

TRIBUTE TO ADAM SUSSER

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention and that of Congress and the American people an inspirational story of a 5-year-old boy named Adam Susser; whose uplifting story is a true testament to the hope that stem cell research brings in the quest for the treatment and cure of numerous diseases, injuries, and birth defects from which hundreds of millions of people suffer worldwide.

Due to severe asphyxiation at birth, Adam Susser was diagnosed as being cortically blind with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. Despite recommendations that Adam be institutionalized, and despite the grim predictions that he would never gain the ability to see or walk; his parents, Gary and Judith, and his twin brother, Brandon, refused to give up hope. With the help of the Genetics Policy Institute, a leading non-profit agency dedicated to the establishment of a positive legal framework to advance the search for cutting-edge cures like stem cell research, Adam's family discovered the means to provide him with the medical care he desperately needed.

Now, after receiving multiple stem cell treatments, Adam has miraculously recovered partial sight; he has overcome his atrophy, gaining the ability to move and walk; he communicates verbally and even goes horseback riding. While I am encouraged by Adam's astonishing progress against significant odds, his story casts a disturbing light on the current barriers that Americans face when seeking such treatment. Stem cell research, including embryonic-based research—which studies stem cells with the unique capability of developing into any cell type—offers the greatest hope to those who suffer from a myriad of deadly and debilitating diseases, like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, heart disease and diabetes. An even more promising aspect of embryonic stem-cell therapy is that it does not require expensive anti-rejection drugs after transplantation.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration policy continues to hinder the use of embryonic stem cells by only allowing researchers access to a limited number of these cells, most of which are unusable due to contamination. This unconscionable policy stance takes us in the wrong direction, as the Administration and Congress should be doing everything in their power to facilitate the scientific and medical community's search for a cure to horrific diseases afflicting millions in America and globally. Adam Susser's story is a shining example of what can be achieved through the use of stem cell therapy, and I urge all my colleagues in Congress to join me in recognizing his courage as well as his family's refusal to give up hope.

STEVEN ROBERT SOLLEE

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, today I want to congratulate Steven Robert Sollee on his recent

offer of appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Steven sought a nomination to West Point through my office, competing with a group of highly qualified applicants. He passed the evaluation process, and I am proud to give him a Congressional nomination.

Steven is currently a senior at Kingwood High School in Kingwood, Texas. He has dreamed of becoming an officer in the United States Army. Steven possesses many qualities that will make him an excellent cadet at West Point and upon graduation, an excellent officer in the United States Army. He has always shown a dedication to public service as an Eagle Scout and a member of the Order of the Arrow, the Boy Scouts' Honor Society. Steven is a Christian with a deep faith in God that he demonstrates with his service to his church. He has a stellar academic background with 3.89 GPA and a class rank of 54 out of 980. He won the K-Award in Chemistry at Kingwood High School, which recognizes the best student of the class. Steven has achieved all these honors while participating in a demanding schedule of extracurricular activities, including varsity tennis, the high school band, the language club, the National Honor Society and the National French Honor Society.

The interview by my Service Academy Nomination Board was the real clincher for Steven. Nothing can replace a personal encounter to establish credibility and character. His interviewers said that Steven was a first class candidate, well qualified and highly motivated to attend West Point. They were impressed by his professed dream and knew Steven understood the gravity of the commitment to the Academy. They recommended him for a nomination without hesitation.

I believe that Steven is a fine Texan who will serve his country with distinction and I wish him good fortune in this new chapter of his life.

TRIBUTE TO MAX FALKENSTIEN

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Max Falkenstein, the "Voice of the Kansas Jayhawks", who will be retiring at the conclusion of the 2005-2006 men's basketball season at the University of Kansas.

The conclusion of the current season will mark Max Falkenstein's 60th season of broadcasting Kansas University sporting events. At age 81, he has been inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, the College Football Hall of Fame, the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame, and the KU Athletic Hall of Fame. He was the first inductee of the Lawrence High School Hall of Honor. Additionally, he has been awarded an honorary "K" by the Kansas Lettermen's Club. The Sporting News in 2001 named Falkenstein "the best college radio personality in the country" and ESPN's Dick Vitale included KU's Bob Davis and Falkenstein in his "Sweet 16" of the best announcer teams in the United States.

