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HONORING JIM REES

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jim Rees, who passed away on September 9, 2014, at his home in Markham, Virginia.

Jim served as president of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate for two decades, from 1994 to 2013. I had the privilege of working closely with Jim over the years on many important issues, especially working to improve historical literacy among young Americans. Jim was a tireless advocate of George Washington's legacy, his estate at Mount Vernon and the leadership virtues of our nation's indispensable founding father. Because of his work building Mount Vernon's endowment and revitalizing interest in the estate, Jim was called "an indispensable man to Mount Vernon in his time" by Barbara Lucas, regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, who spoke to the Washington Post about Rees' legacy.

Jim was beloved not only by the board of the Ladies' Association, staff and volunteers but also by all those who share his commitment to preserving the legacy of the Father of our Country. His passing is a loss to the Mount Vernon community and indeed the nation. I respectfully submit Jim Rees' obituary from The Washington Post and ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Jim's life and achievements.

[Sept. 13, 2014]

JAMES C. REES, 62, LONGTIME PRESIDENT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON, DIES

(By Emily Langer)

James C. Rees, who endeavored to keep George Washington first in the hearts of his countrymen, and particularly in the hearts of his country's tourists, as president for nearly two decades of the founding father's Mount Vernon estate, died Sept. 9 at his home in Markham, Va. He was 62.

The cause was multiple system atrophy, a neurological disorder, said his husband, Kirk Blandford.

Mr. Rees spent nearly his entire career at Mount Vernon, the stately home 15 miles outside the District in Virginia, where George Washington lived for decades and where he was buried after his death in 1799.

After working in the development office and as the estate's associate director, Mr. Rees became in 1994 Mount Vernon's executive director, a title later changed to president. He moved into a home on the grounds overlooking the Potomac River and became, he said, the public relations agent for the nation's first president.

The nonprofit Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, which has independently owned and maintained the property since 1860, credited Mr. Rees with leading fundraising initiatives that brought more than \$250 million to the estate. During his nearly three decades with the institution, its endowment grew from \$4 million to more than \$100 million, according to the group.

"It has been said that George Washington was the 'indispensable man,'" observed Barbara B. Lucas, the regent of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, adding that Mr. Rees "likewise was an indispensable man to Mount Vernon in his time."

Mr. Rees's tenure as president coincided with what he and other George Washington enthusiasts feared was a growing ignorance about American history, particularly among the young. Once, Mr. Rees encountered a group of students and began joking with them—"you know, playing off some of the Washington myths," he told the *Weekly Standard*.

"I said, 'Well, it's a good thing this isn't a cherry tree, or it might be in danger—you never know who might come chop it down.' And there was no reaction. Nothing. So I said, 'But I guess we could always use the wood to make some teeth.' Nothing. Blank stares."

Mr. Rees led a years-long mission to enliven the visitor experience at Mount Vernon and to invigorate the image of the president who lived there. Washington, Mr. Rees remarked, seemed to be locked in the national imagination as the rather dour-looking gentleman on the \$1 bill.

"Washington was athletic, adventurous and risk-taking, known to be one of the finest horsemen of his day and willing to meet challenges head-on," Mr. Rees once told the *New York Times*. "Some have called him the nation's first action hero."

At the Ford Orientation Center, a building opened in 2006 with sponsorship from the Ford Motor Co., visitors watch a film described as an "action-adventure" movie about Washington's military exploits and personal life.

The Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education Center, which also opened at Mount Vernon in 2006, includes theaters, interactive displays and galleries with artifacts from Washington's life, including the bedstead he used during the Revolutionary War, his sword and, perhaps best known, his dentures.

The teeth in particular represented a departure from what had previously been the organization's conservative presentation of the former president.

"We used to be so discreet that we didn't want to display Washington's dentures," Mr. Rees told the *Times*. "When we finally broke down and showed them, they turned out to be a sensation. That taught us something."

Mr. Rees also oversaw the restoration and reconstruction of Mount Vernon's whiskey distillery and gristmill. One of his last undertakings was fundraising for the \$106 million Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington, which opened in 2013, the year after Mr. Rees retired.

James Conway Rees IV was born May 5, 1952, in Richmond. The history textbooks he used as a youngster, he often said with chagrin, devoted significantly more space to Washington than can be found in books used today.

He was a 1974 English graduate of the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg and received a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University in 1978. Before joining Mount Vernon in 1983, he did development work for William & Mary and for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Mr. Rees often reflected on the challenges of promoting Washington in the modern age.

"I suppose it has to do with lots of things," he once told the *Weekly Standard*. "The rise of social history—filling up history with all kinds of people who'd been ignored before means there's less room for old heroes. And I suppose it has to do with the end of the great man theory of history, too."

