

Mary Levell Peart Straker, the late Andrea May Levell Franklin, and one son Bryan James Levell. Mrs. Levell used to say having four children in five years was like having her own classroom. A graduate of the New York City public school system, she completed her undergraduate degree at Brooklyn College and received her Master's degree in Linguistics from Long Island University.

Armed with her faith, a wonderful mother and supportive extended family, Juanita pushed ahead to achieve her goals. She began working in the New York City public school system as a teacher of English as a Second Language commonly known as E.S.L. Juanita was serving in a school that had students from well over 50 countries speaking over 100 languages. She has taught from elementary through high school, as well as adult education. Her participation in conferences, seminars and workshops for over 30 years has kept her current and well qualified in her profession.

Juanita retired in 2008 from her full-time teaching position but continues to work part-time as an English teacher. The connection to her community and her faith has been a steady part of Juanita's life from her work in the church, in school and in her neighborhood. Juanita has been a member of civic and social groups from childhood to the present. She has been active with Cornerstone Baptist Church, the Jewels S.C., NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.—Delta Rho Omega Chapter, Jack and Jill of America, Inc. (Brooklyn Chapter), American Association of University Women, Verona Place—Macon Street Block Association, United Federation of Teachers, National Council of Negro Women, Brooklyn Historical Society, Schomburg Center for Cultural Learning, Brooklyn College Alumni Association, Association of Blacks in Education—NY, Business and Professional Women's Organization of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Women's Caucus for Congressman Towns, and AARP.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Juanita Theresa Williams Levell.

SALUTING THE MEMORY OF BEN ALI, FOUNDER OF WASHINGTON D.C.'S BEN'S CHILI BOWL

### HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the memory of Ben Ali, founder and owner of Ben's Chili Bowl, a local historical landmark. Dubbed "King of the Half-Smoke" by Washingtonians who flocked to Ben's daily, Mr. Ali died earlier this month at the age of 82.

Ben Ali exemplified the American Dream through his entrepreneurial spirit and endurance. An immigrant from Trinidad, Ben opened his namesake restaurant on August 22, 1958 with the help of his wife, Virginia. In the process, Mr. Ali shaped the city of Washington and its unique U-Street Corridor by serving his trademark chili dishes to generations of diners.

Opened during U Street's heyday as an African American Cultural Mecca, Ben's Chili Bowl has withstood major neighborhood construction projects, national economic shifts,

and the notorious 1968 riots, which ravaged much of the city. During that dark night, Ben's Chili Bowl was one of only two establishments left unscathed.

In the early 1990s, Ben's Chili Bowl stood as an unyielding anchor of the neighborhood's rebirth, and continues to serve dignitaries, celebrities, and local guests alike. All are loyal customers of Ben's Half-Smokes and Chili Cheeseburgers, a personal favorite of mine since 1969.

Ben's Chili Bowl will persist as a Washington institution, a symbol of unity and strength in a city that has seen its share of hard times. Today, a tourist may dine next to an elected official, or a school boy next to his sports hero, as they all gather together for the incomparable experience of enjoying Ben's famous chili.

Madam Speaker, I ask that we honor Ben Ali for his exceptional contributions to our community. The vital role that both he and Ben's Chili Bowl will continue to play in Washington will be his lasting legacy. I ask that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Mr. Ben Ali.

TRIBUTE TO THE TOWN OF WESTMINSTER ON THE OCCASION OF THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING

### HON. JOHN W. OLVER

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. OLVER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the founding of Westminister, Massachusetts 250 years ago on October 20, 1759. The following history provided by the Town's 250th Anniversary Committee vividly details a community with a rich cultural heritage and great natural beauty.

Nestled at the foot of Mount Wachusett, the highest mountain in central Massachusetts, Westminister was unsettled territory at the beginning of the 18th century. The land had been designated as payment for soldiers who had fought in King Phillip's War, but for many years no one was interested in leaving the comforts of home to settle in the wilderness. In 1737, however, the descendants of those veterans and others were drawn to the region's bounty and began to settle the region. As the population grew it became a district in 1759 and was given the name of Westminister, a name rooted in traditions of England. Full incorporation of the town came in 1770.

On June 10, 1776 Westminister residents voted to "stand by and support the (Continental Congress) with their lives and fortunes if they should declare independence on the Crown of Great Britain." During the American Revolution, three hundred fifty six Westminister men served either as Minutemen or enlisted soldiers in the American Continental Army.

