

Mexican immigrant mother in Gary, IN, found herself with no job, no money and no food. So she did the only thing she could think of: She decided to pack up her young son and move back to Mexico, where they would at least have something to eat.

Fortunately for the city of Chicago, which I am honored to represent, the old Model T Ford they rode in overturned near Albuquerque, leaving them stranded without money.

The mother took a job as a farm worker and they began migrating between sugar beet fields in the Black Hills of South Dakota and tomato farms in Minnesota and Iowa.

Eventually, they landed in Chicago.

Over the next seven decades, that little boy, Arturo Velasquez, would become a civic treasure in Chicago: an entrepreneur, philanthropist, activist, advisor to Chicago's leaders, and patriarch of one of Chicago's leading Hispanic families.

Arturo Velasquez was dedicated to his family, his church, his business, and the city of Chicago, especially the Mexican American community on Chicago's South Side.

This past Friday, Mr. Velasquez passed on at the age of 93. But his influence will live on in the people he inspired, the lives he helped change, and the opportunities he helped create for so many.

Mr. Velasquez was a gracious man. He was also humble. He used to describe himself as a "jukebox operator."

In fact, he owned one of Chicago's largest music and game firms, Velasquez Automated Music Co, which he founded more than 70 years ago. It is run today by his son Ed and daughter Maria Elena.

In 1970, Mr. Velasquez helped another son, Art, found Azteca Foods, Inc; which supplies thousands of groceries and restaurants with tortillas and other food products.

He played a key role in the establishment of the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce, the Azteca Lions Club, the Illinois Federation of Mexican Americans and many other business and civic groups.

Formal education was a luxury for Mr. Velasquez, as it is for many children of migrant workers.

He attended 13 different grade schools and he never went to high school. But he was a strong advocate for education.

He was determined that all five of his children would graduate from college, and they did.

He also worked tirelessly for decades to provide other young people, especially Mexican Americans, with the educational opportunities he himself never received.

He served as a trustee for two colleges: the City Colleges of Chicago and National Louis University.

And a year ago, Chicago City Colleges' West Side Technical Institute, which Mr. Velasquez supported strongly, was renamed in his honor.

Arturo Velasquez continues to help others, even now.

His family asks that anyone wishing to honor his memory donate to two causes that were important to him.

The first is the City Colleges of Chicago Foundation for Scholarships to the Arturo Velasquez West Side Technical Institute, a scholarship fund for Latinos in the 2-year technical education program who want to go on to 4-year colleges.

The second cause is Alivio Medical Center, near and dear to my heart, a community health center, founded by Mr. Velasquez's daughter Carmen, that provides free health care to thousands of Chicago families each year in the mostly Latino Pilsen, Little Village and Back of the Yards neighborhoods.

I cannot tell you how impressed I am with Carmen and her work at Alivio. The fact that her father inspired her and now wants to continue helping her, even in his passing, says a lot about the family.

Mr. Velasquez received many well-deserved accolades including an honorary doctorate for public service from St. Xavier University, and the Ohtl Award from the Mexican government, the highest award to a Mexican who lives outside that country.

And in 2002, he was honored by the Chicago Historical Society with its Making History Award.

But what meant most to Mr. Velasquez was his family.

He and his wife Shirley were married for 72 years. They were blessed with five children, 11 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

As a young father, Mr. Velasquez dreamed of being able to provide his family with a home of their own.

It took a while. He bought an empty lot at 72nd Street and St. Louis Avenue in 1945. But he did not build a house on it until 1950.

Mrs. Velasquez once told a reporter, "Every Sunday he would take the kids to the empty lot. He'd tell them, 'Go jump on it. It's yours.' And I'd say, 'Can't you think of any other place to go?'"

In 1959, Mr. Velasquez covered the White Sox for a Spanish-language newspaper. That year, the Sox won their first division pennant in 40 years, only to lose the World Series to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

In 2005, he saw his great-grandson Willy throw out the first pitch during Game 2 of the division series.

He had tickets to every game of the playoffs.

And he saw his beloved White Sox, at last, win the World Series, another dream come true for a man who made the dreams of so many others possible.