"But there's something else that worries me," he continued. "The qualities Wash-

ington possessed just aren't as appreciated as they were. Honesty. Good judgment. Modesty—my God, who in late-20th-century America gets credit for being modest anymore?"

In 2007, Mr. Rees published a book, "George Washington's Leadership Lessons: What the Father of Our Country Can Teach Us About Effective Leadership and Character."

Survivors include Kirk Blandford, his partner of 29 years, whom he married last year, of Markham; and a brother.

On one occasion, Mr. Rees was called upon to correct an oversight by Washington, who had borrowed from the New York Society Library "The Law of Nations," Emer de Vattel's 18th-century political treatise, and failed to return it.

By the time the matter came to Mr. Rees's attention, the item was more than two centuries overdue. He returned a copy to its rightful owner.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION, 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I support the core pillars of the President's plan to fight ISIS—the use of American surveillance, intelligence assets and air power to support the ground operations of the Iraqi army and Kurdish fighters in Iraq, and to strike ISIS military equipment, troop concentrations, and command and control in Syria. I also believe we should supply weapons to those groups in Syria, such as the Syrian Kurds, who have consistently fought ISIS, and whose priority is to defeat ISIS. I welcome the opportunity to work with my colleagues to revise the existing 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force to more clearly support these objectives, but to also ensure that U.S. ground forces are not engaged in combat in Iraq or Syria.

My one concern with the Administration's plan relates to the proposal to arm the so-called "moderate" Syrian opposition. I believe that it is a well-intentioned proposal that will have unintended negative consequences that will not serve our ultimate goal of defeating ISIS.

First, the primary objective of these Sunni Islamist fighters is the defeat of Assad and his Alawite dominated regime—not the defeat of ISIS. Since the start of the war there have been shifting alliances among these Sunni Islamist forces that include the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, different elements of the Free Syrian Army, the Islamist Front, Ahrar al-Sham and ISIS, among others. Their common cause and overriding objective is defeating Assad. Indeed, the commander of the Syria Revolutionaries' Front, Jamal Maarouf, one of the most militarily proficient commanders of the FSA, recently said that, "It's clear that I'm not fighting against al-Qaeda. This is a problem outside of Syria's border, so it's not our problem. I don't have a problem with anyone who fights against the regime inside Syria."

While there is no doubt that Assad is a brutal dictator, he does not pose the same threat to the United States as ISIS, and his forces have recently been battling ISIS. At this point, arming fighters whose primary purpose is to

weaken Assad has one unintended result—strengthening ISIS. Indeed, I fear that the arms we provide to the so-called Syrian opposition are more likely to end up in ISIS hands than to be used against ISIS terrorists.

There is one group within Syria that has been battling ISIS from the start, and that is the Syrian Kurds. We should provide material support to these Kurdish fighters in Syria.

We should also continue our efforts to get the Sunni tribesmen in Iraq and Syria to take up the fight against ISIS. The President and his team deserve great credit for helping to push former Prime Minister Maliki from power. He ruled Iraq, not as a nationalist Iraqi leader, but as a Shia strongman. That sectarian approach alienated the Sunni population in Iraq, and made them more open to tolerating the rise of ISIS.

With the emergence of a more inclusive Iraqi government, we must work with all parties to assure Sunni tribesmen that their interests are better served by a united Iraq than by ISIS. That is why the President's emphasis on a political component to this strategy is so important.

IN RECOGNITION OF JERRY DEAL

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Jerry Deal who is retiring after serving for eight years on the Burlingame City Council, the last four as Vice Mayor, and for 13 years on the Planning Commission, three times as the Chair. His work on the Planning Commission earned him the nickname "Father of Design Review." Jerry's commitment to his beloved home community and public service has benefitted the city of Burlingame and the quality of life of its residents.

As an architect, Jerry has used his training and skills to inform many of his public policy decisions. He was instrumental in the transformation of Burlingame Avenue and the building of the new Safeway, roof garden, pocket park and retail and office spaces. As a business owner himself and a member of the Burlingame Economic Development Committee, Jerry helped foster a business-friendly environment. His pragmatism and humor, essential to any good architect, have allowed him to be effective in leading the public and his colleagues.

Due in part to Jerry's leadership, the library was saved and Burlingame still maintains its own police department. Jerry is also a tireless advocate for children, promoting and protecting our schools and developing additional recreational fields.

