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A TRIBUTE

(By Claude Lavielle)

Worse than death, is to be forgotten . . . So that this never happens to those to whom we owe so much, the association "Les Fleurs de la Memoire" (Flowers of Remembrance), came to life. It happened on December 15, 2000, in Saint Lo, a city which, after the June 6, 1944, bombing raids, was called the Capital of Ruins.

Since that day, along with our members, we have paved the way along memory's roads. These paths of memory lead to the American military cemeteries where those, swept along by the Star-Spangled banner, listening only to their courage, came to offer their life, so that we could reclaim our freedom.

At the core of Les Fleurs de la Memoire, the 720 members, put aside their differences, religious beliefs, and their origins, share the same gratitude towards the GI's who repose at Colleville-sur-Mer or Saint James.

Together, on Memorial Day or individually on any other day of the year, we come to meditate, in silence, or in prayer. Then, in an affectionate gesture, as would a godparent for their godchild, allowing the heart to speak, we place flowers at the base of the headstone.

It is not uncommon to see grandparents, at times moved to tears, accompanied by their children and grandchildren moving along the rows on the way to find "the" grave.

Once at the gravesite, their heads filled with images. . . . All listen, all meditate.

Is it the sound of the breeze? . . . Rather, isn't it the sound of the souls, the living memory of the dead speaking to our subconscious? . . . Then the terrible sounds of combat invade the mind . . . those unbearable sounds of bombs which explode . . . the whining cry of diving planes . . . the agonizing cries of the suffering. All the horrors of war assault our memories.

Finding the spirit of those who died for that we may live in a better world, kneeling in front of the headstone, placing these flowers, is this not a profound appeal for peace?

That is, I believe, what each person feels when coming to execute their pledge towards our association, "Les Fleurs de la Memoire". A humble pledge always accomplished with the infallible faith and immense fraternity with those whom we honor. It is true we have so much to say to you who sleep forever in our Normandy soil. Yes, so many things, which however must be resumed in one word: "Merci." Yes, "Thank You. Always!"

TRIBUTE TO MARY FRANCES HILL

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mary Frances Hillow, a distinguished student at Visitation Academy located in Town and Country, Missouri. Mary Fran continues to excel in and outside of the classroom.

Mary Fran is an outstanding student. She shows a passionate drive to achieve academic excellence. Mary Fran is also a member of National Jr. Honor Society. The national junior honor society is one of the Nation's premier organizations established to recognize outstanding high school and middle level students. More than just an honor roll, NJHS

serve to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character (and Citizenship for NJHS).

Aside from her academic endeavors, Mary Fran is also an established varsity golfer at Visitation Academy. She dedicates at least 10 hours every weekend to improving her golfing techniques. Mary Fran began playing her first 18 holes of golf in December 2007, just 10 short months later, she finished 10th in the Missouri State Golf Tournament. Mary Fran again excelled on the golf course by winning her second tournament after beating the second place player by 11 shots.

Mary Fran's athletic achievements as a golfer have landed a varsity position for Visitation Academy, something unusual for a freshman to achieve. She is one of five players on the varsity team. Her team was undefeated for the 2008 season and won the state district tournament by 56 shots.

Again, Mary Fran excelled at the State District golf tournament with a 17 hole lead and ended in a tie for first place at 3 over, 75. Her team's score was an impressive 309 at the State District tournament. This is the lowest score ever recorded in Missouri history.

Mary Fran played in the Missouri State Golf Tournament October 20–21, 2008. She was one of the few freshman players in the tournament. Her team won the tournament by 55 shots and Mary Fran was the number 2 player on her team. Individually, Mary Fran finished the tournament in 10th place out of an astonishing 120 players.

Madam Speaker, Ms. Mary Frances Hillow has my absolute highest recommendation to be honored today. I admire her demonstrated commitment to academic excellence and her accomplishments as a golfer and team player. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring such a wonderful Missouri student athlete.

HONORING THE HOLY ROSARY CHURCH OF ANSONIA, CONNECTICUT AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Holy Rosary Church, its staff, and congregation as they commemorate their 100th Anniversary. This is a remarkable milestone for this community treasure and certainly cause for great celebration!

