

Copeland upon the occasion of her retirement. For 42 years, Ms. Copeland has dedicated her career to educating our Nation's youth and serving the Gulf Coast community.

A graduate of Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi, Ms. Copeland began teaching at Mowat Junior High School in Panama City, Florida, in 1972. Eight years later, she joined the faculty at King Middle School in Milton, Florida, where she has established herself as a leader amongst the great educators in Northwest Florida and where she teaches today, chairs the History/Civics Department, and is the Student Government Association Advisor.

For over four decades, Ms. Copeland has inspired the minds of our Nation's youth, and her innovative techniques have brought unique learning opportunities and experiences to her students. Whether organizing an annual visit to Tallahassee, the state capital, to engage her students in the legislative process, sponsoring an annual Veteran's Day program to honor area veterans and first responders and educate her students on the contributions and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, or building pyramids and volcanoes, Ms. Copeland's passion for teaching is demonstrated through each of her tireless efforts in making learning enjoyable and bringing it to life.

Her dedication and service, however, is not confined to her classroom at King Middle School. Ms. Copeland teaches hospital homebound students in the evenings as well as Sunday School at her local church. She has also organized and sponsored countless events, including the Ronald McDonald House Easter Basket to benefit Sacred Heart Children's Hospital in Pensacola, Florida; a Thanksgiving food basket drive to provide for the needy; a blanket giveaway for our area's homeless and to support low-income families; and Meet-the-Candidate breakfasts during election years to afford an additional opportunity to her students and the local community to participate in the democratic process.

Her involvement in the classroom and throughout the community has not gone unnoticed. As a result of her commitment to excellence and service, Ms. Copeland has received myriad awards, including the Alpha Delta Kappa Educator of the Year in 2012, the Governor's Award in Education, the International Award ISTE Ana Mackay-Gutierrez Award for Community Giving, the Santa Rosa County Volunteer of the Year in 2006, the Veteran's State Teacher of the Year in 2007, and the King Middle School "Teacher of the Year" award three times throughout her tenure.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Ms. Deborah "Dee" Copeland for her lifetime of achievements and dedication to the Northwest Florida community. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing Ms. Copeland all the best for continued success in her well-earned retirement and thanking her for her service.

RECOGNIZING THE STROKE COMEBACK CENTER'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Stroke Comeback Center on the

occasion of its 10th anniversary and the critical health care services that it provides to stroke survivors and their families in our community.

The SCC is a non-profit founded by Darlene Williamson and John Phillips in 2004 to create a community in which stroke survivors and their families could receive proper long-term treatment. Meaningful care for stroke survivors is limited in the United States, and the SCC is one of less than ten such facilities. The mission of the SCC has been to pick up where traditional health care coverage misguidedly leaves off by providing affordable speech and language services to stroke survivors in a supportive and participating environment. No patient is ever turned away because they can't afford the cost.

The current situation of stroke coverage and care is in desperate need of reform. It is common misconception that recovery is quick and easy when in reality stroke survivors require comprehensive rehabilitation for a protracted period of time to fully regenerate their cognitive and physical abilities. Yes insurance coverage for such care, if provided at all, runs out within 3-12 months, and the Medicare therapy cap for speech and physical therapy falls well short of covering the true costs. There is an estimated direct and indirect cost of about \$73.7 billion. However, it is impossible to measure the emotional, physical, and financial burden a stroke puts on a survivor and their family.

Today, the SCC operates with about 100 individuals served in 40 groups weekly, growing from just five groups in 2005. More than a dozen committed volunteers contribute more than 3,000 hours annually. The SCC works closely with national, state, and local stroke-related organizations and receives referrals from all of the major hospital centers in the metropolitan area. Ninety-three percent of survivors report improvement in one or more areas of speaking, listening, writing or reading. On average, survivors report that they are now three times more confident in their social interactions allowing them to reestablish their role in their family and the community. The success of the SCC is due in part to their undiminished and comprehensive programs. Its life participation, group-based approach helps patients achieve their maximum potential.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contributions and achievements of the Stroke Comeback Center and its dedicated staff and volunteers over the past 10 years. The services and programs offered by the SCC fill a void in the rehabilitation process and significantly improve the quality of lives of stroke survivors and their families.