Jerry's passion for community service began with a seat on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Repertory Company, and as a board member of the free Shakespeare in the Park festival. During his time on the Burlingame City Council he was involved in a long list of issues and committees. In addition to the already-mentioned Economic Development Committee, Jerry served as a liaison between the city and the Burlingame Chamber of Commerce. He has one of the better attendance records at Chamber functions, and he listened closely when the Chamber made important

suggestions to improve the quality of life in Burlingame. He was also a member of the Fire Advanced Life Support (ALS) Joint Powers Authority, a public-private partnership launched in 1977 to provide improved emergency medical care to Burlingame citizens.

It isn't just the citizens of Burlingame who trust Jerry Deal to be fair and insightful. Jerry was elected by San Mateo County's 20 mayors to serve on the SamTrans Board of Directors overseeing fixed-route and para-transit bus services in San Mateo County. The county's mayors also elected him to serve as Vice Chair of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board which owns and operates Caltrain. The Caltrain Board of Directors appointed Jerry as its representative on the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA), the body responsible for overseeing the new Transbay Transit Center, a rail extension for Caltrain and High-Speed Rail and adjacent transit-oriented developments in downtown San Francisco. As you can surmise from this list, Jerry is smart, self-effacing, and is passionate about improving the quality of life for all Bay Area residents directly impacted by city planning, housing and transportation.

Jerry's expertise, enthusiasm and effectiveness have left an indelible mark on the city of Burlingame which he has called home for over 35 years. He and his wife JoAnn Johnson-Deal, a teacher at Franklin Elementary School, have five children and ten grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor Jerry Deal, the Vice Mayor of Burlingame, a proud resident and a dear friend, for over two decades of outstanding public service. He will be leaving us shortly to move to Oregon, but his legacy will live on in the beauty of Burlingame, in its architecture, in its family-focused activities and lifestyle, and in the example of fairness that Jerry exhibited during his time in public office. We will say farewell to a friend of decades who has etched his mark on decades yet to come.

HONORING JON C. FOSTER

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Jon C. Foster, a distinguished and exemplary Firefighter for Fire Station 74, San Nicolas Island, for the Federal Fire Department Ventura County, on the occasion of his retirement from a remarkable career of over 35 years of dedicated service to our community and our country.

Firefighter Foster has had an outstanding and admirable career, which began when he enlisted in the United States Air Force as a Firefighter in 1976. He quickly rose to the ranks of Staff Sergeant and Crew Chief before the end of his enlistment in 1982. Firefighter Foster continued his commitment and service to the community by working at the Construction Battalion Center, where he served as a Firefighter for the United States Coast Guard and worked with the CBC Fire Department.

Firefighter Foster was transferred to Point Mugu Fire Department, where he served for two years before being assigned to San Nicolas Outlying Field. Firefighter Foster has

shown his impeccable dedication to Ventura County by serving for the last 25 years at Fire Station 74, San Nicolas Island. His unwavering service to Ventura County has been invaluable to the safety of this community.

With over three and a half decades of exceptional work dedicated to the Department of Defense, Fire and Emergency Services, Firefighter Foster has set a superior standard of performance for those who serve with him. His service has truly lived up to the meaning of the Department of Defense, Fire and Emergency Services' motto, "Protecting Those Who Defend America."

Firefighter Foster's lifetime career of leadership and his many accomplishments are indicative of his steadfast commitment and dedication to our community. As this chapter in his career comes to an end, I want to express my sincere appreciation for Firefighter Foster's years of honorable and selfless dedication that greatly contributed to the success of the Federal Fire Department Ventura County.

For these reasons, I commend Firefighter Jon C. Foster and wish him the best in all of his future endeavors.

NATIONAL DAY OF TAIWAN

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise regarding the continuing maritime disputes in the waters of the East China Sea, particularly surrounding a group of particular islands. Known as the Senkaku Islands to Japan, the Diaoyutai Islands in Taiwan, and the Diaoyu Islands in China, these islands are the focal point of the many disputes over the waters of the East China and South China seas.

Although tensions remain, Taiwan has emerged as a pro-active voice urging countries to work together to insure prosperity and security for all. Japan, China, and Taiwan all have claims to islands in the East China Sea, and the resulting tensions—particularly between China and Japan—threaten our political, economic, and security interests in the region.

Taiwan's President, Ma Ying-jeou, is determined to peacefully resolve this problem by working to build a trusting relationship with the countries involved. In 2012 President Ma proposed the East China Sea Peace Initiative, which demonstrates Taiwan's genuine interest in finding a permanent solution that benefits all stakeholders. The general response to the initiative has been positive in this country, and I believe it holds much promise. I am hopeful that regional tensions can be lessened because of the constructive steps taken by Taiwan.

Taiwan has proven time and again to be a friend working to ensure the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific. With the National Day of Taiwan fast approaching on October 10, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Taiwan for their friendship, thank President Ma for his contribution towards regional peace, and to wish all of Taiwan's people a wonderful and most happy National Day.