

Corps, a position he held for five years. He has been honored many times by such diverse groups as the American Jewish Congress, the NAACP, the City of Hope, Fight for Sight, The Urban League, The National Conference of Black Mayors, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the ACLU, the State Department, the Boy Scouts of America, Haddassah International and the Peace Corps.

He has received awards from the Bronx Community College for his work with children, the Albert Einstein Award from Yeshiva University, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Prize and the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors for excellence in the performing arts. He was the first recipient of the Nelson Mandela Courage Award and was honored at the White House with the 1994 National Medal of Arts from President Clinton for his contributions to our nation's cultural life. He has received honorary degrees from City University of New York, Spellman College in Atlanta, Tufts University, Brandeis University, Long Island University, Bard College and most recently Doctor of Humane Letters from Columbia University. In 2010, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation honored Mr. Belafonte with its prestigious Phoenix Award.

Mr. Speaker, Harry Belafonte has devoted his life to the cause of freedom, justice, equality, and human dignity. His has been an important and consequential life. And he is still going strong.

So on the occasion of his 85th birthday, I rise to say Mr. Belafonte: Happy birthday and thank you for your active faith, your lifetime of service, your tireless devotion to human rights and freedom.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP JOSEPH WILSON PARKS

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2012

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bishop Joseph Wilson Parks, for his contributions to the State of New Jersey and to our nation. On February 15, 2012, Bishop Parks passed away at the age of eighty-one. As a spiritual leader, mentor, and community servant, Bishop Parks dedicated himself to bettering the lives of others.

Bishop Parks was born on January 7, 1931 in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. He was one of six children of Ernest R. Parks and Lura V. (Barber) Parks. Although he began high school in Wilkesboro, NC, Bishop Parks ultimately received his high school diploma from Harren High School in New York City.

In 1945, Bishop Parks joined the Mt. Olive Fire Baptized Holiness Church in Harlem, New York. At the young age of seventeen, Bishop Parks became one of the first Junior Deacons at Mt. Olive and would later go on to serve as a Senior Deacon for ten years. Bishop Parks was a member of Mt. Olive Fire Baptized for twenty years.

On November 27, 1951, Bishop Parks was drafted into the United States Army. For eight years, he proudly served his country during the Korean War and would ultimately receive an Honorable Discharge.

After returning home, Bishop Parks went on to work in the printing industry for thirty-eight

years. During his time in the printing industry, he was a proud and active member of the Local 1—Amalgamated Lithographers of America.

On January 30, 1954, Bishop Parks married the love of his life Anna B. Harmon Parks.

Bishop Parks went on to graduate from Manhattan Bible Institute in New York City, receiving his Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in 1968. He also received an Honorary Doctorate from Fuller Normal Industrial Institute in Greenville, South Carolina. In 1965, Bishop Parks was ordained as a reverend and appointed pastor of St. Peter F.B.H. Church in Paterson, New Jersey.

In 1973, Bishop Parks and his family moved to Paterson, New Jersey, where he continued to serve his church. Upon moving to Paterson, Bishop Parks became an active community advocate throughout Paterson. Bishop Parks was a member of the Paterson Pastors' Workshop, St. Joseph's Hospital Pastoral Care Team and instituted numerous ministries that benefited the community.

On November 24, 1994, Reverend Parks was ordained as a Bishop of Sounds of Praise Pentecostal Ministries, under the auspices of the Bishop Chandler David Owens, Chairman of the Church of God in Christ.

For those lucky enough to have known Bishop Parks personally, they knew that his family and faith meant everything to him. I know that he will be missed by his children, family, friends, and congregants, but most of all by his wife Anna B. Harmon Parks.

On February 25, 2012 the memorial service and funeral for Bishop Parks took place in our hometown of Paterson, New Jersey. I was humbled to have the honor to speak at Bishop Parks' memorial service. Having known Bishop Parks throughout my career in public service, I can confidently say that his life was a life well-lived.

The job of a United States Congressman involves much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing and commemorating the achievements of truly selfless individuals like Bishop Joseph Wilson Parks.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, Bishop Park's family and friends, all those whose lives he touched, and me, in recognizing Bishop Joseph Wilson Parks.

McKINNEY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FIRST-RATE EDUCATION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2012

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate McKinney Christian Academy on 20 years of providing first-rate education to the young people of North Texas.

As the school's mission statement says, "McKinney Christian Academy exists to honor Jesus Christ by teaching students to live biblically through education of mind, body, and spirit." Over the past two decades, it has done just that for hundreds of students.

On the first day of classes back in 1992, just 13 children walked through the doors. Currently, 510 students from pre-kindergarten through the twelfth grade are being served at

McKinney Christian by a devoted, skilled faculty and staff.

In fact, the local paper recently named McKinney Christian's lower school principal, Ms. Debi Sass, and a top-notch teacher, Mr. Jeff Anderson, 2011 Principal of the Year and Teacher of the Year for the area.

McKinney Christian is honored to have former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee join them at a special anniversary celebration this month, and while I will be in Washington, D.C. during the occasion, it's a pleasure to welcome the Governor to the Third Congressional District of Texas.

To the McKinney Mustangs—parents, students and teachers alike—congratulations on being a part of such an exceptional institution. Keep up the good work.

God bless you, God bless Texas, and may God continue to bless the United States of America through great folks like you.

TANZANIA MISSION FULFILLS DREAM FOR CARMEL COUPLE

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2012

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following.

[From the Monterey Herald, Jan. 22, 2012]

DAVE AND WENDY BANKS TEACH VILLAGERS
DURING PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCE

(By Amy E. West)

When Carmel's Dave and Wendy Banks met in the 1960s, they talked about joining the Peace Corps. What they didn't realize was it would take them more than four decades to make it happen.

After marrying, raising kids and retiring, they said to each other, "You know what we talked about long ago? Maybe we should try it."

The retired couple returned to Carmel in 2010 after spending more than two years in Tanzania, educating villagers about HIV prevention, biology and English.

Surprisingly, they integrated well into the Tanzanian culture.

"If you have gray hair, you're in," said Dave Banks, 70, a retired pharmacist.

Their Tanzanian village of about 1,000 people not only respected their elders, but also respected the customs of one another. The village, Maringo, had two major tribes, and Catholic, Muslim and Lutheran faiths lived and celebrated traditions together, which impressed the Bankses.

"I think a lot of places in the world could take an example from Tanzania," said Wendy Banks, 69, a retired teacher.

Tanzanians subsist on less than a dollar a day, and at least 10 percent of the population lives with HIV. The stigma of the disease, especially with women, inspired the Bankses to start a life skills club to teach how to prevent the spread of HIV and brainstorm ways for HIV-inflicted villagers to support their families.

High school students from the club performed skits and raps for the younger school kids, and persuaded even Muslim girls to do condom demonstrations.

Primary education, required in Tanzania, is free, but tuition for high school costs about \$100 a year. Educating boys takes priority over girls, but the headmaster in Maringo worked hard to keep the ratio at 50 percent.

To stay in school, girls commonly find older men to finance their education in exchange for sexual favors. "Babu" Dave and

"Bibi" Wendy worked to teach the women to say, "No, not without a condom."

"You just don't know if you get through," Wendy said.

The headmaster also requested their help teaching in a high school with 500 students and only two teachers. Dave taught biology and Wendy taught English to 80 freshmen each.

To start the school's first library, the couple called for donations from Monterey Peninsula residents, who mailed nearly 3,000 books. To cover shipping costs of nearly \$55 a box, the community raised \$5,000.

The couple's family also offered support. A granddaughter requested soccer balls—used or new—instead of gifts for her 10th birthday, and shipped them with pumps to Tanzania. One of the couple's daughters raised money to finance two girls' education for three years.

The couple brought with them a laptop, printer, solar charger, shortwave radio and a power strip, which proved especially useful in a village that had just one room with electricity and many villagers with cellphones that needed charging.

Wendy Banks was struck by villagers' resourcefulness. "They can do so much with so little," she said.

One memorable side trip seems to bear this out. To get to a larger city a few hours away, the couple rode in trucks called dala-dalas, which were crammed with livestock, people and bags and had "already lived their life and died," Dave Banks said. On one trip, the truck got a flat tire. The driver used a pile of rocks to jack up the truck, but jammed on the wrong size spare tire. Soon after starting up again, the truck ran out of gas. After the driver borrowed a bike to travel to the only village with gas, he returned and swished gasoline in his mouth, spit it on the carburetor, and they were finally on their way.

"Traveling was just so awful," Wendy said.

"When we got off the bus, we were always real happy," Dave said. The average age of a Peace Corps volunteer is 28, and only 7 percent of volunteers are older than 50 or married. The organization is trying to change that. In November it teamed up with AARP to reach out to volunteers with a lifetime of skills and professional experience.

The oldest volunteer currently serving in the Peace Corps is 82, just five years younger than the oldest volunteer ever to serve.

But the Peace Corps' rigorous medical background may stymie the process for older Americans, who must provide thorough documentation to show a clean bill of health. Though both Wendy and Dave were in excellent physical health, the Peace Corps still requested medical records dating back to their 20s. Applicants with diseases like diabetes can serve, but may be placed closer to medical facilities instead of in remote villages.

