

native Halifax County and served as Principal of Pittman Elementary School. While there, he instituted a number of successful programs that helped to create an environment in which every child could learn successfully. In 1992, he was appointed Principal of Brawley Middle School where he was so successful that he was named Halifax County School's Wachovia Principal of the Year. In 1994, Steve returned to the newly merged Edgecombe County—Tarboro City School System where he served as Principal of Stocks Elementary School.

Two years later, Steve Thornton was recruited to serve as Executive Director of Human Resource Services with the Wilson County Public Schools. The following year he ascended to the position of Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource Services, the position that he now holds. Steve is well respected and revered by the community and his colleagues in the entire school system. They will miss his spirit of dedication and excellence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Steve Simon Thornton for 31 years of service to the precious children of eastern North Carolina and for his commitment to education. I ask that my colleagues wish Steve Thornton God's continued blessings as he continues on life's journey.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

#### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,713,655,602,953.23. We've added \$5,086,778,554,040.15 to our debt in a little over 3 years. This is debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

#### HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN PLASTIC TOYS INCORPORATED

#### HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge American Plastic Toys Incorporated, upon its 50th anniversary. American Plastic Toys is headquartered in Walled Lake, Michigan and operates a total of three facilities in Michigan and Mississippi. As a genuine model of American manufacturing, the company has proudly manufactured safe toys in America since 1962.

American Plastic Toys assembles 100% of the toys in their more than 125 item product line in the United States. It is worth noting less than 4% of their toy value content is imported and the majority of this minuscule percentage are sound components and fasteners, none of which are painted. Proudly, American Plastic Toys molds most of the components in their products in their own plants or purchases them from U.S. companies.

Dedicated to providing youngsters with safe toys and furniture for role play, riding and pre-school learning along with summer and winter fun, American Plastic Toys mandates every product be tested by at least one independent U.S. safety-testing lab. They are focused on ensuring their toys comply with every applicable safety standard.

The products manufactured by American Plastic Toys are sold by most major North American mass merchants. Their toys are also available in Central and South America and Australia. No doubt, American Plastic Toys has encouraged the imagination of many a child.

Mr. Speaker, for 50 years American Plastic Toys Incorporated has consistently been committed to a truly American product with a legacy of excellence, ingenuity, and the irrepressible spirit of the American entrepreneur. Today, as the company celebrates this enormous milestone, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating American Plastic Toys and recognizing their years of loyal service to our community and country.

#### HONORING TIMBER POINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S 5TH GRADE STUDENTS FOR WINNING THE DISNEY PLANET CHALLENGE

#### HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jennifer Giordano's 5th Grade Class at Timber Point Elementary School of East Islip, NY. Recently, the class was recognized as the Disney Planet Challenge's 2011–2012 New York State winners. They also placed 5th overall in the entire country. I am honored to have this school, Jennifer Giordano and all these students in the 2nd Congressional District of New York.

The Disney Planet Challenge is a competition designed to encourage American youth to play a key role in impacting the environment classroom by classroom. By learning the merits of conservation and innovative energy solutions, students become aware of the importance of protecting our environment. The challenge's interdisciplinary approach involves math, science, and English in order to motivate students to compete for a common goal. This is being applied on Long Island and across the nation.

Ms. Giordano's 5th Grade Class at Timber Point Elementary School embodies the spirit of thinking globally while acting locally. This all started with the film WALL-E, which inspired the students to launch a project focused on keeping non-biodegradable trash and dangerous chemicals out of local landfills. They met this goal by holding themselves and their community accountable. This included urging local restaurants to use biodegradable materials, setting up compost sites, initiating a battery collection program, and starting recycling programs. These 5th graders have successfully made their community more aware of how their habits impact our environment. Their hard work shows that when we all work together to do our part, we can make a big difference.

I commend these students for their dedication to their community and our planet. I would

also like to honor their teacher, Jennifer Giordano, and their parents for instilling in these children the importance of protecting our environment for future generations. As the New York State winners of the Disney Planet Challenge, I would like to formally submit all of these students' names in recognition of their achievements:

Zaina Abdelbaky, Brittney Amaru, Nicolette Banville, Charlie Curran, Kyle DeLisi, Nickolas Dimitriou, Ryan Engblom, Lauren Florenz, Steven Geisler, Nicole Graziano, Tom Hazell, Shannon Hubany, Dylan Lopez, Natalia Lozinski, Owen Meddis, Julia Ryan, Kerri Smith, Katelyn Spina, Natalie Stergakos, Ryann Tracy, Cassidy Triolo Matthew Pinz.