IRON BILL

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on May 31, 2013, Houston Fire Department suffered its most tragic event in its history. Four of Houston's bravest firefighters died in the line of duty, fighting a 5-alarm blaze at a hotel in southwest Houston:

Captain EMT Matthew Renaud, 35, of Station 51;

Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee, 41, of Station 51;

Firefighter EMT Robert Garner, 29, of Station 68;

Probationary Firefighter Anne Sullivan, 24, of Station 68.

They were the best we had in Houston, and we are still saddened that they are gone.

The hotel's hellish inferno claimed the lives of these four firefighters and injured fourteen other firefighters when the roof collapsed—some critically. One of the brave who survived was Captain William Dowling, also known as "Iron Bill."

Iron Bill was injured serving Houston, the community in which he was raised. A graduate of Klein Oak High School, Captain Dowling left Texas to serve his nation as an enlistee with the United States Marine Corps. In 1993, on leave from Marine boot camp training, he married his high school sweetheart—Jacki. As a Marine, Iron Bill served 4 years, including a deployment to Somalia with I Marine Expeditionary Force in support of Operation Restore Hope, 1995. He returned home to Texas and to Jacki to begin his career and to start a family. Twenty-one years later, Captain Dowling and Jacki have three children: Forrest, Faith and Foster.

Iron Bill's patriotic spirit and love of the community led him to join the Houston Fire Department. He graduated from the Houston Fire Department Academy in 2000 and steadily rose through the ranks. He worked at Stations 12, 19, and 48 before making Captain at Station 68 in January of 2013. Firehouse 68 is located at the corner of Bissonnet and South Gessner in the "heart of Southwest Houston". In 2013, the fire apparatus of Firehouse 68 made 14,847 responses, making it the third busiest fire station in the City of Houston. There, at Firehouse 68, Captain Dowling became known as "Iron Bill," a fitting nickname to describe a strong and courageous hero.

It was just five months after he arrived at Station 68 that Captain Dowling and fellow firefighters received an alarm call that would take them to the gates of hell.

On that fateful day, in the heat of the Texas noonday sun, Captain Dowling along with the four other firefighters rushed into the hotel to find potential trapped guests. While the firefighters were in the hotel, the roof collapsed, trapping and killing Garner and Sullivan from Station 68 and Bebee and Renaud from Station 51. Captain Dowling's legs were crushed and burned, but he remained calm, radioed for help and waited for his brothers to pull him from the flames.

The attending physician in the ambulance said that Captain Dowling, though severely injured, kept asking about the condition of his crew. He was more concerned for the safety of others than himself—the testament of a true hero. He told the doctor, on the way to the hospital, to tell his wife and children that he would fight for them. Hearing this comes as no surprise to Captain Dowling's family: they know him as a fighter.

Captain Dowling was seriously injured with burns over thirty percent of his body, and he was placed in a medically induced coma for months at Memorial Hermann Hospital and Medical Center. He subsequently had both legs amputated and suffered brain damage. A long road of recovery was ahead for Captain Dowling, but surrounded by a team of doctors, his family, firefighter family, friends, church

and the entire city and state of Texas, Iron Bill was not alone. Deservingly, Captain Dowling became everyone's hero.

Finally, six months after the fire, Captain Dowling left the hospital and went home, riding in Station 68's newly dedicated fire truck. Of course, he sat in the Captain's Chair. Along the drive home, he was greeted by firefighters and members of the community, who lined the streets and highways from the Texas Medical Center to Tomball.

Since returning home, Jacki left her full time job at Frank Elementary to care for her husband full time. It's no surprise that as a Texas woman, she's strong and determined, but quite simply, the strength that she possesses is amazing. To keep the community updated on Iron Bill, she started blogging on a community Facebook page (entitled "Capt. William Dowling Iron Bill"). This blog allows the community to rally behind the Dowling family: cry with them, laugh with them, pray for them and see their hero survive.

