

the late Beatrice. They loved to travel, and visited more than 100 countries during their life together. I offer my deepest condolences to his three sons, Paul, Kurt, and John. The Old Book tells us that "the Lord is close to the brokenhearted," and that is my prayer for you. During this difficult time may you find solace in faith and family.

IN HONOR OF JAMES L. MEYER

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Mr. James L. Meyer for his unfailing service to Alexandria and Central Louisiana. Due to his prominent and tireless efforts for our great state, his legacy will live on as the Alexandria International Airport Commercial Terminal will now be named the James L. Meyer Commercial Terminal.

Mr. Meyer's ambitious career started at Louisiana Tech University where he earned two degrees: one in Chemical Engineering and the latter in Civil Engineering. After his marriage to Mrs. Joy in August of 1957, he served as an officer in United States Air Force from 1957 until 1960. He eventually returned to Alexandria where Mr. Meyer was employed as a design engineer.

In 1968, he decided to start his own engineering firm. While growing James L. Meyer & Associates—his consulting, engineering, and surveying firm—to a successful business with five locations across Louisiana, he also held numerous board positions and received many distinguishable awards for serving his region.

Mr. Meyer's presidency for the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce and becoming the first Chairman of the England Authority are the reasons he is being honored today. His services from both positions evolved a military base closure into a commercial international airport; therefore, air passengers were doubled and millions of dollars were brought into region through capital construction.

Mr. Meyer's efforts reflect how one dedicated person can affect an entire region and his life should be an inspiration to others. His career has brought honor and pride to his family, friends, community, and the state of Louisiana. I congratulate Mr. Meyer upon his legacy that will be known as James L. Meyer Commercial Terminal.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. LARRY
DiCHIARA FOR BEING NAMED
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a special school superintendent today, Dr. Larry DiChiara.

Dr. DiChiara was named Superintendent of the Year by the School Superintendents of Alabama in October 2011.

Dr. DiChiara has always been committed to teaching and helping students. He was a former principal, teacher and coach from

Loachapoka Elementary and High Schools in Lee County, Alabama, before taking over at Phenix City Schools in Russell County.

I'm proud to congratulate Dr. DiChiara on this great achievement and hope he will continue his service for many years to come to our children, parents, teachers and our community. Congratulations!

HONORING ELOUISE COBELL

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join Indian country in mourning the death of Elouise Cobell, who passed away on Sunday, October 16. Her role as lead plaintiff in the historic Cobell v. Salazar litigation has forever changed the way the federal government views the trust responsibility with Native Americans. Elouise Cobell was a true Indian leader.

She was born Elouise Catherine Pepion, November 5, 1945, on the Blackfeet Nation reservation located on the eastern edge of Glacier National Park in Montana. After graduating from Great Falls Business College, she became an accountant and rancher. Later, Elouise served as Treasurer for the Blackfeet Nation for 13 years and helped found the first all Indian owned national bank.

It was during her time as tribal treasurer that she realized the royalty checks received by tribal members seemed substantially lower than the value of the resources owned. She learned as much as she could about the way the federal government handled the Indian trust fund accounts and found that over decades, others in Indian country had claimed the funds were badly mismanaged.

In the mid 1980s Elouise, already frustrated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, BIA, came to Congress looking for assistance and justice for all Individual Indian Money account holders. All she wanted was what all of us expect from our banker—to know how much is in each account and a showing that the balance was correct.

In 1992, the House Government Operations Committee issued a report titled, "Misplaced Trust: The BIA's Mismanagement of the Indian Trust Fund." The report called the BIA's management of Indian trust funds "grossly inadequate in numerous important respects." It further found that the BIA had "failed to fulfill its fiduciary duties to beneficiaries of the Indian Trust Fund."

Congress passed the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994 to give account holders more control over, and access to, their funds, and to provide a model to reform the system. Unfortunately, little was changed at the BIA. Fed up and frustrated with stonewalling and continued mismanagement, in 1996 Elouise filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of more than 500,000 Indians at a time when no one else would.

