

TRIBUTE TO MR. LEON WEST

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great honor and gratitude that I stand before you today to recognize the many accomplishments of Mr. Leon West. I can truly say that Leon is one of northwest Indiana's most dedicated, distinguished, and honorable citizens. I have known Leon for many years, and he is one of the most passionate and involved citizens that I have ever known, especially when it comes to his service to the Democratic Party and the people of the First Congressional District. For the past 14 years, Leon has been a constant fixture in Porter County, serving as chairman for the Porter County Democratic Party, and more recently, as First District chairman. At the age of 72, Leon has decided to retire from these posts to spend more time with his family, but his efforts over the course of his tenure and the impact he has had on transforming the government in Porter County will forever be remembered. To honor Leon, a farewell reception will be held at the Woodland Park Community Center in Portage, Indiana, on Monday, August 6, 2007.

Leon West was born in Osceola, Arkansas, on September 17, 1934. He was one of six children. Known for his passion and unwavering devotion to the betterment of his community, it is no surprise to learn that Leon, as a young man, served in the U.S. Army from 1957 to 1959 and again from 1961 to 1962. While serving his community in various capacities throughout his lifetime, Leon came to be known for his strong work ethic, a trait he undoubtedly developed during his 42 year career at United States Steel.

Early on, Leon knew that the best way to improve his community and to help the people of Porter County was to get involved in public service. In each of his roles, Leon focused on the same goal, to make a difference in society, starting with his own community. Some highlights of Leon's career include his service on the Portage Board of Zoning Appeals, his 18 years on the Portage City Council, and his service on the Porter County Council. In addition, Leon further demonstrated his commitment to the people of northwest Indiana through his membership with the Portage Jaycees, the Exchange Club, Dunes Lodge #741, and the Shriners, to name a few. It was through his work with the Jaycees that Portage, Indiana, received its status as a city in 1968. He has also served on various councils and boards. From issues ranging from taxes and transportation to caring for the elderly, Leon West has always been an active participant in seeking to improve his community in every way possible. For his efforts, he was awarded the prestigious Sagamore of the Wabash in 1997 by the late Governor Frank O'Bannon.

While his everyday presence will be missed in northwest Indiana, Leon will now have a chance to fully commit his time to those closest to him, his family. A loving husband, father, and grandfather, Leon's commitment to his community is surpassed only by his love for his family. Leon and his loving wife, Beverly, will soon be moving to Texas, and they plan to spend as much time as possible with

their three children: Kathy, Kerri, and Ken, and their adoring grandchildren: Blake, Paige, Andrew, Claire, Duncan, and Lou.

Madam Speaker, Leon West has selflessly given his time and efforts to the people of the First Congressional District and to the Democratic Party in northwest Indiana throughout his years of service. At this time, I ask that you and all of my distinguished colleagues join me in commending him for his lifetime of service and dedication, and I ask that you join me in wishing him the best of health and happiness in the years to come.

IN HONOR OF THE 2007 SUSSEX
COUNTY SENIOR OF THE YEAR,
MARIA RATH

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend Maria Rath of Hainesville for her kind and generous service to her community. In her retirement, Maria has turned her tremendous energy and heart into a true blessing for all of Sussex County. Next week, her good deeds will be recognized at the State Fair when she is named the 2007 Sussex County Senior of the Year. I join my Sussex neighbors in honoring her for her work.

Maria has established the Bread of Life's Ministry, a one-woman show distributing donated baked goods to area food pantries and families in need. She has partnered with places like Panera Bread, Manna House, and Sussex County Technical School to take their donations of leftover bread, repackaging it, and distribute it to institutions like Liberty Towers and Nutrition Center, Brookside Apartments, the Newton Adult Day Care Center, First Presbyterian Church of Sparta, and, my own church, Lafayette Federated Church. In addition to her regular rounds, Maria will take whatever extra time or effort is necessary to help a family she hears may need her loving touch.

In addition to this important project, Maria and her husband, Wilbur, started a furniture ministry six years ago. Through that endeavor, they bring household furniture to families in need. Maria also cooks at the Manna House once a month and volunteers at the Newton Hospital labs. Her labors are truly labors of love, bringing joy and hope to people as well as the material goods they need so badly.

Maria notes, "I'm 77, but I feel like 49." Age is no match for a young and vibrant spirit and heart. Maria is an extraordinary example for men and women of all ages, demonstrating the power of a single life to influence so many lives in a very positive way.

CARIBBEAN STATES MAKE AS-
SESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF
POVERTY ON DEVELOPMENT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD an opinion editorial

published in the CaribNews newspaper the week ending July 31, 2007 titled "St. Vincent & the Grenadines: Launches Poverty Assessment Survey" and an article entitled "Poverty Picture in the Caribbean: Barbados to Undertake Assessment." Both examine the initiatives these countries have taken to address poverty.

