

the first Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire in 1804. On this day over 200 years ago, Serbians began the arduous effort to gain independence after nearly 300 years of Ottoman rule.

Finally, this year marks 125 years of diplomatic relations between the United States and Serbia. A strong democratic Serbia is crucial to the future of the former Yugoslav republics, the Balkans, and the rest of eastern Europe. Strong ties with the United States are necessary as Serbia looks to encourage international investment, expand its economy and move forward into the future.

Madam Speaker, please join me, Serbian-Americans and the citizens of Serbia in remembering such an important date in their history.

**SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MR. SIDNEY SHELDON**

**HON. MARY BONO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 16, 2007*

Mrs. BONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay special tribute to a great American playwright, television visionary and literary artist whose stories and characters have entertained and impacted the lives of generations of Americans, Mr. Sidney Sheldon.

For more than 20 years Sidney Sheldon was a prominent and respected force in television who created such popular programs as *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965–70), *Hart to Hart* (1979–84), and *The Patty Duke Show* (1965–70). These sitcoms helped propel the careers of some of our most beloved actors on stage and screen including Barbara Eden, Larry Hagman, Stephanie Powers, Robert Wagner, and Patty Duke.

As a legendary writer, Sidney Sheldon won numerous awards that spanned three careers—a Broadway playwright, a Hollywood TV and movie screenwriter, and a bestselling novelist.

At the age of 50, Sidney Sheldon focused on creating best-selling novels that included *Master of the Game* (1982), *The Other Side of Midnight* (1973) and *Rage of Angels* (1980). Although those were his most famous literary works, Sidney Sheldon also published a total of 18 novels.

When expressing his passion for composing novels, Sidney Sheldon stated, “I love writing books. Movies are a collaborative medium, and everyone is second-guessing you. When you do a novel you’re on your own. It’s a freedom that doesn’t exist in any other medium.”

Sidney Sheldon was a proud American Veteran, who upon his return from service during World War II, focused his attention on writing plays for Broadway. In recognizing Sheldon’s unquestionable talent as a playwright, Sidney Sheldon won a Tony award for his work on the play *Redhead* in 1959.

Over the decades, Sheldon accrued numerous awards and recognition for his commitment to television, film, and stage, including winning an Academy Award for Writing Original Screenplay (1947) for *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer*; and an Emmy Award for his work on *I Dream of Jeannie*, which aired on NBC.

Although Sidney Sheldon was born in Chicago, Illinois, he remained a life-long resident of the Coachella Valley. I was deeply fortunate to call the legendary Sidney Sheldon a friend.

I extend my deepest sympathy to the entire Sheldon family for their loss; a loss we all share. The passionate works of Sidney Sheldon that defined a generation will continue to live in the hearts of countless future generations of Americans. We celebrate his memory and our Nation is better for his service.

**EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA**

**SPEECH OF**

**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 14, 2007*

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, this week our country lost a fine American with the death of Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD. Congressmen NORWOOD was a tireless advocate for his district and the State of Georgia and an icon in the field of health care. His dogged determination to improve life for the average family and improving health care in this country for the patient that confronted overwhelming bureaucracy, increasing costs, and diminishing access was a hallmark of this great man’s career of public service.

Before I was elected to Congress and during one trip to Washington I met with my Chamber of Commerce as a private physician, I was asked which Member of Congress I would most like to meet. I responded that I would most like to meet with CHARLIE NORWOOD. To my surprise, they were able to set up a meeting for me with Congressman Norwood. Now at the time, I was a constituent of Majority Leader Dick Armey who represented the 26th District before he retired and I succeeded him here in the House of Representatives. At that time, the Majority Leader was basically playing traffic cop to one of CHARLIE’s many bold health care initiatives. Unfortunately, when Congressman NORWOOD figured out I wasn’t visiting him as an emissary of Congressman Armey he listened to my gushing praise and then quickly exited the meeting graciously. It was 6 years later that I would have the chance to meet again with Congressman NORWOOD, this time as a freshman member of the U.S. House of Representatives. The first question he asked me then was, “are you with me or against me,” then referring to his long battle for the Patient’s Bill of Rights.

Well, I’ve been with CHARLIE ever since. During my early tenure in office, he was a gracious mentor and even more so when I joined him as member of the Energy and Commerce Committee during the 109th Congress. CHARLIE’s strong defense of medical providers and patients, his tough stances on border security and national security, defined a man dedicated to his country. Even during his failing health, Congressman NORWOOD was as persistent as he ever was.

My thoughts and prayers are with Gloria and his family. America lost a great man. I lost a friend and a mentor. CHARLIE, we won’t forget you.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO RAY LEE HUNT**

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 16, 2007*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the life of humanitarian Ray Lee Hunt in honor of his 2007 Linz Award. Mr. Hunt is not only being recognized for his humanitarian effort and his longtime dedication to community services but for his exemplary leadership in supporting the revitalizing of downtown Dallas and his strong commitment to the community’s health and medical care system.

For over more than a decade, Mr. Hunt has provided health care to Dallas’s impoverished population through Dallas Medical Resources. As a chairman he has sought to secure Federal funding for Parkland Memorial Hospital. Mr. Hunt has not only improved the health care system in Dallas, but he has also helped promote the city as a medical center.

The Linz Award that Mr. Hunt will receive on April 4, 2007, it’s an award that is given annually to a Dallas County resident for his civic or humanitarian efforts. He is the 78th recipient of the award created in 1924 by Simon Linz, one of the founders of Linz Jewelers.

