

In our time working together on important water and transportation issues, I saw firsthand Ruben's commitment to improving the quality of life for area residents. His immense passion and devotion for his hometown led him to create legislation to build the Peripheral Canal as well as to establish the California Conservation Corps. Through his commitment to public service, Ruben inspired hope for a better future for the next generation. Due to his remarkable service to Chino, a High School was named in his honor, as well as a park in Chino.

Ruben was preceded by the death of his wife, Irene in 2008. He is survived by his sons: Bud, Maurice, and Gary. He leaves with cherished memories a loving family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. My thoughts and prayers, along with those of my wife, Barbara, and my children, Mayor pro tem Joe Baca Jr., Jeremy, Natalie, and Jennifer are with Ruben's family at this time. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring a beloved community member and tireless advocate, Ruben Ayala.

RECOGNIZING MR. KELVIN DASHUN BROWN FOR HIS DEDICATION AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable disabled individual, Mr. Kelvin Dashun Brown. Mr. Brown is a lifelong resident of the City of Mound Bayou in the Mississippi Delta.

He was born on September 21, 1977, with cerebral palsy and is a spastic quadriplegic. At birth his parents were told that he would not live beyond the age of two years old and if he did, he would be in a vegetative state.

Mr. Brown has proved the doctors incorrect. He started his education at the age of two at Delta House Child Development and the Bolivar County Demonstration Center in Cleveland, Mississippi. At the age of four, he was enrolled in the Mound Bayou Head Start Program. At the age of six, he was enrolled in the I.T. Montgomery Elementary School. Upon completing his education there, he enrolled at John F. Kennedy High School, where he remained until graduating in May of 1997. While a student at John F. Kennedy High School, he was a member of the Student Council and served as class representative and was elected vice-president during his junior year.

Mr. Brown worked for the City of Mound Bayou Police for eight years as a certified dispatcher and was promoted to Sergeant. Serving as Volunteer Youth Activities Coordinator for the City of Mound Bayou Police for the past seven years, he has coordinated and raised funds for annual back-to-school giveaways of school supplies, cookouts, toy drives, and monthly story hours for youths. He has held numerous preventative activities at the local school districts in the City of Mound Bayou and the City of Shelby to forge relationships with local school districts, youths and local police departments. Mr. Brown has received many accolades and awards for his youth and community endeavors.

He is an active member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, where he serves with the Usher Ministry.

Mr. Brown is the oldest son of Eugene Brown and Joann Brown. He lives his life by this motto: "It is what it is". In other words, his condition cannot stop him from being an asset to society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Kelvin Dashun Brown for his dedication to serving his community and youths in the Mississippi Delta.

HONORING UNITED STATES ARMY SERGEANT BRIAN LEONHARDT

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with immense gratitude and deep sadness that I wish to commend United States Army Sergeant Brian Leonhardt for his bravery and his willingness to fight for his country. Sergeant Leonhardt, a member of the Indiana National Guard assigned to the 713th Engineer Company, 81st Troop Command out of Valparaiso, Indiana, was killed in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan, along with three other members of the Indiana National Guard, when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device on Friday, January 6, 2012. The sacrifice of Sergeant Leonhardt, as well as that of his fellow Guard members, will be forever remembered by those they fought to protect.

Born in Crown Point, Indiana and a resident of Merrillville, Indiana, Brian graduated from Hammond Baptist High School in Hammond, Indiana. Friends and family remember him as an athlete who loved to play basketball and an avid fan of the Miami Heat. A man of faith, Brian attended services at First Baptist Church of Hammond.

After his graduation, Brian joined the Indiana Army National Guard and completed his basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, where he was recognized as the honor graduate of his class. One of eight children, it is evident that Brian was raised with a deep sense of patriotism. In fact, three of his brothers are also military veterans. For Sergeant Leonhardt's unwavering love for his country, as well as his extraordinary skill and commitment as a member of the Indiana National Guard, he received numerous military awards and honors.

