

success, and ensure that they receive the highest quality of education.

TRIBUTE TO SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, JR., FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN U.S. NAVY FLAG OFFICER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today, to recognize the christening of the USS Gravelly, the 57th Arleigh Burke class Aegis Guided Missile Destroyer, in honor of the late Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravelly, Jr.

Samuel L. Gravelly, born in Richmond, Virginia in 1922, was the first African American to command a fighting ship (USS Falgout) and to command a major warship (USS Jouett). As a full commander, he made naval history in 1966 as the first African American commander to lead a ship—the USS Taussig—into direct offensive action. He was the first African American to achieve flag rank and eventually Vice Admiral.

In 1942, Gravelly interrupted his education at Virginia Union University and enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve. He attended Officer Training Camp at the University of California in Los Angeles after boot camp at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Illinois, and then midshipman school at Columbia University. When he boarded his first ship in May of 1945, he became its first African American officer.

In 1945, when his first ship reached its berth in Key West, Florida, he was specifically forbidden entry into the Officers' Club on the base. Gravelly survived the indignities of racial prejudice and displayed unquestionable competence as a naval officer.

Vice Admiral Gravelly's tenure in the naval service was challenged with the difficulties of racial discrimination. As a new recruit, he was trained in a segregated unit; as an officer, he was barred from living in the Bachelor's Officers' Quarters.

Gravelly exemplified the highest standards and demanded very high standards from his crew. Vice Admiral Gravelly was a trailblazer for African Americans in the military arena. He fought for equal rights quietly but effectively, letting his actions speak for him. Vice Admiral Gravelly died on October 22, 2004, at the naval hospital in Bethesda, Maryland.

Samuel L. Gravelly, Jr.'s performance and leadership as an African American naval officer demonstrated to America the value and strength of diversity. Gravelly was a true professional with superb skills as a seaman and admirable leadership attributes. His spirit aboard the USS Gravelly will be an inspiration to its crew, the United States Navy, and America for generations to come.

HONORING CLEO ZENT

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Cleo Estelle King Zent of

Petaluma, California, for an unusual accomplishment. Cleo just celebrated her 100th birthday, an event few people have the opportunity to enjoy.

There is no one secret to Cleo's longevity. Cleo maintains that genetics and a healthy lifestyle have kept her spry. She always avoided alcohol and tobacco use and, since she never drove, she got her exercise by walking everywhere. Cleo's positive outlook has also allowed her to experience ten fulfilling decades of life.

Cleo, daughter of Hugh and Laura Walker King, was born in Floyd, New Mexico on April 9, 1909. Her father was a leading citizen who championed education and promoted school issues among voters.

In 1927, Hugh and Laura King moved the family to Rio Vista, California where Hugh and his sons worked for Speckels Sugar Company until moving to Lodi, California three years later.

Following Prohibition, Cleo worked as a waitress in a local coffee shop where local winemakers gathered for breakfast and conversations. Cesar Mondavi and August Sebastiani were among Cleo's customers.

On May 2, 1942, Cleo married Claude R. Zent. The couple spent most of the World War II years in Alameda, where Claude worked as an electrical engineer at the Naval Air Station. Their first son, William R. Zent, was born in 1945, followed by the birth of Jack Zent in 1948.

After the War, the Zent family moved to a 12-acre plot of land just outside the city of Petaluma and Claude transferred his employment to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo.

For the next twenty years, Cleo and her family spent their time building and improving their homestead. According to Cleo, for years their house looked like they were just moving in or just moving out. When Cleo's dreams for her home were almost realized in 1966, Claude died of a brain hemorrhage. Cleo remained on the family's property walking to and from the grocery store, mowing the lawn and maintaining her home until she was in her 90s.

Today, Cleo lives in the Golden Living Care Home in Petaluma and she shares her life with her sons and her four grandchildren, Caryn Estelle, Kevin, Christy and Christopher Zent.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to honor Cleo Zent whose experience is a testament to the fact that a healthy lifestyle and optimistic outlook can lead to a long and fulfilling life. Happy Birthday, Cleo!