Water was essential to the early industrial growth of Westminister in the 19th century, beginning with sawmills, gristmills, fulling mills, and tanneries. These industries were followed by the manufacturing of chairs, other furniture, and paper. But when the railroad bypassed the center of town in mid-century, the factories lost their ability to cheaply bring raw materials into town and transport their finished products to the world. Today there is little evidence of these early industries.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, residents of Westminister found jobs in neighboring cities. Indeed, it became clear that Westminister now had the strategic advantage of being located on and near major highways that pass through the Commonwealth.

Today, Westminister's cultural heritage and rural, scenic beauty are appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The Westminister Cracker Factory, the longest running cracker bakery in the country, closed in the 1970s but the red clapboard building is a landmark which anchors the east end of Main Street. The town common on top of Academy Hill and the town center are remarkably preserved and greatly contribute to the Town's distinction of having one of the largest National Register Historic Districts in Massachusetts. Visitors of all ages enjoy Westminister—whether by skiing, hiking or viewing the autumn foliage on Mount Wachusett, dining at the Old Mill while watching ducks swimming on the nearby pond, or taking a tour of Wachusett Brewery.

I am very proud to represent this community, which is rich in history, in natural beauty, and in the public spirit of its citizenry. Please join me in congratulating the Town of Westminister as it celebrates its 250th Anniversary.

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a milestone event in the cultural history of New York City. This month, El Museo del Barrio, New York's leading Latino cultural institution, celebrates its 40th Anniversary. There is much to be proud of when we speak of El Museo: the beautiful physical space it now occupies; the extraordinary talent it continues to attract; the superb quality of its collections; and the professionalism and dedication of its staff. But for me what stands out most about El Museo is that it has never stopped growing and evolving. Much like the community in which it makes its home, El Museo continues to reinvent itself for new waves of residents and new generations of New Yorkers.

El Museo del Barrio was founded 40 years ago by Puerto Rican artist and educator Raphael Montaleiz Ortiz, who gathered together parents, artists, and activists, to address the absence of Puerto Rican and other Latino artists at larger mainstream institutions. Since its founding, El Museo has been dedicated to showcasing Latino culture. Its permanent collection includes over 6,500 objects which span more than 800 years of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino artistic expression. A wonderfully diverse body of art, this collection includes everything from pre-Columbian Taino artifacts to twentieth-century drawings and paintings, to prints, sculpture, photography and documentary film and video. Located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and E. 104th Street, El Museo is firmly situated on New York's illustrious Museum Mile, but is also far enough uptown to reach into Manhattan's historic El Barrio. Today, more than 100,000 people visit El Museo each year from all backgrounds and walks of life.

On Saturday, October 17th, the museum will hosted an all day celebration and open house to mark the anniversary as well as the opening of El Museo's newly renovated facility. Two new exhibitions will be on display, one of which highlights four decades of El Museo's permanent collection. And to dramatize El Museo's impact on the cultural life of New York City, the Empire State Building was illuminated in the museum's signature mango-yellow color for the entire weekend, so the city as a whole could share in this momentous re-opening.

Madam Speaker, from humble beginnings in East Harlem's Puerto Rican community, this landmark of learning and wonder has emerged as a destination for people from all over the world. They come for many reasons: for the history that is taught, for the remarkable work on display, and, not the least of all, people come to El Museo to feel connected—connected to the past and the future of the Latino diaspora in this great international city. El Museo's holdings and exhibitions are a gift to all New Yorkers and to the world, and for this reason I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the 40th Anniversary of El Museo del Barrio.

RECOGNIZING THE JACOB MICHAEL DAVIS FOUNDATION 4TH ANNUAL EVENT

**HON. CANDICE S. MILLER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Jacob Michael Davis Foundation located in Macomb County, Michigan. This non-profit organization was created in the loving memory of 7-year old Jacob Michael Davis, who sadly passed away in 2005 after a hard fought battle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

The organization will be hosting its 4th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser on November 14th in Shelby Township, so I want to highlight the great work the foundation has performed over the few short years since its inception.

The foundation has carried forward Jacob's legacy—his giving spirit and his unique ability to comfort other young patients while he himself was seeking medical treatment. The foundation has also picked up his torch of hope as it continues to spread his light of compassion and pass his courage on to other families who unfortunately have had to cope with childhood cancer. Although based in the State of Michigan, the Jacob Michael Davis Foundation has extended its helping hand across this great nation, from coast to coast and places in between.

The effects of any childhood illness can be devastating on a family. The emotional and financial distress can leave a mother and father feeling like they have no options, and sometimes even worse with a negative outlook on the future. With so many variables to deal with, families can easily become overwhelmed and lose focus of the primary objective—the care, treatment and recovery of the child.