Sergeant Leonhardt leaves behind a loving family that will forever cherish his memory. He is survived by his devoted wife Dianne, adoring parents Marie and Robert, brothers Charles, Randall, Robert III, Anthony, and Trevor, and sisters Theresa and Jacqueline. He also leaves behind many other friends and family members, as well as a saddened but proud community and a grateful nation. While the loss of Sergeant Leonhardt is a tremendous tragedy, and there is much sadness for a brilliant future cut far too short, the impact he has had on his family, friends, and community will leave a lasting impression.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring a fallen hero, United States Army Sergeant Brian Leonhardt. Sergeant Leonhardt sacrificed his life in service to his

country, and his passing serves as an unfortunate, yet all too familiar reminder of the realities of war. Sergeant Leonhardt will forever remain a hero in the eyes of his family, his community, and his country. Thus, let us never forget the sacrifice he made to preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy.

RICHARD L. MAHACEK

**HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Richard Mahacek in the event of his retirement after four decades of service with Merced County and the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension.

Richard began his youth development career in 1975 in the California Counties of Sonoma, Napa and San Benito as a 4-H Assistant implementing youth programs. Richard then moved on to Merced County where he became responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of 4-H educational programs as the 4-H Youth Development Advisor. He has continued in this assignment for over 35 years. In 2005, he also assumed the role of Merced County Director for all Cooperative Extension programs.

In addition to his work with Merced County, Richard became the California statewide 4-H contact for Mechanical Science/Engineering project areas beginning in 1995. Richard's involvement and direction for the Mechanical Sciences and Engineering projects stems from his interest, degrees and credentials in Industrial Arts and Technology. His curiosity in technology was fostered in his youth by participating in electrical, woodworking and safety projects as a 4-H member in Sonoma County. His work over the years has included development of curriculum and activities in science processes, robotics, computers, GIS/GPS, biosecurity, and environmental issues such as watersheds and wildlife habitats. He has provided numerous workshops and training sessions on science processes, inquiry and experiential learning as implemented through various 4-H curricula locally, statewide and nationally.

Richard has partnered with other groups to extend technology programs including the California Girls Collaborative, Challenger Learning Centers, Merced County Office of Education, the California Division of Recycling, 4-H/Military Kids program, Society of Women Engineers, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and state supported after school programs. He serves on the executive board of the Challenger Learning Center of the San Joaquin Valley and is a member of the California Industrial and Technology Education Association and the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association.

Richard has been married to his beautiful wife Susan for over 32 years. Together they have three grown children. Their son Mark works for an office of education working in computer networking and technology support and his wife Marissa is a teacher in Planada. Paul is a mechanical engineer who is working on an ocean acidification research project in the South of France and his wife Lindsay is an

Accountant. Their daughter Anne is a mechanical engineer who is working on a Masters program in Mechatronics.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Mr. Richard Mahacek for his years of dedication to the 4-H students and program.

#### HONORING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS

##### HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary recipients of the 2012 Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce Awards. The Androscoggin Chamber has an outstanding record of creating and providing opportunities that promote economic and community growth in the communities that make up the heart of Central Maine.

Every year, the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce honors some of the outstanding individuals that work hard each and every day to make the Lewiston/Auburn region a better place to do business. Their efforts to strengthen opportunity and prosperity in Maine are remarkable, and the whole community benefits from the example of their success.

This year's award recipients include Agren Appliance and Baxter Brewing, Business Leadership Awards; Steve Closson of Androscoggin Bank, the Ray Geiger Award; L/A Cash Coalition and L/A Art Walk, Community Service Awards; Pike Industries, the Poland Business Award; Auburn Chief of Police and Acting City Manager Phil Crowell, the Public Service Leadership Award; Healthy Androscoggin, the Education Award; Industrial Roofing, the Cool Chamber Award; Lewiston Career Center, the Ken Addition Award for Business Advocacy; Center Street Dental, New Member of the Year; and, Northeastern Charter and Tours, and the Library Café, President's Awards.

These businesses, individuals, and organizations are among the very best that the Androscoggin County region has to offer. Thanks to the contributions of this year's award winners, Androscoggin County is a great place to work and live. I wish them all continued success going forward.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating the recipients of the 2012 Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce Awards.