MELISSA TEBEAU

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Melissa Tebeau who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Melissa Tebeau is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Melissa Tebeau is exemplary of the type of achieve-

ment that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Melissa Tebeau for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her academic career to her future accomplishments.

SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD RECEIVES HONOR

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to recognize the South Carolina Army National Guard's 218th Brigade Combat Team who was recently honored with the Joint Meritorious Unit Award. Presented by the Department of Defense's Joint Chiefs of Staff, this award is given to units that have achieved distinction in their duties and is the second highest award given to a military unit.

The 218th, led by Major General Bob Livingston, served for a year in Afghanistan as part of Task Force Phoenix advising and training Afghan police and army forces. As a result of their heroic and dedicated service, Afghanistan has doubled the size of its army to 52,000 troops, and the number of Afghan police officers killed in action each month has been cut dramatically.

As a 28 year veteran of the 218th, I want to extend my gratitude and that of the entire nation to Major General Stan Spears, commander of the South Carolina National Guard, Major General Livingston, his brave soldiers and their families for their tremendous commitment to protecting American families by defeating terrorists overseas.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN FAHEY

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, for the past 30 years, Kevin Fahey has dedicated his personal and professional life to the students and faculty of the University of Connecticut. This year, he will retire as the President of the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association (UCPEA), the union for professional staff at the university. While he will remain an active member of the UConn community, I rise to recognize his years of contributions to faculty and staff at the university.

Kevin joined the UConn faculty over three decades ago and currently serves as the Senior Associate Director in the Department of Student Activities. As Senior Associate Director in the Department of Student Activities, he advises the Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG), Kappa Alpha Theta, and Tau Kappa Epsilon in academics, community outreach, and personal and professional growth.

For the past 15 years, Kevin has also served as the President of UCPEA.

Madam Speaker, the success of our education systems relies on the strength and passion of our academic leaders. I can personally attest to Kevin's passion for education, the UConn community, and the students he advises, which has led many to conclude that he "bleeds husky blue". While his leadership with the UCPEA will certainly be missed, he will continue to enrich the UConn community and energize its students. I ask my colleagues to join with me and the UConn community in recognizing his decades of service.

BRITTANY SMITH

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brittany Smith who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brittany Smith is a senior at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brittany Smith is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Brittany Smith for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her academic career to her future accomplishments.

TRIBUTE TO JEFFREY M. COHEN

HON. CONNIE MACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of my most trusted advisors and closest friends, Jeffrey M. Cohen.

Jeff has a long history with the Mack Family, going back almost 20 years. He interned for my father, U.S. Senator Connie Mack III, and later served as his press secretary for several years. After working in a variety of public relations and management positions in the private sector and on political campaigns, Jeff agreed to serve as my campaign manager during my first run for Congress in 2004.

Since then, Jeff has been my right-hand man, effectively and efficiently managing my congressional office as well as my 2006 and 2008 campaigns. He is my sounding board, a dedicated public servant, and a strong advocate for the ideals of freedom and free markets. Jeff is passionate about what he does and his work and management style reflect this.

A professional with Jeff's talents and expertise would be an attractive candidate for any firm, and I've been fortunate to have him by my side for so many years. But Jeff has been

afforded a wonderful opportunity that will allow him to grow in his career.

After 5½ years as my chief of staff, Jeff is moving on to take a position in the private sector.

Jeff has been named executive vice president of Alexandria, Virginia-based Direct Impact, a leading national grassroots, public affairs, public education and corporate reputation firm, and a subsidiary of Burson-Marsteller.

While I am happy for Jeff to begin this next phase of his professional career, make no mistake about it, he will be greatly missed. He has been a valuable member and irreplaceable part of my team, but I will continue to count on his advice and friendship in the years ahead.

Madam Speaker, I would not be where I am today were it not for Jeff's dedication, service and hard work. On behalf of the people of Florida's Fourteenth Congressional District, I want to thank Jeff for his years of service to the people of Florida and the Nation. He is my friend, he is a true public servant in every sense of the word, and I wish him all the best as he begins this new and exciting chapter of his life.

HONORING 43 YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE OF ROBERT WAYNE WILCOX

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 43 years of military service of Robert Wayne Wilcox, a farmer from Moberly and Randolph County Eastern District Commissioner. I want to commend Mr. Wilcox for his two combat tours in Vietnam and two tours in Iraq, and I would also like to draw special attention to the fact that Mr. Wilcox volunteered for multiple tours of duty in both Vietnam and Iraq.

Mr. Wilcox began his military career by entering active duty on March 21, 1966 and served proudly until this past March 23, 2009. Mr. Wilcox accumulated more than 4,000 hours of flight time as a military pilot and during his last tour of duty in Iraq, he flew Black Hawk helicopters in over 400 hours of combat.

Mr. Wilcox has attained numerous awards, including: three Bronze Stars for meritorious service, one Meritorious Service Medal, one Army Commendation Medal, 18 Air Medals, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" device, one Army Service Ribbon, an Army Reserve Component Overseas Training Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross with bronze star attachment.

Our soldiers, sailors, and pilots sacrifice everything they have in service to America and will serve as a permanent reminder of the bravery, loyal patriotism, and love of country.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing Robert Wayne Wilcox our sincerest thanks and appreciation for his commitment, dedication, and service to

our nation. It is an honor to represent him in the United States Congress.

IN MEMORY OF MAYOR BOB WASSON

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 18, 2009

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I inform the House of the death of Mayor Bob Wasson of Sedalia, Missouri. Bob was a lovely man and a dedicated servant to the city of Sedalia, his family, and his friends.

Bob was born on October 20, 1933, in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was raised in Sedalia, Missouri, and graduated from Hughesville High School. In 1953, Bob dedicated his services to the country by volunteering for the army during the Korean War. He spent his time in Korea as a typist and played a pivotal role in hiring KATUSA soldiers, Korean Augmentation Troops to the United States.

In 1962, Bob married his wife, Eleanor. In 1974, they moved back to Missouri, where Bob spent the remainder of his years dedicating his time and efforts to the community. He began his service as owner of his local grocery store, Bob's AF Super. It was through his store that Bob began to meet and interact with residents of Sedalia. In addition, Bob also spent several years as the director of the Sedalia Senior Center. In 1994, he began to reach out to the community by preaching at the Broadway Baptist Church. He was ordained in 1997 and spent time preaching at the Dresden Baptist Church and the Lamine Baptist Church before becoming the pastor at Mt. Herman Baptist Church, where he remained pastor up until his death. As Bob steadily became a noticeable figure in the Sedalia area, the decision was made to run for public office in 2002. Having no previous political experience, Bob was victorious in his first mayoral election, defeating the 11-year incumbent, winning more than 70 percent of the votes.

As a politician, Bob is noted for starting the new recycling program, building a new community center, supporting Whiteman Air Force Base, and developing the economy. However, he is most known for his visibility in the community and his interaction with Sedalia citizens. Councilwoman Wanda Monsees framed it well when she said, "When I think of Mayor Wasson, the image I get, is of how he would be in the parades, and he would have his young grandsons with him. That just personifies the kind of guy he was to me."

In 2008, Bob was diagnosed with a brain tumor and in April he underwent surgery to remove it. In May, he underwent a second surgery to remove a tumor discovered in his colon. However, even while battling cancer, Bob continued to serve Sedalia as Mayor. I admire the tenacity he displayed as he battled cancer and the courage it took to continue working and providing sound advice during difficult times.

Madam Speaker, Bob Wasson was a great man. It was a pleasure to work with him on issues that affected Sedalia and central Missouri because he fought hard to make it a better area. I will miss him terribly and I hope the