

Appreciation Week, and Tuesday, May 6, as National Teacher Day. These days have been set aside as a time for honoring teachers and recognizing the lasting contributions they make to our lives.

Last year, the National Education Association (NEA) conducted an online poll asking teachers what kind of gift would most make them feel appreciated. The answer? A simple “thank you,” according to nearly half (48 percent) of all respondents.

Such humility comes as no surprise. My mother was a public school teacher, so I know firsthand how many sacrifices teachers make both with their own money, their time and their heart. They work long hours and are often underappreciated. Yet, few other professionals touch as many people as teachers do. I bet many of us learned life lessons that we carry with us today because of a special teacher. I don’t know that we can ever say “thank-you” enough times to teachers who have made a difference in our lives. This week, I hope we’ll all take a minute to tell a special teacher “thank you”—a simple thank you card, a quick phone call—it means a lot.

I recognize that these are small ways to honor teachers, and that we have to put our money where our mouth is. Teachers give so much to support Kansas students—it’s high time that Congress repays the favor. Here are some of the ways I have made a commitment to helping teachers:

Providing tax relief for teachers. I co-sponsored H.R. 549, the Teacher Tax Relief Act to increase and make permanent a tax deduction of up to \$400 for elementary and secondary school teachers. I am also a co-sponsor of H.R. 3605, introduced after H.R. 549, which will increase the deduction to \$500. This deduction would help teachers recoup expenses when they use their own money to buy classroom supplies.

Funding Continuing Education for Teachers. I voted for the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science (COMPETES) Act, which became law in August, 2007. The act provides professional development for teachers, ensures more highly qualified classroom teachers in mathematics, science, engineering, and technology, and provides funding to improve laboratory equipment and facilities.

Student Loan Assistance. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which I voted for and was signed into law by the President in September, 2007, includes a tuition assistance program for public school teachers who commit to working in impoverished areas or in high-need subjects.

Public schools are at the heart of any community and I believe we all have to work together to make our schools the best that they can be. That means everyone in the community—parents, business owners, retirees, local government and students must pitch in.

This week is an opportunity for all of us to get involved. That apple on the desk or a thank you card is an important first step. But, let’s use this week to learn about and advocate for high standards for our public schools and appropriate compensation for teachers. A community’s active support of the work that teachers do, combined with that “thank-you,” can make changes that will last for generations to come.

HONORING CAREER OF DR. SARAH N. DENMAN

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Sarah N. Denman and her 33 years of service to the students and faculty of Marshall University. Marshall University is home to 14,000 of West Virginia’s best and brightest students and one of the finest public universities in the Nation. For the last 9 years, Sarah has served as the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Marshall University and is now set to retire on May 10, 2008, with Marshall’s 171st Commencement.

Born and raised in Kenova, West Virginia, Sarah has devoted her life to improving our State’s educational opportunities. She earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Marshall University and her doctorate in higher education administration from West Virginia University. She then taught for 6 years at Ceredo-Kenova High School before joining Marshall’s faculty. At Marshall, she has served as Coordinator of the Communications Program, Associate Dean for the Community College, Higher Learning Commission Consultant Evaluator, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and since 1999, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

During her tenure, Sarah has been a godsend to Marshall University, helping it expand and flourish, and has played a powerful role in transforming a once humble Marshall College into the internationally renowned university it is today. From Associate Professor to Provost, Sarah has left her mark on virtually every aspect of the University and touched countless lives of those around her.

Marshall’s academic programs have been blessed by her guidance and, in turn, southern West Virginia has been blessed by Marshall. Thanks to her hard work and dedication at Marshall, the best and brightest of West Virginia’s students have access to the higher education they need—without leaving the home they love—to succeed in the global economy.

Sarah’s list of accomplishments far exceeds her years of service. She has nurtured generations of young minds and helped shape the higher education system in West Virginia. Her dedication to her work and commitment to helping others are examples to us all.