#### RECOGNIZING REVEREND ELIJAH EASON FOR HIS HONORABLE SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY AND COMMITMENT TO THE COMMU- NITY

##### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable veteran

and man of God, Reverend Elijah Eason. He has served his community through hard work and Christian leadership.

Reverend Eason, a resident of Rolling Fork, Mississippi, was born October 31, 1965, to Frank and Maggie Eason in Washington County, Mississippi. He was the youngest child born to this union.

Following his graduation from Rolling Fork High School in 1984, he enlisted in the United States Army, where he served for four years. After returning home from the military, he met and married Angelia Michelle Bush in 1992.

In 2001, he devoted his life to Christ and was ordained a Baptist minister. For nine years, he led the flock of the Mount Lula Missionary Baptist Church and served there with great spiritual devotion. Reverend Eason always had a joke or a parable that would make you smile. He had true and genuine love for people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Elijah Eason for his dedication to serving our great Country and his community

#### PHILIP D. PROVENCHER

##### HON. FRANK C. GUINTA

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate Philip Provencher of Dunbarton, New Hampshire, on receiving the French Legion of Honor. It is truly a prestigious distinction to be appointed a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. Throughout history, France has been a strong ally to the United States and it is greatly appreciated that they continue to recognize the heroic acts of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, and for the sacrifices and service performed to assist the French people during World War II.

As a member of the U.S. Army's First Infantry Division, Philip joined with allied forces on D-Day to help liberate France from the Germans by carrying a 50 lb. mortar on his back through the turbulent tides of the English Channel, to help support ground forces on Omaha Beach. As a translator for his unit, "Frenchy" then marched with his fellow soldiers through France, Belgium, and Germany. His valiant efforts during this campaign also earned him a Bronze Star for rescuing a wounded friend while under enemy fire.

These are but a few examples of the heroic and courageous acts Mr. Provencher performed in service to his country during WWII and I join with President Sarkozy and Governor Lynch in congratulating Philip on this esteemed recognition. On behalf of a grateful nation, I thank him for his dedicated service to our country.

IN HONOR OF THE RETIREMENT  
OF SANDY HOPP FROM THE  
COUNTY OF STANISLAUS

##### HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Sandy Hopp in the event of her retirement from Stanislaus County.

Sandy Hopp has been an employee of the County of Stanislaus since January 2003. She was recruited to work as a Field Representative for Supervisor Jeff Grover, a position she held for eight years. She is currently the Field Representative to Supervisor Terry Withrow, representing Supervisorial District Three. After being hired, she quickly increased in responsibilities and exhibited a great skill in working with people in all walks of life. She is often the eyes, ears and voice of her elected Supervisor, and represents the Supervisor in venues such as the Salida Municipal Advisory Committee, the Weed and Seed Project and other community meetings and organizations.

Mrs. Hopp has a tremendous understanding of government operations and serves as an outstanding interface between the Supervisors' Office, County departments, the community and various state and federal organizations. In her role, Mrs. Hopp quickly developed a passion for the area of legislative and governmental affairs. She was selected as a liaison to a French delegation visiting Stanislaus County, she serves as the coordinator of Government Day for the elite Leadership Modesto program and she was a coordinator of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of California Counties Supervisors Association Annual Meeting.

Mrs. Hopp is an outstanding liaison with the offices of local, state and federal elected officials. A personal highlight of mine is when Stanislaus County officials visit Washington, D.C. to present projects and priorities. Mrs. Hopp coordinates extremely complex schedules for maximum efficiency of the trip and also serves as an outstanding liaison to Congressional offices. Visiting with Mrs. Hopp on these trips is always a highlight for my staff and for me personally.

Mrs. Hopp has a personal commitment to excellence and a strong faith which is central to whom she is as a person and to her service to her family, church and community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Mrs. Sandy Hopp for her many years of dedication to the County of Stanislaus.

#### RECOGNIZING ELDER HENRY SMILEY FOR HIS DEDICATION AND SERVICE TO THE COMMU- NITY

##### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2012*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable and honorable man, Elder Henry Smiley. A lifelong resident of Copiah County, Mississippi, he has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve.