

is "Brighter Hope, With a New Vision." Highly visible in the community as a civil rights advocate, she has a way of saying what must be said without offending those around her—she always has a smile and a kind word for all who pass her way.

Born in Kansas City, Kansas, Dr. Thomas received her Bachelor of Arts and a Masters Degree from the University of Kansas and her Ph.D from Columbia University. After retiring as an engineer at Pacific Bell-SBC, she began a pilot program geared to attracting at-risk high school students to the field of engineering.

For 28 years, Sandra served as a youth counselor at the Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church, where her husband, Reverend A.D. Thomas, is Pastor Emeritus. She is currently an instructor and consultant for young adults. A foster mom for over 2 decades, Sandra was named "Outstanding Mother of the Year" at Altadena Elementary School in 1977 and Pasadena High School's "Mother of the Year" in 1979.

Dr. Thomas, a Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), has been affiliated with the organization for 55 years, and serves simultaneously at all levels of the NAACP organization. She is currently an NAACP National Trainer, a Regional Officer, a California State Director and the President of the Altadena Branch of the NAACP, where she has been successful in implementing many positive changes in the Altadena-Pasadena community.

In addition to her NAACP activities, Sandra is an Altadena Town Council member, the founder and CEO of the "Quality of Life Community Center," Chairperson of the Pasadena/Altadena African-American Leaders Community Coalition, a member of the Pasadena Junior League, the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, Leadership Pasadena, the Pasadena Unified School District Non-Violence Team, and the Altadena Community Center Board of Directors.

Dr. Thomas and her husband, long-time Altadena residents, have 3 children, Michael, Vincent, Rosalyn and 6 grandchildren.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Dr. Sandra E. Thomas.

#### PERMITTING USE OF ROTUNDA FOR HOLOCAUST DAYS OF RE- MEMBRANCE CEREMONY

SPEECH OF

**HON. SCOTT GARRETT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 14, 2006*

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the efforts to allow the United States Capitol rotunda to be used for the annual ceremony commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

This period of genocide against the Jewish race remains one of the darkest stains on the history of humanity. It is vitally important that we take time each year to remember the victims of this horrific event. The people of the United States must never forget the tragic ac-

tions spurred by hatred, bigotry and extremism.

Having this ceremony at our Capitol rotunda is both important and symbolic. We are the beacon of democracy and freedom for the world and have been defenders of the oppressed throughout history. Our brave young men heroically crossed the Atlantic to fend off and defeat the Nazis who were bent on racial imperialism. It is fitting at this center of our Federal Government that we express our deepest gratitude to the veterans of World War II and pay our respects to all the innocent victims of the Holocaust we were not able to save.

My heart and prayers go out to all the victims of the Holocaust—those who did not survive, those who did and the families of all. Each went through an unimaginable experience, one that no one should ever have to undergo.

As both a Member of Congress and as a private citizen possessing a strong faith, I vow to always remember and respect those who suffered such a tragic fate and I support this body's efforts to do the same.

May we as a people never forget those who have suffered nor ever let such an occurrence happen again.

#### HONORING ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER SILVIO BERLUSCONI

**HON. HENRY J. HYDE**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2006*

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi on his recent speech before the joint session of the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate. I am proud to be joined in this effort by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

When terrorists hijacked airplanes, smashing them into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it was the worst disaster ever perpetrated on American soil. A large part of the world reached out in sympathy to our wounded nation. Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian Premier, called for a giant rally for the Italian people to express their grief and shed their tears for the families of the victims, and to show their compassion for a nation that had been gravely wounded. It was a heartfelt expression of the pain they felt for America by hundreds of thousands of Italians who crowded into Rome's Piazza del Popolo, the place of the people.

Berlusconi's call to action was so successfully answered by the Italian people, that certain political parties of the left called for a counter rally—an anti-American rally. These parties were two Communist parties, and a third party which had been the original Communist party but had changed its name to the Democratic Party of the Left. They paraded through the streets of Rome, a small phalanx holding red flags with the iconic Communist hammer and sickle and placards denouncing America for having entered Afghanistan in pursuit of Osama bin Laden and to destroy the Al Qaeda terrorists. They shouted anti-American slogans, said blood dripped from our hands and that we were assassins. They threw the American flag on the ground, trampled it,

poured gas on it, and set it afire. Nowhere in their speeches or placards was there mention of the American tragedy, nowhere mention of grief for the dead or compassion for the families. Italy is a democratic country where everyone is guaranteed the freedom of speech. They expressed their opinions, feelings, and anti-American bias.

When Silvio Berlusconi appeared, several weeks ago, before the joint session of the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate, which is a signal honor paid to a world leader, he was not invited by President Bush, as many Italian newspapers stated. He was invited by the House of Representatives and the Senate, led by DENNIS HASTERT, Speaker of the House, and Vice President CHENEY, as Presiding Officer of the Senate. The Constitution imposes a separation of powers between the legislature and the executive branch and we, the legislative branch of the U.S. Government, are proud of the independence this grants us. We invited him.

When the Italian Prime Minister stood before us and spoke, it was not to Democrats and Republicans but to all of the representatives of all of the districts of all of the states and for all of the American people. This legislative body represents the broad expanse of America and all of her people. And when we rose in a standing salute and gave thunderous applause to Prime Minister Berlusconi, it was the American people who were speaking. The American people who were exercising their right to the freedom of speech, a constitutional right in our country too. The American people gave their opinion. In standing in ovation to Berlusconi's impassioned words of friendship, we rejected the elements in Italy who had turned their back to our suffering, deploring their conduct and their opinions. We instead showed the warm feeling of affection in our hearts for the people of Italy.

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. BETH MARCUS

**HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2006*

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Beth Marcus, of Burbank, California. Each year in March, in recognition of Women's History Month, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation's women.

Dr. Marcus is a family physician in La Canada Flintridge, where she has practiced for over 10 years on the medical staffs of both Verdugo Hills Hospital and Glendale Adventist Medical Center. After completing her Family Medicine residency, she went on to complete a Fellowship in Adolescent Medicine, where she worked with adolescents struggling with poverty, family estrangement, drug abuse, homelessness and other issues.

Her patients cross the lifespan from infants to geriatric patients. Knowing that excellent medical care means going far beyond a diagnosis and a prescription, she has a remarkable capacity to bring compassion and empathy into the care she provides. She is an active advocate for patients, educating them and assisting them in obtaining social services and other sources of support to help them navigate the challenges of illness.

Beth is a member of the California Academy of Family Medicine, was the Secretary/Treasurer of the Los Angeles Chapter from 1995–2000 and a delegate to the house of delegates during those years. She is a member of the American Medical Women's Association and the Society of Adolescent Medicine. For several years she was a volunteer at the University of Southern California teaching a course titled Introduction to Clinical Medicine.

As Burbank Temple Emanu El's social action chair, Dr. Marcus has coordinated various campaigns for helping others in the Burbank, Glendale, North Hollywood area. She has arranged blood drives, collected shoes and clothing for impoverished children, gathered donations for tsunami victims and hurricane victims, filled backpacks with school supplies, assembled items for homeless women, and made sandwiches for the hungry. In addition, she volunteers in fundraising efforts for the Parent Teacher Association at Emerson Elementary School in Burbank, and is planning to implement a nutrition program at the school called Food is Elementary.

In addition to her professional and civic involvement, Beth is busy as a wife and mother, raising 2 twin boys, Adin and Jonah. She and her husband of 11 years, Dr. Jeff Ring, reside in Burbank.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in honoring an outstanding woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Dr. Beth Marcus.

#### TRIBUTE TO MAYOR BETTY FLORES

#### HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2006*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Betty Flores, an accomplished mayor from my hometown of Laredo, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, Mayor Flores was elected mayor of Laredo in 1998. Since then, she has worked tirelessly to bring Laredo into the 21st century with success and pride. Whether it be through economic development or the rich culture Laredo is known for, Mayor Flores has been there finding ways to advance the city's agenda.

Last year, Laredo received its highest financial rating in its 227-year history. This is the consequence of Laredo being one of the Nation's largest land ports, with 74 of the Fortune 100 companies and 52 countries conducting international trade via the Port of Laredo.

Mayor Flores has earned many awards including Laredo Times Laredoan of the Year and Texas Women of the Century from the Woman's Chamber of Commerce of Texas. This is Mayor Flores's last year in office, and she will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to honor a citizen like Mayor Betty Flores.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYWOMAN SANDRA LEE WIRTH

#### HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2006*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mark a very sad occasion: the passing of my former colleague in the New York State Assembly, Assemblywoman Sandra Lee Wirth.

