

In addition to her political volunteerism with the Democratic Party, Ms. Fanning worked tirelessly for the Scranton Tomorrow "Winter in the City" project.

She is also a member of the Society of Irish Women.

Ms. Fanning also enjoys her role as aunt to her three nieces, Jennifer, Erin and Ellen and her nephew, James.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Kate Fanning on the occasion of this special honor. Her commitment to community service, citizenship and volunteerism serves as an inspiration to all and deserves the singular recognition she is receiving from the Lackawanna County Federation of Democratic Women.

THE RETIREMENT OF R. BYRON
DAVIS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a great public servant to the State of West Virginia. After 45 years of federal service, R. Byron Davis recently retired and while he will surely be missed, he leaves behind a legacy of work that will benefit the State of West Virginia for years to come.

Beginning his career in the 1960s, serving as a civil engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington District and later the U.S. EDA, Byron went on to become the Chief of Engineering Service for the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Huntington. He has spent the last 20 years as the Economic Development Representative for the State of West Virginia with the EDA.

During that time, Byron has traveled to all 55 counties in the State, meeting with most County Commissions, conducting meetings with city officials, economic development authorities and public service districts. Through his hard work, many new projects have been funded and many long-term jobs have been created.

In my District, Byron was instrumental in providing us the support to establish multi-use industrial buildings and incubators to Marshall University, Beckley, Hinton and Huntington. He was also instrumental in helping fund industrial park projects in Wayne, Mercer, Raleigh, Fayette, Logan, Summers, Monroe, Greenbrier and Mingo counties. Most recently, he was instrumental in helping with my establishment of a Mine Safety Technology Consortium in the Third District, and I am grateful for his support of this important project that will be a catalyst in transforming West Virginia coal mining.

It has truly been an honor and a pleasure to work with Byron through the years on these and so many other important initiatives. I admire and respect his dedication to our state, his strong work ethic and his unwavering values.

I again commend Byron for great work that he has accomplished. Of course, of all of his accomplishments, Byron would likely say that he is proudest of his strong Christian family, his wife of 47 years, Marion, and his seven grandchildren.

I hope that in his retirement he will get to spend a little more time with "his greatest ac-

complishment" and enjoy the fruits of his labor, for they are many. I wish him the best as he begins the next chapter in what has been and continues to be a life lived well.

Byron, the great State of West Virginia thanks you.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 198, a resolution recognizing the significance of Black History Month. I am an original cosponsor of this important legislation.

Celebrated during the month of February, Black History Month allows all Americans to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans, the famous and the not so famous, who have made strides in all walks of life.

I would like to share with you the words of one of the most noted African Americans in history—civil rights leader, Pan-African sociologist, educator, historian, writer, editor poet, and scholar, W. E. B. DuBois, who said:

"The shadow of a mighty Negro past flits through the tale of Ethiopia the shadowy and of the Egypt the Sphinx. Throughout history, the powers of single blacks flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has rightly gauged their brightness."

This is time to celebrate the trials, tribulations, accomplishments and contributions of African Americans, who have certainly created and attained so much in this nation's young history.

As many of my colleagues know, many of our ancestors were brought here in the grips of iron chains on slave ships. Despite this demoralizing beginning, African Americans created a noble culture that encompasses the American spirit of survival through adversity.

I would like to share a few stories of my past, of why it is so important that we continue to celebrate Black History Month and continue to reflect on our country's struggle with the equality of all people.

More than 60 years ago, my parents, Robert and Ruth Cummings, grew up in rural South Carolina—near a small Clarendon County town called Manning. Some here may recall that Clarendon County would later have the dubious distinction of having its segregated mis-education of Black children successfully overturned in one of the Supreme Court's five *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation cases: *Briggs v. Elliot*.

I will never forget the painful lesson that my father taught us children about our Grandfather's death in Clarendon County.

When my father was a child in South Carolina, his father was taken back to their home after collapsing in church.

Granddad lay close to death as two white doctors arrived to examine him—an older doctor and his younger assistant.

Later on that moonless night, they emerged from the house onto the front porch.

They did not notice that my father was sitting over in the corner, alone in the dark.

"We should take this man to the hospital in town," the younger doctor pleaded. "It's not worth the effort," the older doctor replied. "He's just a N-*g-g-*r."