In 1999, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia confirmed what Indian country had always known—the Department of the Interior had breached its trust obligation to Indians in handling Indian funds. Fourteen years after the case was first filed, 220 days of trial, 80 court decisions, and two contempt citations against Cabinet secretaries later,

President Obama signed into law the landmark \$3.4 billion settlement for the Indian account holders.

Because of Elouise and the litigation that she initiated, the Department of Interior has made numerous changes to the way it does business with respect to Indian funds and trust resources. Seattle University Law School Indian Law Professor Eric Eberhard said there is "no doubt that Elouise Cobell changed the legal landscape when it comes to Indian law and the federal government's trust responsibilities."

Against all odds, Elouise persevered with her commitment to the issue. Since the early 1990s, the Committee on Natural Resources held numerous hearings on the issue associated with the handling of Indian trust funds. It was during my tenure as Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee that I had the privilege and honor of getting to know and work with Elouise. Her dedication to this issue was bar none.

Elouise won so many battles; the only one she lost was to the cancer that took her from us too soon. She will be remembered for her strength, courage, and positive outlook. We can honor her life by continuing the work she started.

I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the life of Elouise Cobell and her many achievements, and in expressing our sincere condolences to her husband Alvin, her son Turk, and all her family and friends.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
NITA THOMAS

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember Mrs. Nita Thomas, whose life and countless contributions to this world should be celebrated by all.

The definitive Southern woman, Nita possessed outstanding character, unwavering faith and matchless elegance. She carried herself with such charisma and poise guaranteed to light up every room she entered.

Her deep devotion to her family and friends is one of her most memorable qualities. With each encounter, Nita's love and joy she felt for her loved ones was evident. I extend my deepest condolences to those this wonderful mother and grandmother leaves behind.

In Acts 20:35, the Lord Jesus himself said "it is more blessed to give than to receive." She was a champion for those with special needs and passionately worked to ensure each person was met with an accepting heart. With all that Nita gifted to everyone she came across, it is indeed apparent she lived her life by these words.

Nita grew in Jackson Parish, where she was taught to love thy neighbor as thyself. She never lost touch with her roots. Nita had the stature and charm to walk with those in the upper echelons of power, but she had the grace and dignity to remember those whom society had forgotten.

Today, our words may seem futile in comparison to the indelible mark Nita left in our hearts. Some say—and I honestly believe—that the heart has its own memory, one that is

more genuine and more sincere than the memory of our minds. Without a shadow of a doubt, I know Nita has a permanent place in the hearts of those who had the good blessing to know her.

To say that Nita left her fingerprint on the world is an understatement. She was a friend and confidant to many, and deemed a source of strength by all; I know she will continue to touch and guide the loved ones she leaves behind.

CONGRATULATING DR. MARK J. LEMA ON THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I rise today to congratulate Mark J. Lema, M.D., Ph.D on receiving the Distinguished Service Award from the American Society of Anesthesiologists. The award is the highest honor bestowed to an individual for lifetime of exemplary service and achievement in the specialty of anesthesiology.

As the 65th recipient of the Distinguished Service Award in the organizations' one-hundred plus year history, Dr. Lema joins an illustrious group of awardees that includes the founders of anesthesiology, and pioneers in the field.

Dr. Lema is currently Chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, N.Y. He also serves as Professor and Chair of Anesthesiology at the University of Buffalo, State University of New York, as well as a board member on the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER). He has also served as president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (2007), the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (2004) and the New York State Society of Anesthesiologists (2001). He is currently President of the Medical Society of the County of Erie.

Dr. Lema received his PhD in physiology from University at Buffalo and his medical degree from SUNY Downstate Medical Center. Throughout his prominent career Dr. Lema has been recognized as one of the country's authorities in the field of anesthesiology. He has served Western New York community with nearly thirty years of service and achievement in scientific research and organized medicine.

Mr. Speaker it is with great pride I recognize Dr. Mark Lema for receiving the Distinguished Service Award and extend my thanks for his countless contributions to the Western New York community in which he calls home.

HONORING UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIALIST RICARDO CERROS, JR.