Mr. Hunt is one of those people who give so much to the community without asking any praises or interpretation. Mr. Hunt has helped raise millions of dollars to improve poor health care in Dallas County. Mr. Hunt has been chairman of Dallas Medical Resource since it was founded in the late 1980s. Mr. Hunt has also been a major benefactor to the Austin Street Shelter, the Genesis Women’s Shelter and UT Southwestern Medical Center.

He has also served our government in various ways. In 2001, President George W. Bush appointed him to the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. He has also served as chairman of the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Hunt is a man who not only represents the spirit of Dallas but of our Nation.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE ETHICS REFORM ACT OF 2007**

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 16, 2007*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Ethics Reform Act of 2007 with Congressman GREG WALDEN. This legislation would abolish the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and establish an Independent Ethics Commission.

Recent legislation and current proposals attempt to reform the ethics process; however, they do not address the core issue at hand, Congress’s ability to govern its own ethical behavior. Members of Congress and their personal relationships can skew the evaluation process and create the potential for decisions being made upon a personal or political basis. This legislation would rectify these issues by replacing the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct with a panel made up of former

Members of Congress who can bring a higher level of objectivity to the table.

Our ethics reform bill would deal comprehensively with accountability and oversight of Congress in a way that cannot be accomplished under the current system.

**ON RECOGNIZING THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF F. WILLARD VICKERY AND HIS IMPACT ON THE SCOUTING COMMUNITY AND NORTHWEST FLORIDA**

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 16, 2007*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 80th birthday of F. Willard Vickery and his impact on the scouting community and Northwest Florida.

Mr. Vick, as he is known, began his journey in scouting in 1939, obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout five years later. Ever since his 12th birthday in 1939, he has held the Boy Scouts of America in the highest regard. Because of this pivotal time in our nation's history, Mr. Vick served as the Scoutmaster when adult leaders were sent off for military service. Soon he would follow his former Scoutmasters' paths by joining the United States Navy upon graduating from high school, and served in the medical corps in Tennessee. He remained in Tennessee after the War's end and attended college there. It was during this time that he became involved once again with scouting at a local camp, and also met Annie, his wife of nearly 59 years.

After graduating college, he became a full-time employee of the Boy Scouts of America in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This was the first of several scouting camps that Mr. Vick would be instrumental in having built throughout the South. Throughout the next decade, his career led him to Georgia and then Arkansas. As his professional experience grew, so did his reputation as a great scout leader. Mr. Vick became known as a leader who put passion into the development of professional young men through the Boy Scouts. In fact, the governor of Arkansas at the time was so impressed that he specifically tasked his son with learning from Mr. Vick.

In the early 1960s, Mr. Vick brought his family to Pensacola, Florida. Soon after, he

was named the Executive Scout for the Gulf Coast Council. During his time in this position Mr. Vick made a very notable hire. Roy Williams, who was hired to be the Finance Director, later went on to become the Chief Executive of the Boy Scouts of America. There is no doubt in my mind that the leadership and mentoring provided by Mr. Vick played an instrumental role in shaping Roy into the scout leader he is today.

Mr. Vick also worked with many outside the scouting community, including members of First Baptist Church and Rotary International. He was a host for several foreign exchange students and also served on the Community Task Force addressing the problem of violence in public schools. Other educational work included serving as a volunteer drumming teacher to elementary and middle school students.

Certainly, scouting was the mainstay through most of his life, eventually earning him the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award. His strong faith, along with that of his wife Annie, helped to guide and focus men and women of all ages to become better people through helping themselves and helping others.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to recognize F. Willard Vickery on the occasion of his 80th birthday. His leadership through faith and good deeds to this day leaves an everlasting impression on those who know him.

**THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT**

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 12, 2007*

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great concern over the current funding situation facing rural schools. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 provided compensation to counties with a large presence of National Forest lands. Unfortunately, the law authorizing these payments expired at the end of 2006. When it became apparent the reauthorization would not pass the House through regular order during the 109th Congress, my col-

leagues and I introduced H.R. 6423, which would have extended the funding for one year, providing us with more time to work for a long-term solution. Despite our efforts, the 109th Congress adjourned without reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. However, I maintain my commitment to providing this much-needed funding for rural counties.

I fully support the reauthorization of this law, which provides essential funding for over 4,400 schools in 780 counties. This money compensates counties for the loss of tax revenue as the Federal Government placed large amounts of land in forest reserves. The revenue-sharing mechanism that was created for the counties when this land transfer occurred is no longer viable due to decreasing timber sales.

With nearly 5.5 million acres of National Forests in my Congressional District, my counties are greatly affected by the expiration of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. As an example from a county in my district, Plumas County School District receives roughly \$2.5 million annually from this program, which represents 20 percent of their annual operating budget. Without this funding, the County is preparing to:

Lay off 9 administrators (out of a total of 16); lay off 47 teachers (out of a total of 150); close all school libraries; possibly close some or all cafeterias and cut transportation activities.

In Sierra County, schools will be shut down and students will be bussed up to 3 hours over the State line to attend school in Nevada. As you can see, reauthorization of this program is essential.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to compensate these counties from which large amounts of land were taken to create the National Forest System, and by failing to produce a real solution that will provide this funding, we are neglecting that responsibility.

I was disappointed to see that no funding was provided for rural schools in the continuing resolution we have recently passed. I am hopeful that the emergency supplemental we will soon consider will contain the needed funding for these counties, which are truly in dire circumstances.