

waiting in line," said Mr. Kennedy, who stepped down this fall after 19 years in the post. "I admired his spunk."

SUNY Potsdam also had cause to mourn the former congressman, and to celebrate his accomplishments. Mr. Martin's papers are held in the college archives, "so that all can remember and learn from his life's work," SUNY Potsdam President John F. Schwaller said.

Times staff writer Brian Kelly contributed to this report.

HONORING MICHAEL T. SUMIDA

HON. STEVE AUSTRIA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2012

Mr. AUSTRIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Michael T. Sumida, recent recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal.

It is an honor to join the people of Ohio's Seventh Congressional District in recognizing Mr. Michael Sumida, whose patriotic work as a Japanese interpreter provided our military with invaluable intelligence and helped bring an end to World War II. As a Japanese American living in Hawaii, Mr. Sumida courageously volunteered his talents to assist the United States military in defeating the Japanese. In the face of racism, Mr. Sumida excelled in acquiring critical enemy intelligence by questioning Japanese prisoners. During his interrogations, Mr. Sumida uncovered the location of enemy troops as well as their plans for attack. The work accomplished by American interpreters was such a valuable asset to military intelligence during World War II that President Truman credited them with ending the war two years prior to the expected end date.

Mr. Sumida currently resides in my hometown of Beavercreek, OH with his wife, Patricia Sumida. It is with great pride along with Ohio's Seventh Congressional district that I honor Michael T. Sumida for his service to our nation.

BUCK RAMBO INDUCTED INTO THE SOUTHERN GOSPEL MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S HALL OF FAME

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2012

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, music is in the very fiber of our being, and we are proud to continually showcase the sounds that call Tennessee "home." I rise today to honor one of Tennessee's great sounds as he is inducted into the Southern Gospel Music Association's Hall of Fame.

Buck Rambo started a Gospel singing group in 1960 and quickly set the world ablaze with great harmonies. It would become The Singing Rambos and the group would release over 70

projects, making them a household name in America, Central America, the Bahamas, and Europe. Adding to their bright career, Buck led the group to television where they were central to the early beginnings of many faith-based stations. The Singing Rambos entertained troops at Strategic Air Command Bases, in Vietnam, and in several European military posts. Having hung up his travel hat, Buck now leads a life of service to his faith, his family, and his community.

The very rhythm of our culture, Gospel music lifts and carries us through our darkest moments to our brightest days. The sounds of The Singing Rambos are deeper than the notes on a page: they are hummed into our souls. I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating Buck Rambo on his induction to the Southern Gospel Music Association's Hall of Fame.

SPEECH ON DETERIORATING SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST PARTICULARLY FOR RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2012

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a speech I recently gave on the deteriorating situation in the Middle East particularly for religious minorities. Increasing violence, targeted attacks and heightened discrimination against Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq and Egypt, combined with longstanding abuses in Afghanistan and Pakistan, are among the many reasons why I introduced H.R. 440, bipartisan legislation that would require the State Department to appoint a special envoy to advocate for religious minorities.

More than a year has passed since the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed this legislation yet, today, both this bill and its Senate companion, S. 1245 are both languishing in the Senate. This is deeply disappointing. Even more disappointing is the fact that the State Department has urged Senator JIM WEBB to oppose this bipartisan legislation and put a hold on it in the Senate.

Time is running out—both in terms of the legislative calendar for this year and in terms of the survival of these communities. Will a special envoy guarantee these communities' protection in the lands they have inhabited for centuries? No one can predict for sure. But I am certain that to do nothing is not an option—lest on the State Department's and Congress' watch we witness a Middle East empty of faith communities, foremost among them the beleaguered Christian community.

Here is the text of my recent speech:

Just one year ago my good friend, the late Chuck Colson was given [the Edwin Meese Award for Religious Liberty] award for his tireless efforts to promote religious liberty and human dignity. His prophetic voice is sorely missed during these trying times for our country. For these are indeed trying

times—times that demand men and women of faith to steel themselves for the challenges ahead. Are we prepared to do so?