#### IN HONOR OF POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY

#### HON. ANN MARIE BUERKLE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Ms. BUERKLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Polish Constitution Day: a day in which we celebrate the signing of Europe's first written constitution.

The Polish Constitution was signed into law on May 3, 1791. It was preceded only by the United States Constitution, making Poland the second nation in the world to establish a written constitution.

Once a monarchy, Poland recognized and declared the sovereignty of its citizens through the renunciation of noble power and the signing of the Polish Constitution.

Much like the United States Constitution, the Polish Constitution grants legal rights for all, freedom of religion, separation of powers, and political equality.

To this day, the principles of democracy have been central to the Polish people, including the many Polish-Americans who have made significant contributions to the United States of America and communities across this great nation.

It is with privilege that I pause and join with members of Congress, people across the United States, Poland, and nations around the world in commemorating and celebrating the Polish Constitution and the many efforts that the Polish people have made towards the development and growth of democracy throughout the world.

#### HONORING DR. THOMAS SMITH

#### HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following proclamation.

Whereas, Dr. Thomas Smith has distinguished himself as an Educator in American government and civic leadership at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. High School in DeKalb County, Georgia; and

Whereas, Dr. Smith for the last ten (10) years has led his ninth grade civic students in the study of civic leadership both through academics and community service; and

Whereas, he spearheaded the effort to bring federal and state legislators to the school on

a consistent bases to mentor and expose the students to our government first hand; and

Whereas, this year, the civic leadership students who have been successful in their studies include Abraham Ameer, Dorian Bullock, Tommy Jones, III, Morgan Mathews and Carlton Williams; and

Whereas, his boundless energy and enthusiasm has opened nationally recognized opportunities, helping his students understand that their futures are as limitless as the skies; and

Whereas, we are grateful for the life and work of this outstanding teacher who defines the very essence of the profession; and

Now Therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, Jr. do hereby proclaim May 22, 2012 as Dr. Thomas Smith and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. High School Civic Leadership Students Day in Georgia's 4th Congressional District.

ADVAIT "ADI" PATEL

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor one of America's newest National Elementary Chess Champions, nine-year-old Advait "Adi" Patel, who hails from Logan County, West Virginia. This Logan Middle School fifth grader placed first in the recent competition that drew 2,200 young people to test their skills, stamina and heart. We salute all those who helped organize the competition and who nurture our country's future generations. In Adi's case, beyond the thrill of victory and the satisfaction of success, we can find useful lessons for both today's and tomorrow's leaders.

Competing with the latest video games and their striking graphics has not been the easiest time for the venerable game of chess, but one thing that can usually trump the newest technology is old fashioned love; especially the love of a grandfather in India, who took the time and patience to teach Adi how to play the game during a visit.

Adi's parents have been very supportive as well, taking him to faraway tournaments and providing him lessons and online access to other players. Importantly, they are behind his pursuit as long as he still loves the game, another feather in their parental caps.

Likewise, Adi is as thoughtful off the board as he is during a tough game. He recently commented in a local news story that, "It's fun to play, and there's no brawl in it—no fighting physically," Advait said. "It helps me with school, too. Math is a lot easier now. I've had straight A's ever since I started playing, because it teaches you how to focus. There is a lot of thinking in chess."

With our national focus on today's student science and math accomplishments translating into tomorrow's innovations and entrepreneurs, Adi's example sets exactly the right tone for his fellow students, teachers and school administrators alike.

Adi's chess coach, David Saville, believes a chess player's best skill is to be able to "visualize the future." I think we can all visualize a brighter future with the talent, values, hard work and dedication displayed by Adi, his coach and family.

RECOGNIZING ERIC BABCOCK

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the courageous actions of Grove City resident, Eric Babcock. On December 18, 2012, Eric rescued a neighbor's young granddaughter from the second floor of a burning garage.