For Dave and Wendy, 18 months passed from the time they submitted the application until they left for Tanzania. Though they returned a year and a half ago, the couple still uphold one of the three Peace Corps goals—promoting a better understanding of Tanzanians to Americans. They've given numerous talks around the San Francisco Bay Area and don't seem to tire of telling their stories.

In an African culture that respects their elders, but also depends on an extended family for support, the Tanzanians thought it odd for two people to leave their home and family of four children and 10 grandchildren.

Wendy's response: "We'll go back to our family . . . and maybe our family will be better, because we had this experience to share."

CONDEMNING IRAN FOR ITS PERSECUTION OF YOUCEF NADARKHANI

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 556, which condemns the Government of Iran for its persecution, imprisonment, and sentencing to death of Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani.

H. Res. 556 rightfully condemns the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities, and calls for the exoneration and immediate release of Pastor Youcef and all other individuals held or charged on account of their religion.

Pastor Youcef is a 34-year old father of two who was arrested over two years ago for the crime of converting from Islam to Christianity. In October 2009 he was tried and found guilty of apostasy. Adding to this atrocity, his sentence of death-by-hanging was recently upheld by the Supreme Court of Iran.

Only in oppressive regimes like Iran could this fundamental human freedom to worship as one sees fit could be considered a crime, let alone one punishable by death.

And sadly, the case of Pastor Yousef is only one of many other deplorable religious freedom cases in Iran. It demonstrates the Iranian authorities' utter disregard for religious freedom, and highlights Iran's continuing violation of the universal rights of its citizens.

It is deplorable, and this House should denounce it in the harshest of terms. Pastor Youcef deserves to be free. He deserves to practice his faith and be home with his wife and young children. He deserves to have his rights as a human being upheld and respected.

I urge a yes vote on H. Res. 556.

IMPORTANCE OF FISCAL DISCIPLINE IN OUR OFFICES

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2012

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that is of principal importance to our fiscal situation today in this Congress. I am referring to our own fiscal responsibility within the confines of our Congressional offices.

According to the Chicago Tribune, the number of members from Illinois that have returned more than one million dollars from their office accounts, called Member representational allowances, or MRA account only totals four members. They are Congressmen COSTELLO, JACKSON, MANZULLO and I. I encourage my fellow colleagues from my home state, and those across the county, to accept my challenge to strive for this respectable marker, to ensure the general public that we in Congress can also "Live within our means." We ask those who we serve, our constituents to make sacrifices to do so, and therefore we are expected to do the same in return.

I understand that returning this money will not offset our debts significantly and is a nomi-

nal amount when compared to our ever increasing colossal debt. But, the country and our citizenry demand a Congress that is in tune with their needs and values. Consequently, fiscal responsibility is tantamount to operating a home and a business, and we as leaders should make an effort, no matter how minuscule, in order to gain back the public's trust in this government.

I thank you Mr. Speaker for allowing me to speak on this issue. I praise my Colleagues from Illinois that are motivated to pursue fiscally responsible policies, and I encourage all Members of Congress as a whole, to follow our example.

IN CELEBRATION OF JOHN COWANS'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2012

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and admiration that I congratulate Mr. John Cowans on a significant milestone, his 90th birthday, which will be on Thursday, March 1, 2012. John will celebrate this remarkable milestone with family and friends on Saturday, March 3, 2012, at a semi-formal gala in his honor. For over 32 years John's lasting dedication and irreplaceable presence in Northwest Indiana has allowed him the opportunity to touch the lives of countless individuals.

John Cowans was born on March 1, 1922, in Union Springs, Alabama. After high school, John devoted six years of his life to serving our country in the United States Army. Mr. Cowans then attended Tuskegee Institute, earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education, which would be the beginning of an influential teaching career. John went on to further his education and earned a master's degree in school administration from Alabama State Teachers College. John accepted his first teaching position at the Morgan County Schools in Decatur, Alabama. Later, he moved to Gary, Indiana, and taught science, math, and social studies at Charles R. Drew School. His career at Charles R. Drew would span 32 years. For his many dedicated years of inspiring youth through teaching, he is worthy of the highest praise.

John Cowans made his mark on history as the first African American Vice-President of the Indiana State Teachers Association. Mr. Cowans also became President of the Gary Classroom Teachers Association. Mr. Cowans's pursuit to push education to greater levels continued, and he was instrumental in bringing about a day of recognition for teachers. To add to his already extraordinary career, John was a member of the National Education Association Assembly of Delegates to the Democratic National Convention 1976. John was able to impact the lives of youth for generations to come when he contributed to the creation of the 21st Century Scholars Program, which today helps to ensure that every student in Indiana can afford to attend college in exchange for a good citizenship pledge. Mr. Cowans is truly an inspiration, and I am grateful for his outstanding contributions to education in Indiana and across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, John Cowans has been an excellent leader in our community. Not only has