Last Saturday, Sandra Lee lost her courageous battle with lung cancer. She undertook this fight—like all others she took on, and there were many—with the grace, poise and dignity that we all came to expect from her.

Born Sandra Lee Liberatore in West Seneca, Sandra Lee was a realtor by profession, and was President of the Greater Buffalo Association of Realtors in the early 1990s. At that time, during a county fiscal crisis, the Erie County Legislature instituted a county Real Estate Transfer Tax to fund the operation of mass transit services in Erie County. As one might imagine, Sandra Lee was appalled and swore to do something about it. She did.

Sandra Lee took on and defeated an entrenched incumbent in the Erie County Legislature. During Sandra Lee's 3 years in the County Legislature, she was a fighter for senior citizens and property taxpayers. She was also a great opponent of government waste: she refused various "perks" of the job and funded the operation of her legislative district office personally.

In 1994, the incumbent in the then-148th district seat of the New York State Assembly was retiring, and Sandra Lee jumped into the race with the same vigor that she took to the race for the County Legislature. In another heated and expensive campaign, Sandra Lee again defeated the same person she defeated for the County Legislature in this race for the Assembly.

It was in the Assembly that I got to know—and deeply respect—Sandra Lee Wirth. Although we came from different political parties and were of different generations, few people were as kind to me upon my election to the Assembly in 1998 as Sandra Lee was. We represented adjacent districts, and in addition to sharing a border, our respective communities shared many important characteristics and on local issues affecting our communities, Sandra Lee and I worked together very well.

In 2002, the legislative redistricting process was underway—and lo and behold—Sandra Lee Wirth and I were redistricted into the same Assembly district when her hometown of West Seneca was added to my Assembly district. In initial news reports, Sandra Lee was quoted as saying, "I'm running where I live, Period."

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad Sandra Lee changed her mind. Rather than contest an election against me, Sandra Lee instead chose to run in a newly created district east and south of West Seneca. She continued to serve in the Assembly until her death last week.

In 2004, Sandra Lee was forced to deal with another challenge—the illness and subsequent death of her husband Bill. When I saw Sandra Lee at Bill's wake, she spoke lovingly of "her Billy," and as she struggled through Bill's illness and her own, Sandra Lee's love of her family and her community never waned.

Every fight that Sandra Lee Wirth fought was waged with dignity and aplomb. Her commitment to public service was as strong as any I have ever witnessed. I am proud to have called her a colleague, but Mr. Speaker, I am prouder still to have called her my friend. May God ensure that she rests in peace.

#### A TRIBUTE TO BETTY WANG

#### HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 15, 2006*

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Betty Wang, of South Pasadena, California. Each year in March, in recognition of Women's History Month, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our Nation's women.

Betty Wang was born in China in 1947 and moved to Taiwan with her family in 1948. She came to the United States in 1969 in order to pursue higher education at the University of Illinois. Upon graduation she and her husband, Eddie Wang, worked in Chicago for a few years, and then moved to South Pasadena in 1978.

After working briefly for a major insurance brokerage firm handling risk management for corporate clients, Betty retired in 1978 to take care of her son, Timothy. This also marked the beginning of her career as a "professional volunteer."

Betty has been involved in various community activities over the years. She began by assisting teachers in the South Pasadena Unified School District classrooms; then became involved in the Marengo Elementary School Parent Teacher Association where she volunteered in sports activities such as soccer, baseball, basketball, swimming and water polo. She was also involved with the parent organizations at Polytechnic School and was a Den Mother for the Boy Scouts of America. In addition, Ms. Wang is a long-term member of Mandarin Baptist Church in Alhambra.

Ms. Wang has been active in the South Pasadena Chinese American Club for many years, as a board member since 1989 and President in 1992. Much of the South Pasadena Chinese American Club's efforts go toward helping the South Pasadena Unified School District. She served on the Board of the Friends of South Pasadena Public Library for the past 6 years and was the President during her last year. She has continued her volunteer service to the library by serving on the Community Facilities Task Force. Betty was involved in South Pasadena's City Streetscape Committee during the Gold Line Station construction. Her latest volunteer effort is to serve on the President's Council for the Chinese Garden at the Huntington Library, Art Collections & Botanical Gardens, where she is helping to raise funds for the construction of one of the most beautiful and unique botanical projects at the Huntington Library.