

CHARACTER COUNTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mrs. CAPPs) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPs. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and highlight the wonderful education framework called Character Counts.

I am very proud of the Santa Barbara YMCA and the Santa Barbara county education programs in my district that support this important framework which promotes civil responsibility through the following six pillars.

The first pillar is called "trustworthiness." This program teaches children and young adults the value of reliability, honesty, loyalty and the courage to do the right thing. It is followed in sequence by a pillar named "respect."

Respect encourages students to treat others with the same kind of tolerance of differences and consideration that they would wish to be treated themselves. It is never too early to begin to teach that framework that is centered around respect for one's self and respect for others.

The third pillar in the framework called Character Counts is titled "responsibility," which teaches young people to consider the consequences of their actions and to be accountable for the choices that they make. Again, the earlier we can begin to both model and teach ways to make choices which lead to good consequences for a young person's life, the better the results can be for them and for those with whom they associate.

Then we have the pillar of Character Counts that is labeled "fairness," and that is easy to see but it is hard to teach. It is taught by repetition on a playground, in a classroom, by following rules and understanding why rules are established, to be open-minded and not to take advantage of others, to learn to wait for one's turn.

Then we come to the pillar of responsibility called "caring." Caring can be described in so many ways, but again, we learn to be caring individuals by seeing how others care for us and we begin to experience compassion, gratitude, forgiveness. These are behaviors that we want to repeat with young people over and over again until they become second-hand.

Finally, we come to the sixth pillar in this framework called Character Counts which is labeled "citizenship." Here we teach students the merits of getting involved in making a community an environment, a place where they would want to live and be themselves and where they can see the benefits for those they care about.

Madam Speaker, last October I had a chance to see Character Counts firsthand in my district on two separate occasions. I attended the Fifth Annual Civic Mission of Schools Forum sponsored by the county schools office. I also was part of the Santa Barbara YMCA Character Counts event where

each of these promoted these six pillars.

So I want to particularly thank Art Fisher for his dedication and his tireless work toward civic education at the Santa Barbara County Education Office. I know that the work he is doing to teach our children the value of responsibility, respect, honesty and compassion is remarkable.

I want also to highlight the work of Aaron Martinez at the Santa Barbara YMCA in promoting the very same program for children as young as 2 and 3 years old, stretching all the way through every age of life, which is what the YMCA is all about.

By promoting these six pillars of Character Counts, the YMCA gives our children, our young people, lifelong tools for success, and of course, our children will be the leaders of tomorrow.

So these lessons are invaluable, not just for them and for their day-to-day life but also for the future of our community and our society.

I told these young people as I listened to them describe these pillars that from what I have seen in Washington, D.C., and in the House of Representatives in the Congress, these principles of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship are absolutely necessary for making decisions affecting their lives and should be important for us to model here in the United States Congress ourselves.

I told them that I could envision these six pillars here on the floor of the House of Representatives, that we would say to ourselves every day that just as we want to teach these values to our young people we want to model them here.

We need to set the example in our own House to remind our children that character does count.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING DEL REEVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to a proud son of Sparta, North Carolina, country singer and Grand Ole Opry legend, Del Reeves. Del Reeves passed away after a long and painful battle with emphysema on New Year's Day 2007.

Del Reeves was born in 1933 and was named Franklin Delano Reeves after Franklin Delano Roosevelt who was nominated to be the Democratic Presi-

dential candidate just a few days before his birth. Del was a driven individual who knew at a very young age that he wanted to be a performer.

As a young child, Del spoke of music on the radio and said, "I listened on the radio on Saturday nights and it was the ultimate," referring to the Grand Ole Opry. "As a child, I told my daddy I was going to sing on the Opry one day. He said, 'Yeah, sure you are.' I kept my goal in mind and in '66 we achieved it." He was one of the select members of the Grand Ole Opry for 40 years.

Del achieved that goal and many others. From a very young age, Del would borrow his brothers' instruments, and by the time Del had turned 12 years old, he had become a local radio star on WPAQ in Mount Airy on the "Merry Go Round Show," a program which is still aired today.

□ 1930

But this was just a start for Del Reeves. He went on for years performing and recording numerous hits, including 55 charted hits, two of them in the top 10.

Del was just more than a performer. He attended what is now Appalachian State University and served in the Air Force at Travis Air Force Base, where he wrote a number of his songs.

Del was very dedicated to his hometown and the advancement of others. He started the Del Reeves Scholarship Fund, and for 10 years came back to Alleghany for the "Del Reeves Homecoming," where he held concerts to benefit the scholarship fund he set up.

I am so proud that Del, a Sparta native, was successful in his performing career, yet never lost touch with his roots and never let go of his dedication to helping others. Del had a wonderful career that spanned over 40 years. Beyond being a member of the elite group of the Grand Ole Opry, Del also wrote and performed a number of hit songs and appeared in eight movies, including "Sam Whiskey," starring Bert Reynolds and Clint Walker. Del also worked in television, hosting a TV program called the "Del Reeves' Country Carnival."

Some of Del's greatest hits were "The Belles of the Southern Belle," his first hit in 1963; "The Girl on the Billboard," his number one billboard hit; "Sing a Little Song of Heartache," which he wrote with his wife; and "Looking Through the Windshield," his trucker anthem released in 1965.

Other notable hits that charmed and thrilled country music fans were hits such as "Women Do Funny Things to Me," "Good Time Charlie's," "Be Glad" and the "Philadelphia Fillies." In addition, Del wrote many songs for country legends such as Carl Smith, Roy Drusky, Rose Maddox and Sheb Wooley. Del enjoyed performing lighter material as well as singing ballads, and he reflected on that saying, "Under this clown's face, there's a serious guy . . . I've been clowning as long as I can

remember.” That is what made Del Reeves unique, he was such a multifaceted and talented person.