I again congratulate Sarah for her 33 years of dedicated service at Marshall University and wish her continued success in retirement and all her future endeavors.

NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTOR AND MORTICIAN RECOGNITION DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res.

892, a resolution that designates March 11 as “National Funeral Director and Mortician Recognition Day.”

Funeral directors and morticians are vitally important in helping families mourn death, celebrate a life, and begin the process of closure. They also give advice on the decisions one needs to make as a caretaker and as a provider of a funeral service. According to the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association, “The funeral ritual is helpful and valuable for all who feel the loss of the deceased. It validates life and allows us to go on living. The ritual aspect is important for closure and social reasons. Attending the funeral allows us to deal with the loss, says goodbye, and reaffirms the importance of living.”

Mayor Bill Sandberg of North Saint Paul, who died on April 20, 2007, was one of my mentors. He spent his career as a funeral director in the St. Paul area and was active in the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association and a Heritage Club member of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA). NFDA was established in 1882 in order to better serve the public and its members. Today, it is the oldest and largest national funeral service organization in the world.

I want to thank funeral directors and morticians for their dedication to this profession and urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

IN SUPPORT OF H. RES. 981—RECOGNIZING MARCH 6, 2008, AS THE FIRST-EVER WORLD GLAUCOMA DAY, ESTABLISHED TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF GLAUCOMA, A LEADING CAUSE OF PREVENTABLE BLINDNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 981, recognizing March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, established to increase awareness of glaucoma, a leading cause of preventable blindness. I want to congratulate my colleagues Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN for introducing this important resolution and together with Congressman PETE SESSIONS for bringing this measure forward. As a cosponsor of this resolution, I am proud to speak out in favor of adequate Federal funding, legislation when indicated, greater support for glaucoma education and awareness, screenings, regular eye examinations, follow-up, treatment and research. Raising the level of awareness about the effects of this devastating eye disease, and drawing attention toward taking the necessary steps to preserve sight has been of great importance to me, and a special mission for many years.

The resolution expands awareness by calling attention to this dreadful disease that can rob individuals of the priceless gift of sight. Glaucoma, an eye disorder that damages the optic nerve, is a leading cause of irreversible blindness, and affects more than 3 million people. It is often referred to as the “sneak thief of sight,” as many are not aware that they have the disease because it has no noticeable early warning signs, symptoms or

pain. It is estimated that 1.5 million Americans are losing their sight because they do not know that they have the disease and are not getting the treatment they need.

The resolution also supports early detection of glaucoma for those at risk, enhanced treatment for those affected, and expanded research. Those groups at highest risk for glaucoma include African Americans, Hispanics, people with a family history of glaucoma, as well as individuals with diabetes and/or hypertension. Senior citizens, in general, are also at high risk for glaucoma. Compelling studies and data show that glaucoma is 6 to 8 times more common in African Americans than in Caucasians, and that African Americans between 45 and 65 are 14 to 17 times more likely to go blind from glaucoma than Caucasians in the same age group. Glaucoma is also the most common cause of blindness in Hispanics, the fastest growing ethnic minority in the country, and they too are at particular risk of being blinded by the disease.

I am proud to support the resolution and underscore the use of legislation as a vehicle when necessary, support adequate Federal funding for early detection, treatment, research, annual screenings and comprehensive eye examinations for individuals over 40, and those at highest risk for glaucoma.

I applaud and support the mission and service of those agencies and organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, National Eye Institute, Glaucoma Research Foundation, glaucoma specialists at teaching hospitals, clinics, colleges and universities across the country who demonstrate on a daily basis, their dedication and commitment toward combating this devastating disease.

I am particularly proud of the work of the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation, a non-profit organization and the affiliation that I share with my colleague and friend Congressman ED TOWNS, as founding members of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus, a non-partisan body of more than 90 congressional members in the House and Senate. I urge my colleagues who are not members of the caucus to join to promote free glaucoma screenings, education and awareness within your districts.