As CARICOM nations look to move to a single market economy, they should be encouraged to take a proactive approach to assess poverty in their individual nations. Poverty assessments serve as the key instrument of poverty reduction strategy. They are designed to assess the extent and causes of poverty in a given country and to propose a strategy to ameliorate its effects. Understanding the causes and characteristics of poverty in the Caribbean is particularly important at this time as there are indications that living conditions in some countries have declined in recent years.

The data gathered from these assessments will be used to evaluate the quality of life and living conditions being experienced at the community, family and individual levels, with particular interest and emphasis placed on vulnerable groups like women, and children.

The increases in competition stemming from global economic changes in trade and capital markets, the erosion of preferential market access, the vulnerability of the tourist industry and competition from other destinations, and decline in official capital flows from bilateral sources all present a particularly difficult challenge for the Caribbean. Given this environment, there is an urgent need for countries to pursue policies that will stimulate and sustain economic growth and prioritize investments aimed at reducing poverty and developing human resources. So I commend the leadership of the governments of Barbados and St. Vincent & the Grenadines for the steps they are taking to assess poverty in their countries.

[From CaribNews, July 17, 2007]

ST. VINCENT LAUNCHES POVERTY ASSESSMENT
SURVEY

KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT, CMC—St. Vincent and the Grenadines has launched an EC\$2 million-dollar (US \$749,000) poverty assessment programme that Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves said would be welcomed regardless of the outcome.

"Only on the foundation of truth we can build efficacious policies," Gonsalves said as he addressed the launching of the project on Tuesday. The poverty assessment project will seek to create a profile of poverty on the island and is being funded by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme.

The last poverty assessment survey was undertaken in 1996 and it found that 37.5 per cent of the population was poor, while 20.4 per cent of the households and 25.7 per cent of the population was indigent, or living below the poverty line.

Gonsalves, who said that poverty reduction is one of the central pillars of his government's programme, said he was prepared to accept the results of the new survey.

He noted that in the event that the assessment showed there had not been a significant enough reduction in poverty, more would have to be done in addition to what is already in place.

"History is replete with failed leaders who want to hear what they want to, they don't last long," he said, blaming the then New Democratic Party (NDP) government of not properly preparing the nation for the quickly changing economy.

He said they were too concerned with keeping spending down, maintaining a surplus on the current account and other things that amounted to simply keeping their heads above water.

The Prime Minister suggested that more concrete policies needed to be enacted to deal with the crippling challenges that globalisation and trade liberalisation was going present to the region.

"There was no preparation on the most critical resource before us, people, to address the changing nature of the colonial political economy," Gonsalves said.

The poverty assessment will be conducted by the Trinidad and Tobago based firm KAIRI Consultants Limited, the same group that did the 1996 assessment.

[From *CaribNews*, July 23, 2007]

POVERTY PICTURE IN THE CARIBBEAN, BARBADOS TO UNDERTAKE ASSESSMENT SOON TO FIND OUT HOW MANY LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE, ASSESSMENT TO BEGIN IN AUGUST

(By Tony Best)

With poverty levels running the gamut from about nine per cent in the Bahamas and 18 per cent in Jamaica to 21 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago and almost 60 per cent in Haiti, according to the United Nations, Caribbean governments are extremely sensitive to figures which indicate that poverty was either on the rise or was far too high. That explains why the Arthur Administration in Barbados is gearing up to undertake a comprehensive national poverty assessment, beginning possibly in about a month's time and using a broadened definition of poverty.

Trevor Prescod, Minister of Social Transformation, told the *CaribNews* that it was important for the government to have a firm idea about the full extent of poverty so that it could target more of its programmes, projects and resources to the task of meeting the needs of people living in dire circumstances.

"We haven't had any recent scientific analysis of it (poverty) and we are now into, probably within a month or so, we are going to have a wide assessment of poverty," the Minister said in New York after he signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Disabled, the first human rights treaty of the 21st century.

"We are now putting together the kinds of operational management structures to ensure that that assessment is carried out in a very scientific manner," he explained. "We have just established a planning unit within the Ministry of Social Transformation. We are working with the Statistical Department, the Caribbean Development Bank and we are going to have other agencies coming in as well." For instance, the University of the West Indies may be invited to carry out the actual research for the country's human development report, according to Prescod.

"When we get that report we would be in a better position to tell you if there has been any fundamental changes, if we have been able to reduce the numbers" of people living in poverty," he said. The Inter-American Development Bank carried out the last assessment of poverty in Barbados a decade ago and it showed that about 35,000 persons or an estimated 13-14 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. "Enough time has elapsed that we need to have a new report to see if we have made any dent into that 35,000 that we talk about," Prescod added. "But it all depends on what you use as a measurement for poverty. The IDB dealt with an income consumption analysis and what the Ministry is doing, we now have a broader definition of poverty."