When asked how he would like to be remembered, he said, “I want to be remembered as a great showman and a nice guy . . . that’s all I could hope for.” That is exactly what Del got, as he certainly is remembered as a nice guy and a great showman.

One of his closest friends, J.D. Higgins, appropriately commented that on New Year’s Day country music lost a tremendous entertainer, and I will miss him greatly. He will be missed by country music fans all over the world. I know he will be missed by family, friends and his numerous admirers. Del was a true inspiration who made his hometown friends and North Carolina proud.

Del Reeves showed his large heart and love for his hometown community by creating a scholarship fund and always coming home to perform in Alleghany. Del’s contributions will serve as a lasting testimony of his tremendous talent, kindness, motivation and delightful personality. We will all miss Del Reeves but know that his timeless music will never be forgotten. He leaves quite a legacy for fans and future generations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PAKISTAN REFUSING TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST TALIBAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to once again call upon Pakistani President Musharraf to take action against Taliban fighters in the western region of his country. President Musharraf continues to deny that Taliban leaders are hiding in Pakistan and that the Taliban are regrouping there, despite numerous international press accounts describing otherwise.

President Musharraf claims that securing the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not the sole responsibility of his country. He has admitted that border guards at the tactical level often, quote, turn a blind eye when insurgents cross the border into Pakistan. Yet he still shirks the responsibility his country must take in dealing with the situation.

In Musa Qala, a town in southern Afghanistan where a peace deal last year was signed by NATO-led troops and local elders, government officials confirmed that Taliban forces had taken

partial control of the town in the last few days. The Taliban’s movement into Musa Qala completely disregards the peace agreement and goes against the wishes of the Afghani citizens living in the town.

A similar deal was developed last year in North Waziristan, a region in western Pakistan. As was the case in Musa Qala, Taliban fighters disregarded this deal and have taken partial control of the region. Yet President Musharraf continues to defend this peace deal, despite the fact that the Taliban seemed to have created a stronghold in the region where they can likely plan future offensives against U.S. forces and the citizens of Afghanistan.

If the Pakistani President truly wishes to defend this peace deal, he must take the necessary steps towards eliminating Taliban forces, not only in North Waziristan, but throughout his country. President Musharraf has also scaled back plans to enforce and patrol the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. If Musharraf actually wishes to eliminate Taliban forces in Pakistan, he must work to control this border in a safe and diplomatic manner.

Madam Speaker, last week I came to the floor to highlight H.R. 1, a bill that implements the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. This is part of our first 100 hours. Included in H.R. 1 is language that would end U.S. military assistance and armed sales licensing to Pakistan unless it is certified that the Islamabad government is, I quote, making all possible efforts to end Taliban activities on Pakistani soil.

It is my hope that once this law is passed, the bill will finally force President Musharraf to crack down on Taliban training camps and leaders within his country. The Bush administration, however, has already signaled its opposition to this language in H.R. 1. Last week, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Gastright assured Musharraf’s government that the administration opposed any end to military assistance to Pakistan.

I believe it is absolutely unacceptable for President Bush to oppose these actions against the Pakistani government. The language in H.R. 1 places appropriate pressure on President Musharraf to finally take suitable action against the Taliban forces currently plotting within his country’s borders.

The Bush administration claims that it deals with President Musharraf regardless of his actions, because it believes the Pakistani President is better than the Islamic extremist and anti-Western alternatives in Pakistan.

However, there are Democratic alternatives in Pakistan. According to a recent poll by the International Republican Institute, the second most popular leader in Pakistan is former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Now, Mrs. Bhutto’s party, the Pakistani People’s Party, has joined with the Muslim

League Party to form the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy and hopes to restore democratic government to Pakistan in the near future.

Madam Speaker, it is essential for the United States to increase pressure on President Musharraf to step up his commitment to eliminate Taliban fighters in training hubs in his country. A significant step towards applying this pressure came with the language in H.R. 1, which we passed in the first 100 hours, ending military aid to Pakistan unless the Pakistani President takes steps towards this goal of routing out Taliban forces. It is imperative for President Bush to realize the importance of the language in this bill and support the provisions outlined in H.R. 1.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING SARKIS ACOPIAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of a national treasure, Sarkis Acopian. Mr. Acopian died on January 18, 2007, at his home in Palmer Township, Pennsylvania, which is located in my Congressional district near the City of Easton. He was 80 years old.

To say that Mr. Acopian lived a full life does not do justice to the legacy of this extraordinary man. His is, in part, the classic immigrant success story. He was born on December 8, 1926, in Tabriz, Iran, to Armenian parents. He came to this country in 1945 to study engineering at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. While here, Mr. Acopian was drafted into the United States Army. After completing his military service, Mr. Acopian returned to Lafayette, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in mechanical engineering in 1951.

Mr. Acopian used his prodigious intellectual gifts and business acumen to design and build things that helped to make people’s lives better. While working for the Weller Electric Corporation, he designed a power sander which became one of the company’s main products. After forming the Acopian Technical Company in 1957, he designed and manufactured the first ever solar radio. Mr. Acopian subsequently led his company into the power supply business, and the company, which is still operating today, became and remains quite successful in that enterprise.

But Sarkis Acopian was much, much more than just an outstanding entrepreneur. In that regard, he loved outdoor venture and throughout his life he