

Sufaat fit the bill. In 1987, he graduated from California State University at Sacramento with a bachelors degree in biological sciences and a minor in chemistry. In 2001, Sufaat put his degree to work for al Qaeda. The 9/11 Commission found that he spent "several months attempting to cultivate anthrax for al Qaeda in a laboratory he helped set up near the Kandahar airport," which was then a key facility controlled by Osama bin Laden.

Batarfi met Sufaat during this time period.

During one of Batarfi's ARB hearings, the following allegation was read aloud: "In mid-August 2001, [Batarfi] met a Malaysian microbiologist in Kandahar at the Hap Habbash guesthouse. This microbiologist wanted to equip a lab and train the Afghans to test blood."

Batarfi did not deny the allegation, instead he offered this answer: "He was a student, he was not a microbiologist. He wanted to complete his studies and he asked me [for help]. He was only here for four months and had wanted to learn from the people in the hospital how to used (sic) blood-testing equipment. He asked me if he could purchase this medical equipment from Pakistan because in Afghanistan there were not any facilities to purchase it. I told him we could purchase it through [the] al Wafa Office and donate it to the hospital instead of you getting the money from yourself."

One of the board members then asked, "What kind of medical equipment?" Batarfi responded: "It was [a] centrifuge, anti placenta for blood groupings; it was [an] autoclave for blood spacement. It was very simple equipment. He said it was approximately \$5000."

Later, during that same ARB session, the following allegation was read: "The Detainee told another al Wafa volunteer to purchase four to five thousand United States Dollars worth of medical equipment for the Malaysian microbiologist."

Again, Batarfi responded: "... I told the Malaysian microbiologist, if you want to purchase the \$5000 worth of items for the lab it is better to purchase it through al Wafa and you give the money to Afghanistan to me and then send it to Pakistan because it is unsafe."

Note that Batarfi did not deny meeting with the "Malaysian microbiologist," who is most likely Sufaat, or that he authorized al Wafa's purchase of lab equipment for him. Instead, he claimed that the microbiologist was only a "student" who "wanted to complete his studies." Moreover, Batarfi said the equipment was for supposedly innocuous blood-testing.

But Sufaat was no student at the time. Sufaat had graduated from California State years earlier. And al Qaeda tasked Sufaat with finding a way to manufacture anthrax, which is not an assignment that would be given to a mere student. Batarfi's ties to Sufaat are particularly troubling because, after the September 11 attacks, U.S. authorities found that al Qaeda's biological and chemical weapons programs were far more advanced than previously suspected. It is certainly plausible, if not likely given the allegations made against Batarfi while he was at Gitmo, that the equipment Batarfi agreed to purchase for Sufaat was part of this program—possibly to test blood for anthrax infections.

Batarfi was aware of how serious the allegations concerning Sufaat were. During the same hearing, Batarfi protested:

"They put my case with the Malaysian guy because he was a microbiologist. But now I found they claim he was [in the] anthrax field. So I did not know anything about this charge. He was a student who did not complete his studies and he was in Afghanistan

for only four months to work with the technicians about the lab test."

Thus, Batarfi's own testimony indicates he met with and approved the purchase of equipment for al Qaeda's anthrax scientist. Batarfi's denials were only tailored to convey his own supposed ignorance of what was really going on. But there is no reason we should take Batarfi's excuses at face value. Batarfi's denials are tissue-thin.

Indeed, Batarfi made a number of similar admissions in the context of hollow denials during his hearings at Gitmo. Batarfi admitted he purchased cyanide, but claimed it was for dental fillings. He admitted he worked for al Wafa, but claimed the al Qaeda-designated charity wasn't really an al Qaeda front. Batarfi admitted that he met with bin Laden in the Tora Bora Mountains in November 2001. But, Batarfi claimed, he sent a letter to someone (he does not say to whom) asking to meet with the "head of the mountain" and, somewhat magically, just happened to get a face-to-face sit down with the world's most wanted terrorist—at Tora Bora, in November of 2001—you know, when the whole world was looking for him. This was the second time Batarfi claims to have accidentally met bin Laden. The first time came at a funeral in Kabul when, again, bin Laden just happened upon the scene. Batarfi also admitted he stayed at various al Qaeda and Taliban guesthouses, but says he didn't realize they were facilities associated with Osama bin Laden at the time. Finally, Batarfi met the Taliban's health minister in 2001 because, well, that's just the sort of thing an al Wafa employee would do.

The bottom line is this: Congressman Wolf has good reasons to think Batarfi was involved in al Qaeda's anthrax program. Brennan says he has a classified assessment showing otherwise. The Obama administration should release it, so we can see how the detainee task force reached this conclusion. Did the task force take Batarfi's empty denials at face value?

In the meantime, there is plenty of evidence in the unclassified files, which are freely available online, showing that Brennan is wrong.