A true legend, Max Falkenstein has been synonymous with KU athletics for six decades. As KU basketball coach Bill Self recently said in the Lawrence Journal-World, "Max has per-

formed at the highest level over an extended period of time like very few in his profession." Falkenstein broadcast his first basketball game—an NCAA tournament game in Kansas City between KU and Oklahoma A&M—on March 18, 1946. His next broadcast was KU versus TCU in football on September 21, 1946. He was play-by-play voice of the Jayhawks for 39 years and then switched to a commentator's role in September 1984 when Bob Davis assumed play-by-play duties. Falkenstein provided play-by-play for the Big Eight Conference basketball game of the week between 1968 and 1971, and for more than three decades hosted football and basketball coaches' TV programs, including those for Don Fambrough, Pepper Rogers, Mike Gottfried, Ted Owens, Larry Brown and Roy Williams.

Mr. Speaker, I include with this statement a recent article from the Lawrence Journal-World summarizing Max Falkenstein's outstanding career and I join with all KU fans in wishing him well in his long overdue, richly deserved retirement as "Voice of the Kansas Jayhawks."

[From the Lawrence Journal-World, Jan. 7, 2006]

TO THE MAX

(By Dave Ranney)

A few seconds after he'd worked his way past security and into the Jayhawks' dressing room, veteran broadcaster Max Falkenstein fielded a warm, friendly—but unexpected—greeting. "Hey, Max, how're you doing?" It was Michael Lee, a popular reserve guard from last year's basketball team who had recently signed with the Harlem Globetrotters. Falkenstein smiled as they shook hands. There wasn't time to chat. A crowd of well-wishers had gathered around Lee and Kansas University had just trounced the Yale Bulldogs, 87-46, so Falkenstein needed to get ready for his postgame interview with coach Bill Self.

Quickly, Lee explained he was in town for a checkup for an irregular heartbeat. He wanted Falkenstein to know because the "Voice of the Jayhawks" cares. Despite their generational differences, Falkenstein, 81, and Lee, 22, are friends. "Max is cool," Lee said afterward. "As soon as you get here people start telling you, 'That's Max Falkenstein. He's been here forever.' So even before you meet him, you respect him. And then when you meet him, he's always nice. He always says hello. It's like you can't go wrong with him."

Lee isn't alone. Falkenstein, it seems, has more friends than Kansas has sunflowers. Some, like Wilt Chamberlain or coach Phog Allen, have been famous. Most are not. "I was with Max at the (KU vs.) K-State football game this year," said Jim Marchiony, KU associate athletics director. "It took us 20 minutes to get from the parking lot to the press box because so many people stopped to talk to him—and these were K-State fans! 'Whenever you're on the road with Max, it's like you're with the mayor of whatever city you're in,' he said. 'It's amazing.'"

Late last summer, Falkenstein announced he would retire after the 2005-06 men's basketball season. Sixty years behind a microphone, he said, was enough. "I'll miss it terribly," Falkenstein told the Journal-World. "But I think this is a good place to stop. I don't want to overstay my welcome." Though he underwent emergency intestinal surgery Sept. 7, Falkenstein said he was in good health.

"My surgery was completely unexpected and had no relationship to my decision to retire," he said. "As far as I know, I'm in good

shape. Of course, something could happen tomorrow. You never know." Falkenstien's exit will mark the end of an era.

"I can remember my father listening to Max on a battery-powered radio out on the farm," said Dr. Earl Merkel, a 73-year-old KU Medical School alumnus from Russell. "In Kansas, everybody identifies with him," Merkel said. "They may not have met him, but they know his voice. They feel like they know him." "Max is an institution," said John Clarke, a 1979 KU graduate who lives in Hays. "He is synonymous with the Jayhawks. When you hear him, you think of KU."