I want to express my deep condolences to his wife Shirley, their children, Art, Raymond, Carmen, Maria Elena and Edward, and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Arturo Velasquez was a gracious and generous man and a true community leader. He will be greatly missed.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, today I rise to pay tribute to 11 young Americans who have been killed in Iraq since November 19. This brings to 870 the number of servicemembers either from California or based in California that have been killed while serving our country in Iraq. This represents 20 percent of all U.S. deaths in Iraq.

GySgt Marcelo R. Velasco, 40, of Miami, FL, died November 19 from injuries sustained in a non-hostile incident in Anbar province, Iraq. Gunnery Sergeant Velasco was assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Robert L. Johnson, 21, of Central Point, OR, died December 20 as a result of a nonhostile incident in Anbar province, Iraq. Lance Corporal Johnson was assigned to the 5th Combat Logistics Battalion, 1st Combat Logistics Regiment, 1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SPC Tony J. Gonzales, 20, of Newman, CA, died December 28 in Sadr City, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Specialist Gonzales was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany.

PFC Benjamin B. Tollefson, 22, of Concord, CA, died December 31 in Balad, Iraq, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with indirect fire in Ghazaliya. Private First Class Tollefson was assigned to the Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, KS.

PFC Grant A. Cotting, 19, of Corona, CA, died January 24 in Kut, Iraq, of injuries sustained from a noncombat related incident. Private First Class Cotting was assigned to the 515th Sapper Company, 5th Engineer Battalion, 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Fort Leonard Wood, MO.

SSG Sean D. Diamond, 41, of Dublin, CA, died February 15 in As Salam, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Staff Sergeant Diamond was assigned to the 610th Engineer Support Company, 14th Engineer Battalion, 555th Engineer Brigade, Fort Lewis, WA.

1LT Daniel B. Hyde, 24, of Modesto, CA, died March 7 in Samarra, Iraq, of wounds sustained in Tikrit when an explosive device struck his unit vehicle. First Lieutenant Hyde was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, HI.

PFC Bryce E. Gautier, 22, of Cypress, CA, died April 10 when his military vehicle was struck by a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Mosul, Iraq. Private First Class Gautier was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO.

SFC Bryan E. Hall, 32, of Elk Grove, CA, died April 10 when his military vehicle was struck by a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Mosul, Iraq. Sergeant First Class Hall was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO.

SGT Raul Moncada, 29, of Madera, CA, died April 13 near Baghdad, Iraq, of wounds sustained when an explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Sergeant Moncada was assigned to the 563rd Military Police Company, 91st Military Police Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Light Infantry, Fort Drum, NY.

LCpl Ray A. Spencer II, 20, of Ridgecrest, CA, died April 16 as a result of a non-hostile incident in Anbar province, Iraq. Lance Corporal Spencer was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, Kaneohe Bay, HI.

I would also like to pay tribute to the four soldiers from CA who have died while serving our country in Operation Enduring Freedom since November 19.

SSG Joshua R. Townsend, 30, of Solvang, CA, died January 16 in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained in a noncombat related incident. Staff Sergeant Townsend was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Airborne, Fort Bragg, NC.

SSgt Daniel L. Hansen, 24, of Tracy, CA, died February 14 while supporting combat operations in Farah province, Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Hansen was assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron 171, Marine Wing Support Group 17, 1st Marine Air Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Iwakuni, Japan.

LT Florence B. Choe, 35, of El Cajon, CA, died March 27 when an insurgent posing as an Afghan National Army soldier opened fire on personnel assigned to Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan at Camp Shaheen, Mazar-E-Sharif, Afghanistan.

A1C Jacob I. Ramsey, 20, of Hesperia, CA, died April 10 of injuries sustained from a noncombat related incident in Kabul, Afghanistan. Airman First Class Ramsey was assigned to the 712th Air Support Operations Squadron, Fort Hood, TX.

CORPORAL MICHEAL B. ALLEMAN

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to CPL Micheal B. Alleman of Logan, UT. Corporal Alleman died in the service to our country on February 23, 2009, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit using small arms in Iraq's Diyala Province. He was 32 years old and is survived by his parents Boyd and Susan Alleman, his wife Amy, and their two sons Kai and Kennet.