I take inspiration from the German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer who, faced with the tyranny and horror of Nazism gave his very life. And the British parliamentarian William Wilberforce, who labored for decades, against seemingly insurmountable odds, to abolish the slave trade in England—ultimately inspiring abolitionist efforts in America. These are just some of the giants on whose shoulders we stand.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 says, "I saw the tears of the oppressed, and they have no comforter; power was on the side of the oppressor." Oppression has marked the church since its birth. Consider the chilling words of Roman historian Tacitus regarding the early church:

"Besides being put to death they were made to serve as objects of amusement; they were clad in the hides of beasts and torn to death by dogs; others were crucified, others set on fire to serve to illuminate the night when daylight failed— . . ."

Are such trials reserved for the history books? Hardly. Every day, around the world, men and women of faith are imprisoned, beaten, detained, tortured and even killed. And yet such stories receive scant attention in the mainstream media—and perhaps more strikingly, are rarely spoken of from our pulpits. The book of Hebrews enjoins us to "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Do we suffer with our brethren? Have we in the West ceased to be salt and light? Has our comfort led to complacency? Consider that on our watch a historic exodus of Christians from the Middle East is underway—an exodus fueled by persecution.

A phrase not often heard outside the majority Muslim world is "First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people." The "Saturday people" are of course the Jews. Their once vibrant communities in countries throughout the region are now decimated. In 1948 there were roughly 150,000 Jews in Iraq—today less than 10 remain. In Egypt, there were once as many as 80,000 Jews and now less than 100 remain.

It appears a similar fate could befall the ancient Christian community in these same lands. Iraq's Christian population has fallen from as many as 1.4 million in 2003 to between 500,000 and 700,000. Churches have been targeted, believers kidnapped for ransom, families threatened with violence if they stay. This reality is all the more sobering considering Iraq's significance in Christendom. With the exception of Israel, the Bible contains more references to the cities, regions and nations of ancient Iraq than any other country. The patriarch Abraham came from a city in Iraq called Ur. Isaac's bride, Rebekah, came from northwest Iraq. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq and his sons (the 12 tribes of Israel) were born in northwest Iraq. A remarkable spiritual revival as told in the book of Jonah occurred in Nineveh. The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq as did the account of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Furthermore, many of Iraq's Christians still speak Aramaic the language of Jesus.

In Egypt with the ascent of the Muslim Brotherhood, Coptic Christians,

numbering roughly 8-10 million, are leaving in droves. And the Middle East is far from being the exception. Persecution is on the rise. The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church was earlier this month. Given the picture I just painted, one would think the church in the West would be galvanized. But how many churches marked this occasion with even a passing mention? If the faith community isn't engaged are we surprised when our government leaders turn a blind eye to matters of religious freedom?

Consider the following: Bipartisan legislation to create a Special Envoy position at the State Department charged with advocating on behalf of religious minorities in the Middle East and South Central Asia overwhelmingly passed the House a year and a half ago. But it has remained stalled in the Senate as a result of State Department opposition and the refusal of Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry, rumored to be in the running for Secretary of State or Defense, to even hold a hearing on the legislation.

Day in, day out I have the privilege of meeting individuals who boldly follow Jesus despite unbelievably hostile circumstances. Shabbaz Bhatti, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Minority Affairs, and the only Christian Member of the cabinet and an outspoken critic of his country's blasphemy laws, was one such man. On March 2, 2011 he was murdered, his car riddled with bullets, leaving his mother's house for work. In a video filmed shortly before his assassination, Bhatti appears to sense that the path he has chosen will come with a price.

When asked about the threats against his life, he said, without malice or fear, "I believe in Jesus Christ who has given his own life for us. I know what is the meaning of [the] cross. And I am following the cross. And I am ready to die for a cause." And so he did.

The book of Proverbs tells us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. . . ." Bhatti can no longer speak. The Chinese bishop under house arrest cannot speak. The North Korean enslaved in the gulag cannot speak. The Iraqi nun fearing for her life cannot speak.

Will we be their voice? Martin Luther King famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Are we not their friends?

America's Founding Fathers grounded our own experiment in self-governance in the notion that liberty comes from God and that all human life is sacred. As part of this equation, religious freedom was the "first freedom." The ideas set forth in Philadelphia on that hot summer day were simultaneously ancient and revolutionary—they are grounded in historic Judeo-Christian teachings.

Nearly 25 years ago these very ideas were a source of inspiration to the democracy marchers in Tiananmen Square. Ronald Reagan famously spoke of our founding documents as a covenant we made with the world—a promise that transcended time and place. I fear that covenant is in jeopardy.