Falkenstien and his play-by-play partner, Bob Davis, have a one-of-a-kind relationship. "I don't think we've ever argued or had a disagreement," Falkenstien said. "We've had a lot of laughs in 22 years," Davis said. Both are native Kansans. Falkenstien grew up in Lawrence, Davis in Hays. Neither is young. Davis is 61.

"When you stand the test of time like they have for 22 years, you must be doing something right," said Tom Hedrick, a veteran broadcaster who competed with Falkenstien from the late 1940s into the early 1960s. "It'll be difficult for anyone else to do what Bob and Max have done because people move around so much now," said Hedrick, who's semiretired and lives in Lawrence. Falkenstien and Davis have stayed put. Both have other jobs. Davis is play-by-play announcer for the Kansas City Royals. Falkenstien was senior vice president of marketing for Douglas County Bank for 25 years. He remains an occasional consultant. "I've led a charmed life, I know," Falkenstien said.

While a senior at Liberty Memorial High School (now Central Junior High School, 1400 Mass.) Falkenstien heard that local radio station WREN had a job opening. He'd been told he had a good voice for radio, so he applied. "Arden Booth, who a lot of people will remember, had been called into the service," Falkenstien said. "I got the job, but it had nothing to do with sportscasting. I was just a staff announcer."

Falkenstien graduated from LMHS in 1942, six months after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. After a semester at KU, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in hopes of becoming a meteorologist. "I put in 35 months, but I never went overseas," he said. Falkenstien returned to Lawrence. He'd been in town about a week when his former boss at WREN asked him to broadcast a basketball game in Kansas City that pitted KU against Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) in the NCAA district finals.

The fact he'd never done play-by-play didn't matter.

"Back then, it wasn't like it is now. People didn't expect to hear a game on the radio. They'd read about it in the newspaper," he said. "What we were doing was new." Falkenstien stayed at WREN until 1967, when he had a falling out with the station's owner, former Kansas Gov. Alf Landon. The Big Eight Conference wanted him to be the play-by-play announcer for its televised "Game of the Week." "Back then," Falkenstien said, "there was only one game a week that was televised. So this was a big deal for me."

But Landon refused to let his station manager, Falkenstien, appear on television. "I kept saying it would make me more sellable—that would be good for business," Falkenstien said. "But he just didn't get the concept." Falkenstien jumped to WIBW-TV, where he continued to broadcast KU football and basketball games.

In 1984, KU decided to put the broadcast rights to its basketball and football games up for bid. Before then, Falkenstien and

Hedrick broadcast the games for different stations. Learfield Communications, a company based in Jefferson City, Mo., won the bid in 1985. It brought in Davis, who had been broadcasting Fort Hays State University games for 16 years. Falkenstien was offered the sidekick role. "I had a lot of misgivings at first," Falkenstien said. But Davis welcomed the chance to work with Falkenstien.

"I know this sounds a little corny, but when I was growing up my heroes were sportscasters, and Max was one of the first ones out there," Davis said. "He was a pioneer."

Together, Davis and Falkenstien have mastered a low-key, fishing-buddy delivery that's unpretentious, never overbearing.

"Bob and I try to keep things in perspective," Falkenstien said. "Games are supposed to be fun. They're not the end of the world." He added: "It's like Dr. (Phog) Allen used to tell his players. He'd say, 'Remember, guys, there are 300 million Chinese out there who don't even know who we are.'" Falkenstien said he and Davis keep the game simple, their delivery conversational. "Too many color commentators are too analytical," Falkenstien said. "They lose the average fan."

Neither Davis nor Falkenstien pretend to be experts. "I remember one time, I had to ask Roy Williams what a 'secondary break' was, so I'd look smart," Falkenstien said, laughing. In the game programs, Falkenstien used to be listed as color analyst. "I had them drop the 'analyst,'" he said. "I'm just 'color.'"

The broadcasts are not as laid-back as they appear. Davis scrambles to keep track of fouls and points while Falkenstien plucks statistics from a nearby monitor, lifts tidbits from the day's sports pages and pulls trivia from packets provided by the teams' athletic departments—all while the game is going on, all without missing a beat.