IN HONOR OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHILDEHELP

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Childhelp and to congratulate them on their 50th Anniversary.

Childhelp is one of the premier national organizations dedicated to leading the fight against child abuse and neglect. Founded in 1959 by Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Feddersen, Childhelp's approach focuses on prevention, intervention and treatment. The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and receives calls from throughout the United States, Canada, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam. Childhelp's programs and services also include residential treatment services; children's advocacy centers; therapeutic foster care; group homes; child abuse prevention, education and training; and the National Day of Hope, part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month every April. Several of Childhelp's programs were firsts and continue to be studied by professionals worldwide as "models that work."

Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Feddersen continue to actively lead the organization and provide its vision, serving as Chairman/CEO and President, respectively. Their humanitarian commitment has been recognized throughout the world; Sara and Yvonne were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for three consecutive years, 2005, 2006 and 2007.

It is impossible to know how many lives have been touched by Childhelp, how many children protected, how many families strengthened. Although exact numbers may be difficult to identify, it is clear that Childhelp has filled a critical role in child abuse prevention and education. It would not have been possible for Childhelp to achieve its many successes without the dedication and commitment of their volunteers. They are the heart and soul of the organization; they are the links that keep the chain strong.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Childhelp, especially the volunteers of this incredible organization, for their commitment to the most vulnerable members of our society, our children. I also ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Childhelp on the occasion of its Golden Anniversary.

IN HONOR OF BISHOP DR. AUDREY F. BRONSON

HON. JOE SESTAK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, the great Marian Anderson once said, "Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it." In recognition of her investiture as the first woman President of the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity, I would like to honor an extraordinary individual who personifies the "understanding leader" Ms. Anderson described, Bishop Dr. Audrey F. Bronson.

At the age of 14, this remarkable woman was called to begin her vocation as a preacher. In 1975, she was inspired to establish the Sanctuary Church of the Open Door serving the community of West Philadelphia. In September 1978, the successful Sanctuary Christian Academy was founded to produce students skilled in reading, writing, mathematics, language arts and computer science. Other ministries at the church include Sanctuary Bible Institute; Sanctuary Family Resource Center and Referral Service; Sanctuary Christian Day Camp; Dunlap Apartment Complex; and Sanctuary Outreach Ministries.

Bishop Bronson's spirituality, extraordinary intellect and selfless nature reflect the nurturing of her loving and learned parents and brother. Her father, Dr. Uriah Perry Bronson, was a minister and pastor of churches and principal of several schools in Florida. Her mother and step-mother were both teachers and church workers. Her brother, Dr. Oswald P. Bronson, a United Methodist minister, was pastor of several churches and President of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. He recently retired as President, Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida and currently serves as President, Edward Waters College, Jacksonville, Florida.

Dr. Bronson received her bachelor of science degree in elementary education from

Cheyney University; she also holds a master's degree in psychology from Howard University where she also became a candidate for a Ph.D. in psychology. She earned a doctor of ministry degree from New York Theological Seminary. She holds two honorary degrees from Bethune-Cookman College and a doctor of humane letters from the National Theological Seminary and College. Upon completion of her studies, Dr. Bronson returned to Cheyney in 1967 where she taught for 17 years as an associate professor of psychology. Since retiring from that position to devote her full energies to her growing church, she continues to be a valued member of the Cheyney family.

Her many other appointments include: Dean of the Philadelphia Urban Education Institute, a subsidiary of the African American Interdenominational Ministries, Inc. (AAIM, Inc.) of Philadelphia in association with the major seminaries of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Member of the Board of One Church, One Child, Inc., of Pennsylvania, a statewide organization that encourages members of African-American Churches to adopt African-American children. She was a member of the Mayor of Philadelphia's Transition Team and currently serves on the board of the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation and the Executive Committee of the Association of Theological Schools.

Dr. Bronson's faith has led her to minister in prisons; serve as a block captain; work to rid the community of drugs and violence; feed the hungry; and keep her church doors open seven days a week. She is a tireless agent of change ideally qualified to lead the Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity to new heights as it strives to "help the downtrodden" and those "pushed aside." In many ways, Dr. Bronson has been fulfilling this calling all her life. Early in the HIV/AIDS crisis, when some churches were turning away those afflicted with the disease, Dr. Bronson called on her fellow clergy members to accept those stricken by this terrible disease and to offer education and testing in their communities, a mission she plans on continuing in her new post.

Madam Speaker, I ask that this House acknowledge Bishop Dr. Audrey F. Bronson, as a testament to Marian Wright Edelman's observation that: "education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." Bishop Bronson's life of preaching, learning and teaching has made her a pillar of strength, wisdom, and civic spirit. She has empowered countless African-American families to live fuller, more purposeful lives through their faith in God and one another. With her new responsibilities at the helm of one of the premier spiritual collectives in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, her ability to guide, counsel and inspire across an entire metropolitan region is very welcome news.