America's influence is waning. Our once "shining city" appears dim. And we have lost our voice on behalf of the oppressed. And yet, dissidents still seek refuge in our embassies, the persecuted seek safe haven on our shores. To them the promise of American

exceptionalism is no mere philosophical debate; it is the difference between life and death. They cling to the promise even as our own leaders have abandoned it. And so, seeking to preserve that covenant that Reagan envisioned, it falls to men and women of faith to carry the torch—to pray, to advocate, to act.

HONORING JAY PIERSON ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2012

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Jay Pierson and his 34 years of dedicated service to the House of Representatives. I have had the privilege of serving in this institution since 1992 and for all of those years I have served with Jay. During that time I have come to know him for his graciousness, patience and helpful nature. His historical expertise and institutional knowledge will sorely be missed.

I would like to thank Jay for his friendship and wish him the best in his retirement. We have all been better served because of his commitment to the House of Representatives and the American people.

The American people will never know the work of individuals like Jay Pierson, who has toiled long hours making certain the Congress and U.S. House function every day for our federal legislative branch.

I especially want to thank Jay who has stayed many nights with me, often until midnight and long after the House had completed its regular business, while I presented my special orders speeches.

The United States House of Representatives will hold a better place in history because of Jay's dedication and long tenure.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF MR. PAT NEFF GRONER

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Groner's roots trace back to Marshall, Texas, where he was the youngest of five siblings. He attended the College of Marshall and graduated from Baylor University. He then joined the United States Marine Corps, and while stationed in Vermont, he met his wife Louise, or as Mr. Groner proclaimed "the prettiest girl in Vermont". Shortly after their marriage, Mr. Groner served with honor and distinction as a pilot in the South Pacific Theatre during World War II. Upon his return, Mr. Groner joined the Vermont Air National Guard and interned at a

Vermont hospital. As a boy, Mr. Groner's father instilled in him the belief that health care is a profession closely connected with faith, and in addition to his passion for flying, his care for others and faith in God never faded.

When Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Florida was in need of leadership, Pat Groner answered the call, and, along with his wife and their daughter Jodee, moved to Florida. As CEO of Baptist Healthcare, Mr. Groner implemented numerous programs that are now standard operating procedure in hospitals across the country. Baptist Hospital had the first post-operative recovery room in Florida and was one of the first hospitals in the nation to have an intensive coronary care unit, an outpatient surgical care unit, and Life Flight. During his time at Baptist, Mr. Groner also envisioned a place where seniors could enjoy the advantages of a resort lifestyle coupled with quality amenities, services, and health care and the perfect location. Despite working full-time as CEO, Mr. Groner was dedicated to bringing this vision to fruition, and under his leadership, the Pensacola retirement community, Azalea Trace, opened in 1980. Today, it remains a first-class and well-respected adult retirement community.

In addition to his leadership in the American Hospital Association, the Southeastern Hospital Conference, and the American College of Healthcare Executives, Mr. Groner was co-founder and president of the Hospital Research and Development Institute, co-founder of the Voluntary Hospitals of America, Vice-President and Treasurer of Multi-Hospital Insurance Group, and long-time board member for Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Florida. Outside of his contributions the health care profession, Mr. Groner had an unwavering commitment to serve his community through the March of Dimes, YMCA, Community Mental Health Center, Pensacola Rotary Club, Action 76 Taskforce on Higher Education, Fiesta of Five Flags, and various United Fund organizations. Mr. Groner also had a special interest in education and the State university system, where he served as a member of the Florida Board of Regents.

Mr. Groner's contributions to healthcare and the Northwest Florida community are exemplified by the copious honors and awards bestowed on him. Among his many honors, Mr. Groner was inducted into the Health Care Hall of Fame by the American College of Health Care Executives. He was also awarded the Kiwanis Man of the Year Award, Pensacola Junior Chamber of Commerce Good Government Award, Pensacola Chamber of Commerce Pioneer Award, Freedom Foundation George Washington Medal, and Liberty Bell Award.

There is no question that in his 33 year career as CEO and his many years serving our community, Mr. Groner has made an everlasting impact on Northwest Florida and on the health care profession. To some, Mr. Groner will be remembered as courageous pilot who answered the call of duty during one of our nation's most trying times or as pilot of the