But these fears and unknowns are exactly the reason why the Jacob Michael Davis Foundation was created. The foundation is a source of comfort to assist families with those

unexpected financial burdens not necessarily covered by insurance. For example—travel and temporary housing expenses, medical equipment, mental health programs, academic and school tutoring support, post-treatment survivorship programs and bereavement counseling. These are just a few of the economic barriers that the foundation seeks to remove.

The Foundation's goal is to help families keep their energies focused on the recovery and the healing of the child. Amazingly, the staff, volunteers and board members of the Jacob Michael Davis Foundation do not accept any form of monetary compensation, ensuring that every possible cent is spent to assist those families in need. This certainly speaks volumes about the people who believe in the foundation's mission and the remarkable work they have achieved, continue to achieve and hope to achieve in the future. It certainly is my honor to commend all the volunteers for their charitable and dedicated work.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that last month I added my name as a cosponsor to H.R. 1230 which was introduced by my colleague, Representative Doris Matsui, from California. This legislation seeks to establish a National Acquired Bone Marrow Failure Disease Registry and authorize research on bone marrow diseases. I encourage other Members to support this bill and join in the fight to defeat this disease.

In conclusion, I offer my support to the Jacob Michael Davis Foundation on this special occasion. I wish everyone in attendance all the best and hope you have a very successful evening. You are helping to sustain a wonderful cause. I know that in memory of Jacob you will never lose faith in your mission and your passion will be forever alive.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INSPECTOR GENERAL AUTHORITY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2009

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today the "Department of Justice Inspector General Authority Improvement Act of 2009." This Act will authorize the Department of Justice Inspector General to investigate attorney misconduct within the Department of Justice.

Whether we have a Democratic or Republican administration, I believe we should have strong and vigorous oversight of the Department of Justice. At present, however, the Department of Justice Inspector General is limited in his ability to investigate allegations of misconduct. Instead, present law, to the surprise of many, requires that all allegations of wrongdoing by the Department of Justice attorneys be investigated not by the Inspector General, but by the department's Office of Professional Responsibility.

In contrast with the statutorily independent Inspector General, the Office of Professional Responsibility is supervised by the Attorney General. It is absolutely contrary to human experience to believe that the counsel to the Office of Professional Responsibility can aggressively and independently investigate high level officials in the department when the Attorney

General himself has authority over such investigation.

This limitation on authority does not exist for any other Inspector General of other agencies. Accordingly, the Department's Inspector General should have the same power Inspector Generals have throughout the government to investigate any and all allegations of wrongdoing that arise in their department.

In the last Congress, I offered this provision as an Amendment to H.R. 924, the Improving Government Accountability Act. It passed the House, however, it was stripped from the final Bill when the measure went to the Senate. I am introducing this legislation again today because I believe that transparency and vigorous oversight are essential to maintain the checks and balances of our constitutional system.

As documented in my recently released report, "Reining in the Imperial Presidency: Lessons and Recommendations Relating to the presidency of George W. Bush," there was serious misconduct on the part of Department of Justice attorneys, including alleged misconduct by high level politically appointed attorneys, in connection with hiring attorneys for the Civil Rights Division or in other components of the Department. However, due to the unique limitations on his power, it was difficult for the Inspector General to fully investigate these allegations. I certainly trust those sorts of abuses are unlikely to recur in this Administration.

This legislation will help prevent future abuses and politicization of the Department of Justice by improving the Inspector General's tools to effectively carry out his mission. Such vigorous oversight is a matter of good government, regardless of the political party in power.

HONORING PETE GEREN, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE AND ARMY SECRETARY

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of an extraordinary public servant, Pete Geren, who recently stepped down as Secretary of the Army. I am incredibly privileged to call Mr. Geren a close friend, and I am so happy to celebrate this man's distinguished career and service.

Mr. Geren hails from Fort Worth, Texas, and after receiving a Bachelor's Degree and a Law Degree from the University of Texas, he worked as an aide to Senator Lloyd Bentsen. In 1989, he was elected to represent the 12th District of Texas in the United States House of Representatives and would serve in that capacity for four terms. In 2001, Mr. Geren took a position with the Department of Defense as Special Assistant to the Defense Secretary, and later served brief periods as acting Air Force Secretary and Undersecretary of the Army before being appointed to Secretary of the Army in 2007.

Throughout his career, Mr. Geren has worked diligently to represent the best interests of the people he serves, including the citizens of the 12th District of Texas and the soldiers in our armed forces. When he took over