Corporal Alleman served in the 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Wainwright, AK.

Two years ago, Micheal Alleman decided to put his teaching career on hold to enlist in the U.S. Army. When he explained this decision to his fifth grade class at Nibley Elementary School, he said he wanted to be like the Nation's first President, who left his career as a Virginia planter to take up arms against the British monarchy. He said that George Washington was his hero.

I am proud to talk about another American hero today, CPL Micheal Alleman. He defines what makes our Nation great. With absolute surety, he exhibited a devotion to duty and sense of purpose that transcends personal comfort and desire. Corporal Alleman heard his country's call to duty and in that service he gave his last full measure of devotion. He gave his life so we can continue to remain safe and free each day.

As I read accounts from his family and friends, it was readily apparent he was a tremendously selfless and caring man. He was described as a man who deeply loved his family and cared about those around him. His family would bend over backward for anyone. It is no wonder he so readily decided to serve this Nation.

Let us not forget the sacrifice of CPL Micheal Alleman. His service should inspire everyone in this Chamber. I thank him for his service and pray for his family and friends during this tremendously difficult time. His wife Amy stated, "My boys will always know their father stood up to defend this country." Well, so shall we also remember and cherish the memory of his service.

TREATMENT OF DETAINEES IN U.S. CUSTODY

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, today we are releasing the declassified report of the Senate Armed Services Committee's investigation into the treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. The report was approved by the committee on November 20, 2008, and has, in the intervening period, been under review at the Department of Defense for declassification.

In my judgment, the report represents a condemnation of both the Bush administration's interrogation policies and of senior administration officials who attempted to shift the blame for abuse—such as that seen at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, and Afghanistan—to low ranking soldiers. Claims, such as that made by former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz that detainee abuses could be chalked up to the unauthorized acts of a "few bad apples," were simply false.

The truth is that, early on, it was senior civilian leaders who set the tone. On September 16, 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney suggested that the United States turn to the "dark side" in our response to 9/11. Not long after that, after White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales called parts of the

Geneva Conventions "quaint," President Bush determined that provisions of the Geneva Conventions did not apply to certain detainees. Other senior officials followed the President and Vice President's lead, authorizing policies that included harsh and abusive interrogation techniques.

The record established by the committee's investigation shows that senior officials sought out information on, were aware of training in, and authorized the use of abusive interrogation techniques. Those senior officials bear significant responsibility for creating the legal and operational framework for the abuses. As the committee report concluded, authorizations of aggressive interrogation techniques by senior officials resulted in abuse and conveyed the message that physical pressures and degradation were appropriate treatment for detainees in U.S. military custody.

In a May 10, 2007, letter to his troops, GEN David Petraeus said that "what sets us apart from our enemies in this fight . . . is how we behave. In everything we do, we must observe the standards and values that dictate that we treat noncombatants and detainees with dignity and respect. While we are warriors, we are also all human beings." With last week's release of the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, OLC, opinions, it is now widely known that Bush administration officials distorted Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape "SERE" training—a legitimate program used by the military to train our troops to resist abusive enemy interrogations—by authorizing abusive techniques from SERE for use in detainee interrogations. Those decisions conveyed the message that abusive treatment was appropriate for detainees in U.S. custody. They were also an affront to the values articulated by General Petraeus.

In SERE training, U.S. troops are briefly exposed, in a highly controlled setting, to abusive interrogation techniques used by enemies that refuse to follow the Geneva Conventions. The techniques are based on tactics used by Chinese Communists against American soldiers during the Korean war for the purpose of eliciting false confessions for propaganda purposes. Techniques used in SERE training include stripping trainees of their clothing, placing them in stress positions, putting hoods over their heads, subjecting them to face and body slaps, depriving them of sleep, throwing them up against a wall, confining them in a small box, treating them like animals, subjecting them to loud music and flashing lights, and exposing them to extreme temperatures. Until recently, the Navy SERE school also used waterboarding. The purpose of the SERE program is to provide U.S. troops who might be captured a taste of the treatment they might face so that they might have a better chance of surviving captivity and resisting abusive and coercive interrogations.