Specifically, it would focus on "social deprivation," taking into account access to

health care, education and other essential services rather than simply zeroing on income and consumption, he pointed out.

However, the approach the government plans to adopt would make it difficult to compare the IDB's rate with any new findings, because the latter would touch on the lives of a broader cross-section of the Barbadian population. That raises the distinct possibility that the actual number of poor people could be higher than in the late 1990s.

"It is going to be very difficult if we now have the new definition to compare it with what occurred with the IDB's assessment," the Minister said.

While he acknowledged that any assessment which showed a rise in poverty could become a political controversy, with the Opposition Democratic Labor Party leading the charge against his Ministry, Prescod said that it was clear that the Arthur Administration had attacked the problem of poverty by eliminating many of the debilitating conditions under which some Bajans had to live. "If we do an assessment we would discover there has been a change, especially in the provision of housing, many of the persons identified the last time around have since been empowered, were retooled by giving skills to those persons who previously had no skills," he argued.

"You would discover that both the Urban Development Corporation and the Rural Development Corporation have replaced the dilapidated houses. On the basis of observation alone, without having the kind of empirical figure to show, there is obvious evidence of an improvement. I think that is what worries the opposition more than anything else.

"We have done a lot of work, especially in the urban and rural communities across Barbados," he said. "We had lots of people living in horrible conditions and we have been able to make substantial changes in the lives of those persons. No one can realistically question the quality of life and the way it has improved in Barbados over the last 10 years or so. We have done exceedingly well."

WANDA A. BROWN: MISSOURI PRESS HALL OF FAME

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, on September 7th, the Missouri Press Association's Missouri Press Hall of Fame will have as its newest member a person who has devoted her life to community journalism, community philanthropy and community service, all while raising a family of public servants and serving as a business and civic partner with her late husband.

Wanda Brown was born June 16, 1918, in Franklin County, AR. She attended Draughon's Business College in Ft. Smith, AR, from 1936-1938. After graduation, she was business manager for Robbins Buick Motor Company in Ft. Smith. She met her husband, J.W. Brown, Jr., when he came into the dealership to buy tires. They were married June 14, 1946. From 1946 until 1955, they made their home in Willow Springs, MO, where J.W. owned the newspaper and also served as Postmaster. In 1955, they purchased the Harrisonville Democrat-Missourian and formed the Cass County Publishing Company. Under the ownership of J.W. and Wanda Brown, Cass County Publishing Company operated

the Cass County Democrat-Missourian, the Lee's Summit Journal, the Belton Star Herald, the Bates County Democrat and the Lawrence County Record.

Two generations of Cass County residents have known Wanda Brown as the author of a column in the Democrat-Missourian, "Wanda's Favorite Recipes," and have prepared many of them for their families. Few probably are aware that the proceeds from two of her recipe books were given to support The Way Off Broadway Players and the Cass Medical Center Foundation.

With her retirement in 1985, after 30 years as Business Manager of the Cass County Publishing Company, she accelerated her contributions to her community and to the State of Missouri. Wanda Brown has been a generous supporter of the Missouri Press Foundation, the Harrisonville Memorial Hospital, and the Harrisonville Public School Foundation. In her hometown of Harrisonville, she has contributed to the construction of the Harrisonville Baseball Fields, to the Harrisonville High School Bleacher Project, the Children's Library at the Cass County Information Center, and to the creation of a nursing scholarship at the Cass Medical Center. She was a leader in the campaigns to fund the Thermal Imaging Camera for the Harrisonville Fire Department, the construction of the Harrisonville Parks Amphitheater, and the creation of the Harrisonville Public School Foundation Endowment. She also helped to fund the Community Journalism Chair at the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

I would like to extend my most sincere congratulations to Wanda and her family—Larry and Jean Snider, Bill and Mary James, Alex, Doug, Kate, Anne, and Molly. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in commending Wanda for her decades of community service.

PROMOTING TALK RADIO

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, this Sunday will mark the 20th anniversary of the day the Federal Communications Commission voted unanimously to abolish the "Fairness Doctrine."

Under President Ronald Reagan's leadership, the "Fairness Doctrine" was removed from our airwaves because it undermined freedom of speech. Reagan was a man who realized that Washington should not tell the press what to write and say. His vision led to the development of the people's forum of talk radio.

In the wake of this decision, talk radio has grown from fewer than a hundred shows to several thousand. Today, radio commentators like Keven Cohen in Columbia, South Carolina, and Bill Edwards in Savannah, Georgia, play a vital role in bringing intelligent and thoughtful perspective to the many issues facing America.

The "Fairness Doctrine" is a relic of a bygone era. Let's keep it a part of our past and not of our future.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11th.