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and deep sadness that I wish to

commend United States Army Specialist Ricardo Cerros, Jr. for his bravery and willingness to fight for his country. Specialist Cerros was assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. While serving in Afghanistan on his first deployment, Specialist Cerros was killed by enemy forces during a firefight while conducting combat operation on October 8, 2011. His sacrifice will forever be remembered by those he fought to protect.

A native of Gary, Indiana, Ricardo spent his early childhood years in Gary, Indiana, before moving to Salinas, California, to live with his father. He graduated from Everett Alvarez High School in Salinas and continued his studies at the University of California in Irvine. He enlisted in the United States Army in July 2010. Family members recall that Ricardo had a strong feeling to join the military, and that he wanted nothing more than to serve his country. Colleagues remember Specialist Cerros as a well-respected leader. Family and friends remember Ricardo for his cheerfulness, positive attitude, and happy-go-lucky manner. For his courage and sacrifice, Ricardo has been honored by the military with awards including: the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. Ricardo will be greatly missed by so many people in the communities he was part of and forever cherished by those who loved him.

Specialist Cerros leaves behind a loving family. He is survived by his father, Ricardo Cerros, Sr., and stepmother, Deborah A. Cerros, both of Salinas, and his mother, Marguerite D. Cuevas, of Gary, Indiana. Ricardo also leaves to cherish his memory his siblings; Nicholas, Theresa, and Marco Cerros. He also leaves behind many other dear friends and family members, as well as saddened communities and a grateful nation.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring a fallen hero, United States Army Specialist Ricardo Cerros, Jr. Specialist Cerros sacrificed his life in service to his country, and his passing comes as a great loss to our nation, which has once again been shaken by the realities of war. Specialist Cerros will forever remain a hero in the eyes of his family, his communities, and his country. Thus, let us never forget the sacrifice he made to preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today our national debt is \$14,940,671,706,465.75.

On January 6, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$4,302,245,960,171.95 since then. This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

RECOGNIZING DIXIE SMITH AS A HASTINGS' STAR STUDENT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Dixie Smith, a Suncoast High School senior in Riviera Beach, as a Hastings' Star Student. During her junior year of high school, Dixie earned recognition as the Palm Beach County All-Conference selection for diving. This year however, her accomplishments go even further. Recently, world renowned tennis player Serena Williams chose 17-year old Dixie as the recipient for the M Foundation's Silver M Award. With this award, she joins the ranks of previous recipients who are viewed as "exemplary role models" in their communities. The award will present Dixie with a \$1,000 college scholarship and a \$1,000 donation to a charity of her choice. It was Dixie's commitment to giving back to her community which earned her this award.

Without a doubt, Dixie Smith exemplifies the term volunteerism. She started the Autism Speaks club at her high school, teaches gymnastics at Gymnastics Revolution, and also lends her time to instructing developmentally disabled children at the Renaissance Learning Center. Additionally, she has taught surfing to autistic children for the past three years, and has participated in the Surfers for Autism event regularly. In a recent letter, Dixie shared with me how these events served to be a humbling experience as time after time she witnessed children, who were initially afraid of the ocean, overcome their fears and catch waves on their own. She believes that surfing changes them, and the joy felt by their parents as they thank her is better than any award or scholarship she could ever receive. Dixie's work with developmentally disabled children is to be commended. Her selfless service represents a true dedication to the betterment of her community. I am sure Dixie's outstanding achievements are an inspiration to her peers and to the greater Riviera Beach area. I wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

HONORING THE LONG-TIME MEMBERS OF SHEET METAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 20

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sincerity and respect that I offer congratulations to several of Northwest Indiana's most talented, dedicated, and hardworking individuals. On Friday, October 21, 2011, the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 20 honored long-time members with their 25, 40, 50, 60, and 70-year service pins at the Sheet Metal Banquet, which was held at Ambassador Banquets in Hobart, Indiana.

At this year's banquet, the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 20 presented pins for 25 years of membership to: Scott H. Allmon, Jeffery Bacon, George R. Bassett, Jr., Scott Blount, John Breezley, Richard J. Cervantes,