In the late nineteenth century, Italians began to settle in the City of Ansonia and within a few short decades the Italian population had risen to the hundreds. Families began to seek their own religious center and so they approached the Assumption Parish to request the use of the church and it was graciously granted. The first mass was celebrated on October 4, 1908 and as this was the first Sunday of October, it was also Rosary Sunday—and so the title was found, the Holy Rosary Church.

The Holy Rosary Church has not only been a center for religious worship, but a vehicle through which their members could give back

to the community. The St. Ann's Society for women, the St. Joseph's Society for men, and the Children of Mary Sodality for young women were all quickly founded following the establishment of the church and they were later joined by the Catholic Men's Club, the Catholic Women's Club, the Rosary Guild, and the parish's Catholic Youth Organization. The societies can be credited with bringing the annual feasts honoring patron saints to their neighbors as well as succeeding in raising the capitol funds needed not only to purchase the property on which the church resides, but also to completely renovate the church several times throughout its history.

Our churches play a vital role in our communities—providing people with a place to turn to for comfort when they are most in need. The members of the Holy Rosary Church have also given much to the City of Ansonia. Throughout the years, as their membership grew so did its commitment to the enrichment of this community. By strengthening our bonds of faith, the Holy Rosary Church gives its members a place to find their spiritual center and to solidify and support their values.

In its 100 year history, the Holy Rosary Church has built a strong foundation and its success is due to the dedication and commitment of each and every member of its congregation. Through their ministry and outreach efforts, they have left an indelible mark on our community and continue to enrich the lives of others. That is why I am so pleased to stand today to offer my sincere congratulations as they mark this very special centennial anniversary. The families, parishioners, and staff have much to be proud of as they celebrate this 100th anniversary year.

CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION FOR MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to five retired United States Generals who, for the past two years, have served as members of my Military Advisory Council.

These distinguished Americans have served the Nation as leaders of our Armed Forces. They continue their service in our community. I am fortunate to have the benefit of their advice on military affairs.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have often turned to my Military Advisory Council as we considered legislation and appropriations to meet the needs of our Armed Forces. I have benefited immeasurably from their knowledge and experience.

I commend them for their commitment to our men and women in uniform and thank them for making their expertise available to me. They are: General John Wickham Jr., former Chief of Staff, United States Army, General Donald Shepperd, former Director, Air National Guard, General John Cronin, former Deputy Commander, Fleet Marine, General Bill Van Dyke, former Adjutant General, Arizona National Guard, and General Ronald Shoopman, former Commander Arizona 162nd Fighter Wing.

They all have proven themselves to be true patriots. It has been my privilege to have them as advisors on military issues. On behalf of our Armed Forces I thank them for their continued service.

HONORING THE WORK OF CHIEF
VERNON A. LOSH II

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, to honor Chief Vernon A. Losh II, who is retiring this month as chief/department director of the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services. He has held the position since June 1999, and also served concurrently for over 5 years as fire chief of Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District.

Chief Losh has had a long and distinguished career in fire and emergency services, starting in 1974 with the South Placer Fire Protection District where he eventually held every rank from volunteer firefighter to full-time battalion chief. He came to Sonoma County in 1995 as deputy chief/fire marshal for the Department of Emergency Services and became chief a few years later with responsibility for all aspects of the department's work. He deftly managed 23 full-time employees, over 350 volunteers, and a budget of \$7.5 million.

With extensive education in emergency management, including being one of the first twelve people certified in the State of California as a fire chief, Chief Losh has shared his expertise for years as a community college fire service instructor and also as chair of the Santa Rosa Community College Fire Tech Advisory Committee. A long list of professional affiliations—from local to international—are a testament to both his spirit of community volunteerism and the high regard with which he is held by his peers. He has been president of the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association, Sonoma County Department Heads Association, and the Northern California Firefighters Association, to name a few.

Shortly after the anthrax and 911 terrorist attacks on our country, we met with Vern Losh and other Sonoma County officials. We were particularly impressed by the level of emergency preparedness as well as by plans to continuously upgrade and improve equipment and procedures. These efforts, directed by a coordinated leadership effort, clearly paid off when much of the county was affected by severe flooding a few years ago. The response was swift and organized, mitigating what could have been a serious disaster.

The Losh family is also a source of pride to Vern. His wife Teresa is an accountant at the Sonoma County Office of Education and marathon walker for several charitable causes; his son Allen is a specialist in the Army serving as a combat medic ready to be deployed to Iraq on Thanksgiving Day; his daughter Whitney is a student at San Francisco State in the public health field. Whitney just finished her first marathon for Leukemia Lymphoma Society.