I ask that all Members of Congress join me and the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District in thanking Eric Babcock for his brave actions. Despite the grave risk to his own life, he selflessly rose to the occasion and saved the life of his young neighbor. For his heroism, Eric received well-deserved recognition from the Jackson Township Board of Trustees.

I extend my sincere thanks to Eric Babcock for his heroism. While to some he may be an ordinary person, his extraordinary act is exactly what makes me proud to represent the everyday heroes of the Central Ohio area.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF  
CHARLES POWELL

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to pay tribute to a beloved community member and role model, Charles "Chuck" Powell. Chuck passed away on May 10, 2012 at the age of seventy-eight.

Chuck was born on July 3, 1933 in Franklin, Ohio, to Charles and Mamie Powell. He spent several years in Ohio, working as a steelworker until he joined the Air Force and relocated to the March Air Force Base in Riverside, California. During his time in the Air Force Chuck met his future wife, Geri Linton, whom he was married to for 56 years.

Chuck served as a milk distributor in Bloomington for 40 years, and was affectionately known as the "milk man" to all he served. During his free time, Chuck enjoyed coaching his sons youth baseball teams.

Chuck was also an avid golfer, and member of El Rancho Verde Country Club, where he previously served as President, and Vice President. His sons have fond memories of bonding over golf, the sport he loved.

I remember Chuck's competitive nature, his fondness for smoking his pipe, and how he loved a good debate with friends. We often played rounds of golf together; he was a close and dear friend of mine. I knew Chuck as having a deep passion for golf; he was always trying to improve his putting stroke in order to compete with the best golfers. Although Chuck was an outstanding golfer, I will always remember him Chuck for his charm, sense of humor, and ability to connect with everyone he met.

Chuck is best known by his family for his big heart and memorable advice for the people he touched. His children and grandchildren have fond memories of times with their father and grandfather. His son noted that he will never forget his father's sense of humor and the phone calls they would share after a good

round of golf. Chuck's grandchildren could always count on him to give sound advice and to put a smile on their face, even during the worst days.

Let us take the time to pay tribute to a wonderful man. Let us celebrate the life he led, and the positive example he set for others. Although he is no longer with us, his legacy and spirit will continue to live on through the lives of everyone he has touched.

Chuck is survived by his beloved wife, Geri Powell; his three sons, Bob, Neal, and Scott; two siblings, John and Margaret; and six grandchildren, Alyssa, Brooke, Tyler, Tori, Christine, and Chloe. My thoughts and prayers, along with those of my wife, Barbara, and my children, Rialto City Councilman Joe Baca Jr., Jeremy, Natalie, and Jennifer are with Chuck's family at this time. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to pay tribute to Charles Powell.

HONORING BIG WILLIE ROBINSON

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 30, 2012*

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Willie Andrew Robinson III, affectionately known in Los Angeles and around the world as "Big Willie" Robinson. Big Willie Robinson was the founder and president of the International and National Brotherhood of Street Racers. He passed away on May 19, 2012 and will be sorely missed by his fellow Viet Nam veterans and the countless people who found a new sense of purpose in life as a result of Big Willie's work in the greater Los Angeles community.

Born on September 12, 1942 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Willie Robinson attended Louisiana State University in 1960 with the hope of playing football for the university. But because African-Americans were not yet allowed to play at LSU, Willie left after only one year to attend UCLA. Shortly after moving Willie found work in a Los Angeles area body shop. He bought his 1957 Oldsmobile, began street racing, and turned Louisiana's loss into Los Angeles's biggest gain.

Drafted into the Army in 1964, Willie Robinson was one of the first African-Americans to serve in the Green Berets in Vietnam, which he did with honor until 1966. From the time he returned to Los Angeles late that year until his death, Big Willie's trademark beret, fatigues and Brotherhood colors were known worldwide.

At 6'6" and over 300 pounds, Big Willie's immense physical stature paled in comparison to his iconic stature as a peacemaker and truce-broker among LA street gangs and people of all ethnic groups. Legendary Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley respected Big Willie's work so much that in 1974 he helped Big Willie to open the Terminal Island Brotherhood Raceway, which hosted street races while promoting non-violence and racial unity for over two decades.

Big Willie Robinson is one of the greatest ambassadors of hope and racial unity in this country during my lifetime. He was truly a God-send, and it is entirely fitting that he chose to live out his life's mission in the City of Angels. May Heaven receive Big Willie