Particularly during these very difficult times, she is the perfect "watchman on the wall."

HONORING MARCELLA OBERTI

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Marcella Oberti upon

her 100th birthday. A celebration will be held for Mrs. Oberti on her birthday, December 6th.

Mrs. Marcella Oberti was born on December 6, 1909, in San Francisco, California. Her mother was a native San Franciscan and her father was an immigrant from Genoa, Italy. At the age of 5, Mrs. Oberti participated in the 1913 Pan-Pacific Exposition. As a young girl, she attended Montessori Grammar Schools in San Francisco. Upon graduating from high school, she attended the University of California, Berkley, where she majored in English Literature and Language. She graduated from UC Berkley in 1932 and began working for Bank of America in the legal division.

In 1938, Mrs. Oberti married Frank Oberti and they moved to Madera, California. It was a large transition for her; adjusting from a large city life to rural country life. She became active in the community, joining various clubs and organizations. Mr. Oberti and his brothers were busy developing the Oberti Olive Company, which became Madera's largest industry at that time. The small company grew to include 220 acres, processing over 120 tons of olives per day.

Mr. and Mrs. Oberti have two children: Carla and Philip. Mr. Oberti passed away in 1984. Mrs. Oberti leads a busy life visiting San Francisco, playing bridge with friends, spending time with her family, friends and cat. She spends much of her time with Carla and her husband, Bill, Philip and his wife, Klina, her five grandchildren and her six great-grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Marcella Oberti upon her 100th birthday.

HONORING VIRGINIA S. BAUER

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Virginia S. Bauer of Red Bank, New Jersey. Ms. Bauer will be honored as a "Woman of Distinction" by the Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore for her dedication and commitment to the families and victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Ms. Bauer, a widow of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, worked closely with congressional leaders and the White House to pass legislation for September 11 victims in 2002, and initiated efforts to enact federal tax relief for surviving family members. Currently, Ms. Bauer is assisting in the creation of a new development plan for the World Trade Center site in lower Manhattan. Ms. Bauer also serves as senior vice president of Covenant House and is a commissioner of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The Girl Scouts is an organization dedicated to providing a nurturing environment for young girls to build character and skills for success in the future. It was founded by Juliette Gordon in 1912 in Savannah, Georgia, and has since grown by over three million members worldwide through its many regional chapters. The organization also honors women who represent diversity and leadership in their communities. The Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore will present Ms. Bauer with a "Woman of Distinction" award on April 13, 2010.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope my colleagues will join me in thanking Ms. Bauer for the work she does in supporting my constituency, as well as congratulate her upon receiving the "Woman of Distinction" award from the Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CITY OF FAIRFAX, VA., FIRE CHIEF THOMAS W. OWENS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor City of Fairfax Fire Chief Thomas W. Owens and to recognize his decades of public service.

Chief Owens has had a long and distinguished career in public safety. His journey began in 1969 when, at the age of 16, he joined the Sterling, Va., Volunteer Fire Department. During his 21-year tenure with that organization, he served in all operational capacities and eventually rose to the rank of Chief of the department.

Shortly after he began volunteering with the Sterling Fire Department, Chief Owens began his career as a professional firefighter in 1972 as a Firefighter/Station Office with Prince William County, Va., Fire and Rescue. Between 1972 and 1990, Chief Owens' held a number of positions with several municipal fire departments in the National Capital Region, including those in Prince William, Washington, D.C., Loudoun County, and Fairfax County.

In 1990, Chief Owens stepped down from his duties with the Sterling Volunteer Fire Department. That same year, he became the first Director of Fire and Rescue for the Frederick County, Va., Fire and Rescue Department. In 1998 Chief Owens returned to Northern Virginia as Assistant Fire Chief of the City of Fairfax Fire Department, and, in 2003, he was appointed Chief.

This impressive history of regional service tells only a small part of the Chief Owens story and barely captures his many contributions to our community. Under his leadership, emergency preparedness and public and professional education were top priorities. Chief Owens established a formal Life Safety Education Program which emphasized fire safety education for our most vulnerable residents, children and seniors. In addition, he created a citizen-based Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) with grant funding. His dedication to the continued education of emergency responders helped lead to an expansion of the Public Safety Training Center, the strengthening of flammable liquids firefighting capabilities and the implementation of a swift water rescue program. Under the leadership of Chief Owens, the City established an Office of Emergency Management.

Chief Owens has had a permanent, indelible impact in another unique area. He led the efforts to strengthen and enhance the working relationship between the City of Fairfax Fire Department, the leaders of the Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. and the City of Fairfax Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association which fostered mutual respect, support and cooperation and resulted in second-to-none service to the residents of the