregnant.

She recalled the trauma and exhaustion of having a brand new baby at home, Allison—"who we didn't even get a chance to know" because she and her husband were spending so much time at the hospital with Andrew.

Andrew has undergone two operations and will have to have one more. If that one goes well, he has an 85 percent chance of survival, his doctors have said.

Like the other families, the Bogyos said they take each day at a time and hope for the best.

Ruth Kennedy of North Reading found out when she was 19 weeks pregnant that her son, Ewan, now 2 years old, had a CHD. She received an initial diagnosis of just "heart defect" with no additional details and recalls "just sobbing" as she walked past the other women at Mass General who were waiting to get their ultrasounds. Ewan has had two operations with another one coming up.

"Long-term, they can't tell you what to expect. No one survived before. You just have to take it day by day and be happy with what you have," Ruth Kennedy said.

Because of the advances they've made in the last 20 years, there is no existing group of adults who would have had access to the medical care these babies are now receiving, the mothers said. Consequently, there is no real information available on what kind of future awaits these children. Their parents have been told by the children's doctors not to expect Olympic athletes, but to hope for a normal life. Still, no one knows for sure. The situation has given the mothers a different outlook on life.

"It's like a poem I heard about," Lyn McPhail said. The poem is all about planning for a trip to Italy, and anticipating being in Italy, but when you arrive at your destination, you're actually in Holland. You deal with being in Holland, she said, "but the dream you had of going to Italy is still very real."

"You just appreciate every little thing all the more. You're so grateful for the good things," said Ellie Lea. "It's a very humbling experience."

REV. HERBERT THOMPSON HONORED AS A GREAT LIVING CINCINNATIAN

HON. JEAN SCHMIDT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Right Reverend Herbert Thompson, Jr., a bishop, mentor, human rights advocate and community leader, who will be formally honored as a Great Living Cincinnati on February 16 by the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber has bestowed this award on distinguished members of the community annually since 1967. Recipients of this prestigious award are chosen on the basis of professional achievement; community service; leadership; compassion; and vision. Past honorees have included Neil Armstrong, Dr. Albert Sabin and Charles Scripps.

Rev. Thompson was born and raised in New York, where his character was shaped by the hard-working and diverse community of Harlem during the 1940s and 1950s. After serving in the United States Air Force from 1952–1956, he enrolled at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, where he graduated cum laude in 1962.

After a profound religious experience prompted him to serve, he enrolled at The General Theological Seminary, where he completed his seminary work and earned his master of divinity degree. He received his doctorate of ministry from The United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

Ordained into the priesthood in 1965, Rev. Thompson served various churches and communities in New York until 1988, when he was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Southern Ohio. In 1992, he was consecrated as the eighth Bishop of Southern Ohio, and the first African-American elected to serve the Diocese of Southern Ohio in this role. He was only the fourth African-American diocese bishop in the history of the Episcopal Church.

Although he has lived in Cincinnati only since 1988, Rev. Thompson has had an enormous and lasting impact on our community. For example, in 1993, he organized a comprehensive "Summit on Racism" to ease racial tensions within the city. He also helped to push forward the concept for the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Throughout his ministry, he has lived by these words: "To reconcile, to heal, to liberate, to serve." Rev. Thompson recently retired from the Diocese of Southern Ohio, but continues to be actively involved in the community.

Rev. Thompson has dedicated his time and energy to many organizations, including serving as chair of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief and co-founder of Global Episcopal Ministries. He has also served on the boards of St. Augustine College, Bexley Hall Seminary, General Theological Seminary, Kenyon College, Kanuga Conference Center, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Ballet, Cincinnati Opera and the Freedom Center. Among his many awards and honors include the Arts Consortium of Cincinnati's Martin Luther King Jr. Dreamkeeper award.

Rev. Thompson has three children and one grandchild.