Perhaps since, as his biography states, he "currently serves as the Grand Emperor of the

Cosmic Order of Fire Gods, an honor he has held since birth," Vern Losh won't fully retire. He plans to continue as chair of the Sonoma-Mendocino Red Cross, chair of the Volunteer Fire Fighter Committee of the California State Fire Fighters Association, and as the California representative to the National Volunteer Fire Council. He will also become a volunteer firefighter for the City of Healdsburg. And he will continue his teaching at the California Community College.

Madam Speaker, Sonoma County will miss the skills of Chief Vernon Losh, but we thank him for helping to make our emergency services strong. We know he will appreciate having time for his family and his hobbies—photography, football and all sports, attending Giants and 49er games, and firefighting.

HONORING LINDA RAWLS OF
SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, to honor and acknowledge Linda Rawls, who has been named the 2008 Sonoma Treasure Artist of the Year, or simply the Sonoma Treasure, by the city of Sonoma. Each year the city's Cultural and Fine Arts Commission selects one of the hundreds of artists living and working in the Sonoma Valley to receive this honor. Ms. Rawls was singled out for her decade's long work in costume design.

By one account, she has fitted and costumed the stars and extras of more than 132 productions, including those of the Sonoma City Opera, the Sonoma Ballet Conservatory, school plays at Sonoma Valley High and each of the grade schools, Vintage House Senior Center, churches and Hootchie Doo Productions, a community theatre group. Her talents have led her to create designs for productions in neighboring counties, including 42nd Street Moon productions in San Francisco.

According to Ms. Rawls, "Costumes have to do everything. A show can have no scenery, but with a woman's dress or a man's hat, you can decipher the time and place in an instant." She calls costumes the "elemental scenery of a play, telling more about character and context than anything else on stage."

Ms. Rawls stumbled into her artistic calling 26 years ago when the costume designer for a school opera in which her 8-year-old son was performing unexpectedly quit. She volunteered to step in and has been following her passion ever since.

Her peers have acknowledged Ms. Rawls work by awarding her the Best First Day Costume Award from the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England, in 1996 and the Dean Goodman Choice Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre for Costume Design in 2003.

Madam Speaker, Linda Rawls is a true artist in every sense of the word and it is appropriate that we honor her today as the 2008 Sonoma Treasure Artist of the Year.

HONORING FRANK C. TROTТА

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Long Island's finest public servants, Frank C. Trotta, who recently left office after serving for a quarter century as mayor of the village of Bellport—a historic community, which, thanks in no small part to Mayor Trotta's leadership, has successfully preserved its character and identity.

On October 30, I was proud to join the Bellport Chamber of Commerce in honoring Mayor Trotta for his steadfast commitment and countless contributions to the people of Bellport. This tribute was celebrated at the Bellport Country Club, which could not have been a more appropriate location considering that it was losing \$35,000 a year when Mayor Trotta entered office.

Today, the golf course generates more than \$1 million a year in revenue for Long Island's economy which is one of the main reasons that village taxes are among the lowest on Long Island.

During his tenure, Mayor Trotta demonstrated a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility and low taxes while protecting vital government services. His legacy is clear: Today, Bellport is on solid financial footing and has been recognized by CNN and Money Magazine as one of the best places to live on the east coast and is 1 of the 10 "hottest" Zip Codes in New York State.

I have been privileged to know Frank Trotta for nearly 35 years, long before either of us entered public service. We attended graduate classes together in the summer of 1974 at Southampton College and I am proud to say that we have been friends ever since. I watched with great pride as Frank's career blossomed. As someone who was new to public service when I was elected to Congress in 2002, I learned a lot simply by watching and talking to Frank.

Although Frank and I do not belong to the same political party, we share a common philosophy, which is that you always put the needs of the community first. There must always be a place in public service for a man like Frank Trotta who understands that political partisanship has no place in village government and we should all treat one another with courtesy and civility.

For anyone who has ever walked with Frank during Bellport's Fourth of July parade, it is plain to see how much he loves his community and how much that community loves him. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to help honor my friend, Frank Trotta, for his years of service to the village of Bellport and our Nation. On behalf of New York's First Congressional District, I wish him continued success, happiness and good health in his future endeavors as a private citizen and one of Long Island's favorite sons.