My grandfather died on that dark, South Carolina night. As a result, I never had a chance to meet the man whose blood flows through my veins.

I never sat on his knee. He never took me fishing. I never learned about the struggles and joys of this strong and good man.

This, I think, is why I became convinced at an early age that we all must work together to create an America in which no life is considered to be without value.

For Americans of Color, the implications of this personal tragedy are clear.

Unable to depend upon the larger society to value our humanity, African American families have learned that we must create our own doctors and nurses.

We founded first-rate medical schools like those at Howard University College of Medicine, Meharry Medical College, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science and Morehouse School of Medicine.

We have sent our children to study at world-class nursing schools like the ones in my District at the University of Maryland at Baltimore and Coppin State University.

And, in response, brilliant African American men and women have followed their calling to become our healers.

Some became famous—like Dr. Ben Carson at Johns Hopkins University.

Yet, despite all of these efforts, the American medical establishment has confirmed that "unequal treatment" all too often remains the rule, not the exception, in the medical care that Americans of color receive today.

In fact, African Americans receive inferior medical care—compared to the majority population—even when our incomes and insurance plans are the same. These disparities contribute to our higher death rates from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and other life-endangering conditions.

Consider this: The December 2004 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* contained important findings by a research team headed by President Clinton's Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, and Professor Stephen Woolfe of Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Satcher-Woolfe team examined data for the period of the Clinton years that they had gleaned from the National Center for Health Statistics.

During the 1990s, they found that more than 886,000 deaths could have been prevented if African Americans had received the same health care as White Americans.

My friends, when we consider our national health policy, we also are considering our national morality.

We must face the harsh truth: Being Black in America continues to be a medically dangerous condition. And being both Black and poor can be deadly.

But the crisis is spreading. Today more than 46 million Americans of every racial background are uninsured.

And, as a direct result, far too many Americans of every race and creed are dying before their time.

More often than not, health care issues are directly related to the broader challenge of providing access to economic opportunity.

Again, the story of my own parents illustrates this point.

My parents moved to South Baltimore in 1945.

They knew that they had to leave South Carolina if their children were to have a better life.

Life in Baltimore was difficult for my family. During my earliest years in South Baltimore, all that they could afford for themselves and their seven children was a small, rented, three-room house.

Yet, it was there in South Baltimore that my life was changed.

It happened at a neighborhood swimming pool, which at that time was segregated.

We were just children looking for a way to escape the summer heat of South Baltimore's concrete and asphalt streets.

In those days, South Baltimore's white children swam and relaxed in the Olympic-sized Riverside Pool that the City maintained not far from where I lived.

Black children were barred from Riverside by the cruelty of segregation.

We were consigned by the color of our skin to an aging wading pool at Sharp and Hamburg Streets. That wading pool was so small that we had to take turns to be able to sit in the cool water.

Upset about our exclusion from our neighborhood's public pool, we complained.

To their everlasting credit, Captain Jim Smith, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, and the NAACP organized a march.

Other people soon joined in this struggle.

I would like to be able to tell you that the White families at Riverside accepted us graciously. Sadly, that is not what happened.

As we tried to gain entrance to the pool each day for over a week, we were spit upon, threatened and called everything but children of God.

I still carry a scar that I received from a bottle thrown at me during the march. We were afraid. And our parents became concerned for our safety.

Then, when all seemed lost, we saw Juanita Jackson Mitchell marching up the street toward our little group. With her were two reluctant, but grimly determined, policemen. They seemed more afraid of Ms. Mitchell's anger than of the jeering, hostile crowd.

Four decades later, the history books say that the Riverside pool was peaceably integrated. We know the truth.

My friends, the struggle to integrate that public swimming pool at Riverside may not have been a large thing in the eyes of the world.

It was not Little Rock—not Selma, Birmingham nor St. Augustine.

But Riverside has a LARGE meaning for me.

At Riverside, I learned that there are dividing lines in every human lifelines that separate hatred from love.

And I learned that we all will face a time when we must choose on which side of these lines we will take a stand.

That choice is the same no matter who is the victim of prejudice, exclusion and hatred.

We face that same choice today as we open up America to people from every continent, language, religion and race.

And how we handle this choice will determine the future of generations yet unborn.