Contrary to popular opinion, their press-row seats across from the KU bench are not the best in Allen Fieldhouse. They cannot see the scoreboard without leaning back and looking straight up. They are so cramped they cannot stand or cross their legs. Many times, a referee blocks their view. During the Yale game, Davis barked "there's a turnover" without mentioning who had stolen the ball from whom. That's because he couldn't see the play; referee Steve Welmer was standing in front of him, less than an arm's length away.

After the game, Falkenstien is the first—and only—member of the media allowed to meet with Self in the coaches' dressing room.

When they finish, Self leaves for a meeting with the press corps at-large. He uses a back door. Falkenstien leaves through the front door, where hopeful fans wait for autographs. He is an easy target. "Max! Max! Over here!" said Genie Gnagi, standing behind her 6-year-old daughter, Michaela, with a miniature plastic basketball. "May we have your autograph, please?"

Without hesitation, a smiling Falkenstien complies. "He is a true KU legend," Gnagi said. "He will be missed."

TRIBUTE TO FRANCISCO (PACO) ROVIRA-CALIMANO

HON. LUIS FORTUÑO

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Mr. FORTUÑO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual, Mr.

Francisco Rovira-Calimano, whose life work serves as an example to us all. He is a hard-working gentleman, an honest citizen, and a true humanitarian dedicated to the betterment of humanity. Today, Mr. Rovira-Calimano celebrates his 95th birthday—and this is a cause for great celebration.

Paco, as everyone knows him in his beloved town of Guayama, Puerto Rico, was born on February 1, 1911, to Amalia Calimano-Diaz and Jose Rovira-Tomas, his hard-working parents, an exemplary couple in that lovely town by the Guamani River. As the eldest child, Paco soon learned the value of sharing, supporting others, fairness, and hard work principles—values which he has sustained throughout his long and fruitful life. He was an exceptional son, who for 20 years took care of all his mother's needs after his father passed away. He is a man of few words but strong actions and convictions.

While growing up, he attended the Guayama public schools system during his elementary school years, then St. Augustine Academy in San Juan and completed high school at Peekskill Military Academy in New York State. He attended college at Louisiana State University and graduated from The New York State Institute of Agriculture in 1934. Since childhood, he had worked at the family dairy farm "La Cuadra", doing extensive manual labor, and upon graduation he returned to work there. Later, he also acquired "La Tuna", a farm which he skillfully managed raising sugar cane, plantains, cattle and tending to his beloved Paso Fino horses.

Over the years, Paco was involved in many civic endeavors. He joined and became an active member of the Farmers Association of Puerto Rico. Additionally, he was an active member of the Regulatory Board of the Milk Producing Industry, of which he is still an honorary member. He has also been a member of the Guayama Rotary Club for over 40 years and served as its president in 1957. He was a member and an active board member of the "Asociación de Dueños de Caballos de Paso Fino de Puerto Rico", (Paso Fino Horse Owner Association). For many years he collaborated with the "Asociación Agropecuaria" (Agriculture and Livestock Association) from Mayaguez, and was a board member for two years. His main goal was to bring together people from all walks of life sharing a common interest.

Paco's life spans through WWI, the Great Depression, WWII, the Korean war, the Vietnam conflict, and the two gulf wars in Iraq. He has seen 17 Presidents enter the White House and even though he is an American citizen residing in Puerto Rico, he unfortunately cannot vote for the President because of where he lives. However, he has always wanted to see Puerto Rico become an integral part of our powerful nation.

Mr. Speaker, at 95 years of age, Paco continues to work hard every day. He is currently the President of the Campoamor Corporation, and the Santa Elena Development Company. This exceptional human being is married to Elsa Sabater-Recio. They recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. He is the loving father of 5, the doting grandfather of 14, beloved great-grandfather of 11, and father figure of many, many more.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Francisco Rovira-Calimano on his 95th birthday and to thank him for sharing his wonderful life, his heart, his time, and his energy