Finally, I join in with my colleague Congressman ED TOWNS of New York and urge the Energy and Commerce Committee to hold a speedy hearing on H.R. 3005, the Glaucoma Screening Act of 2007, a worthy and important bill introduced by our colleagues, Representatives SERRANO and BOOZMAN.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEAN HELLER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 242, H. Res. 1011—Calling on the United States Government and the international community to promptly develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive regional strategy to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace and good governance in Chad, as well as in the wider region that includes the northern region of the Central African Republic and

the Darfur region of Sudan—had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS AT ALLIANCE OPPORTUNITY CENTER

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the anniversary of the Alliance Opportunity Center, which has served North Texas for 10 years.

The Alliance Opportunity Center, a non-profit organization supervised by Hillwood, Tarrant County College, Tarrant County Workforce Development Board, Texas Workforce Commission and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, has long been committed to economic growth in Tarrant and Denton Counties, and their impact on the area is certainly cause for celebration.

The Alliance Opportunity Center's main goal is to shorten employee turnaround time, reduce job recruitment costs, and enhance employee skills and retention. This objective is achieved through the many services the AOC offers to the community. The Alliance Opportunity Center advertises Alliance job listings nationwide, maintains a current job-applicant database to best match open positions with available candidates, provides companies with the resumes of candidates best suited for open positions, and screens applicants for qualified referrals.

The organization also hosts the Annual Alliance Texas Hiring fair and coordinates and conducts job fairs for individual companies. The Alliance Opportunity Center staff keeps the interests of the community in mind, allowing area companies more time to focus on their core work and, in the process, making Alliance businesses an even greater success.

Madam Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to honor Alliance Opportunity Center for its commitment to playing an active role in the development, improvement and success of the North Texas community. I am proud to represent such a prestigious organization in Texas' 26th Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO MARTHA KRUETZMANN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Martha Kruetzmann on the celebration of her 100th birthday on April 2, 2008.

Martha was born on April 2, 1908 to Peter and Lydia Wigand in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. She was one of four brothers and three sisters. Martha was married to the late Reverend A.I. Kruetzmann and has three children, Eileen, Evelyn, and Edith; eight grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. She currently lives at the Hubbard Care Center in Hubbard, Iowa.

There have been many changes that have occurred during the past one hundred years. Since Martha's birth we have revolutionized air

travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television and the Internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism and the birth of new democracies. Martha has lived through eighteen United States Presidents and twenty-four Governors of Iowa. And, in her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

I congratulate Martha Kruetzmann for reaching this milestone of a birthday. I am extremely honored to represent Martha in the United States Congress and I wish her happiness and health for many years to come.

FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay recognition to the Filipino veterans who so bravely served under the U.S. flag during World War II.

The Philippine Islands were a U.S. territory from 1902-1946. On July 16, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called over 200,000 Filipinos to service under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. They courageously fought side-by-side with soldiers from the United States, under the American flag and for a common goal to protect all nations from aggressive governments.

Madam Speaker, despite their patriotism, sacrifice, and service to this nation, the Filipino veterans of World War II have still not received the full benefits they were promised 62 years ago.

The average age of these heroes is 84. Congress has a moral obligation to provide for the Filipino veterans who fought as part of the United States during World War II before it is too late. We must restore dignity and honor to these proud veterans.

HONORING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF SGT. RICHARD J. “RICK” KASPER

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated public servant from Chester County, Pennsylvania, who is retiring after a nearly 30-year career with the West Whiteland Township Police Department.

Sgt. Richard J. “Rick” Kasper joined the West Whiteland Police as a patrol officer in 1978. He became one of the first members on the force to be promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1988.

As a patrol shift supervisor for 25 years, Sgt. Kasper earned the respect of his colleagues for his ability to think on his feet and his sound judgment at times when officers' lives and the safety of the community were on the line.

Whether it was safely disarming a knife-wielding suspect or responding to a threat of violence at a local mall, the members of the West Whiteland Township Police Department