Black History Month means so much to so many people and I want to thank Congress-

man Al Green for his leadership in introducing H. Res.198 to recognize this fact. I strongly urge all my colleagues to support it.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND
WORK OF FATHER ROBERT AN-
THONY MACK

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend Father Robert Anthony Mack for his 50 years of service as an ordained priest, and his significant contributions to the western New York community and Catholic Church.

Father Mack will be honored in a special Mass at Saint Louis Parish on Sunday March, 25, and today I honor his accomplishments and devoted service to his parish and community.

A passionate and dedicated man, his contributions to Buffalo include service as chaplain of Nardin Academy, Catholic chaplain of the Buffalo Fire Department, chaplain at Buffalo Memorial Auditorium and War Memorial Stadium, and division chairman of the Public and Service Division of the Erie County United Way.

A native of Riverside, Father Mack's first pastorate began in 1973 at Saint Matthew's Parish in Buffalo where he served until 1978. Father Mack also served as pastor of St. Bridget's in Newfane, NY, as well as at Saint Francis Xavier Parish of Buffalo. During his time at Saint Francis Xavier, Father Mack served as regional coordinator for Region 1 parishes and was a member and secretary of the Black Rock Riverside Clergy Association. In August 1989, Father Mack was honored in front of 25,000 people as Irishman of the Year at a home game of the Buffalo Bisons by the United Irish American Society of Erie County.

Father Mack also served as the pastor of All Saints and served as an administrator of the Rosary Parish in Niagara Falls before being appointed pastor of St. Louis Parish where he retired from in 2002. Father Mack also chaired the Peace and Justice Committee of the Priests' Senate and was appointed to the Arbitration Section of the Diocesan Due Process Committee.

Madam Speaker, Father Mack's experience during his 50 years as an ordained priest is unrivaled in our community. He has been a leader and an inspiration to countless parishioners and to the community at large. Father Mack is one of Buffalo's most prolific men of faith and on this special occasion, I recognize his vast accomplishments and dedication to our community.

RECOGNIZING RETIRING SUISUN
CITY POLICE CHIEF RON FOR-
SYTHE

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Suisun City Police Chief Ron Forsythe, who after nearly 30 years of service to

the community of Suisun City has retired from the Suisun City Police Department.

Chief Ron Forsythe has unselfishly served his community with great dedication and pride, and will leave the department with special recognition and with the highest commendation.

Chief Forsythe began his professional career in 1973, as a student aide in the Daily Republic newsroom, eventually being promoted to reporter and photographer.

His time spent in the newsroom piqued his interest in law enforcement. In 1977, he became a dispatcher and reserve police officer for the Suisun City Police Department. Working his way up the ranks, Chief Forsythe was promoted to chief of police in 1993.

During his career in Suisun City, Chief Forsythe was known for his innovative and forward thinking policies. He took leadership roles in introducing technology, such as automation and car-mounted computers to the department.

Chief Forsythe also instituted the first "citizen police academy" in the county and later introduced the first "teen academy" in the country. Moreover, Chief Forsythe's role in implementing community policing in Suisun City played a key role in turning around a city that was once considered the worst city in the bay area to live in.

Police Chief Ron Forsythe has served the citizens of Suisun City with great distinction, evidenced by policing policies that have served as nationwide models and the numerous State and national awards the department received.

As Chief Ron Forsythe retires from the Suisun City Police Department, I would like to thank him, and his partner, Matthew Forsythe, for his record of service and concern for the protection of life and property in the local community, and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors.

JUDGE ELISEO B. VEGA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, the nation—and South Texas—lost a valuable patriot today with the passing of longtime Port Isabel municipal judge and community leader Eliseo B. Vega. Known affectionately as "Cheo," Judge Vega died following a lengthy illness.

Judge Vega was an extraordinary caring and hardworking man. He was a familiar face in the Port Isabel area and was a political powerhouse. Despite his several setbacks due to illness, when most would think that he couldn't pull through, the man just kept going and wouldn't miss working. He was a man of great faith and loved life fully. He loved life so much he didn't want a sad funeral, so we will celebrate his life this week.

His life touched so many people. Judge Vega was best known for his role as judge in the municipal court system. His lengthy judicial career, beginning in 1971, spanned generations. He was what you wanted a judge to be: fair and even-handed. He understood people, he understood justice, and he stood at the intersection of both.

Prior to his legal and judicial career, the Judge was a banker and also served in a law