In the last year, Captain Dowling has received a customized fire tank chair. It's an ATV-like wheelchair, and he loves driving it! At home, Houston Texans' JJ Watt visited Iron Bill and presented him with a Houston Texans' jersey with the #68 proudly displayed. Captain Dowling loves to sing and play guitar—from Bon Jovi to Third Day—and Texas Country music star, Cory Morrow, played for him when he was in the hospital. He was even able to travel to San Diego to see his son Private Forrest Dowling follow in his footsteps and graduate from the Marine Corps' Recruit Training. When Private Forrest Dowling held his newly earned Eagle, Globe and Anchor in the palm of his hand with pride after completing the Crucible, April 17, 2013, Forrest said that the main reason he decided to sign the dotted line and become a Marine, was because of his dad. He said my dad was a Marine and always wanted me to become a Marine as well, so it's what I set out to do. Despite his amazing progress, Captain Dowling has had his share of challenges. His pain is debilitating—so much so that Jacki cried out for help and prayers that he could be seen by a team of experts who had experience with traumatic amputations. She had heard of the work of the team at Brooke's Army Medical Center, which operates the only DOD Burn Center, at Fort Sam Houston and set out to work to get him admitted. The community rallied, launching a change.org petition, emailing and calling BAMC and reaching out to my office. It's rarely talked about, but most Congressional offices spend the majority of their time on "case-work," offering constituents help with a federal department or agency.

Within a matter of hours, Brooke's Army Medical Center deemed Captain Dowling admissible, saying they are honored to receive him and that he would be embraced by fellow Marines. Once the appropriate medical records were transferred, an ambulance transported Iron Bill from St. Luke's Hospital to Brooke's Army Medical Center for further treatment.

As Iron Bill gets the medical care that he needs, I hope he knows the community of Tomball and the greater Houston area and, of course, Texas' Second District eagerly awaits his return home. When that happens, I hope we line the streets and cheer for him once

again. For our community will always be grateful for his service and sacrifices. Once a hero, always a hero.

And that's just the way it is.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA'S BELOVED GEORGE H. WHITEHURST

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and dedicated service of Northwest Florida's beloved George H. Whitehurst who passed away on October 19, 2014. Throughout his long and distinguished career as a mayor and businessman, Mr. Whitehurst served as a mentor and an inspiration to countless individuals. All those who have been blessed by his presence and leadership mourn the loss of a great man and esteemed public servant.

Mayor Whitehurst was born in Greenwood, Florida on July 28, 1926 to George and Ethel Whitehurst. Upon graduating from Greenwood High School, he enrolled in Florida State University where he was a part of the Flying High Circus and performed on the flying trapeze. From 1943 to 1945, Mayor Whitehurst honorably served our Nation in the United States Navy as a hospital corpsman, as well as an operating room technician. Following his military service, he continued his education and graduated from the Indiana College of Mortuary Science in 1950. In 1955, Mayor Whitehurst settled in Crestview, Florida, where he and his wife, Annelle, opened the Whitehurst Funeral Home. In 1961, he entered the public service arena where he would use his great business sense to lead the Crestview community as mayor for more than two decades.

As Crestview's longest serving mayor, Mayor Whitehurst tirelessly worked to better the city he loved. He successfully advocated for increased public safety and economic development, which resulted in the establishment of two police substations and the Crestview Public Safety Building, development of an emergency transportation corridor, restoration of a cemetery, construction of the Okaloosa County Veterans Memorial, conversion of the former Yellow River Railroad bed into Industrial Drive, and a revitalized downtown, among other efforts.

Mayor Whitehurst was a man of conviction and was widely respected by those who knew him. The community's immense appreciation was well evidenced when he received the Mae Reatha Coleman Citizen of the Year Award in August 2013 for his outstanding service. Mayor Whitehurst, fondly known as "Mr. Crestview," will be remembered for his exceptional leadership and contributions to the Gulf Coast community, and his legacy will not be forgotten. To his family and friends, he will be remembered most as a loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to honor the life of George H. Whitehurst. My wife Vicki joins me

in extending our sincerest condolences and prayers to his wife, Annelle; daughters, Angela and Ann; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; and the entire Whitehurst family. He will truly be missed.

#### RECOGNIZING NETKAL AND KOREAN AMERICAN SERVICE DAY

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to applaud the efforts of a group of Korean-American leaders in the United States as they successfully launched the first Korean-American Service Day, ("KA Service Day") on Saturday, November 8, 2014, with hundreds of volunteers participating in various events held in New York, Atlanta, Washington DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

KA Service Day was conceived by the Network of Korean-American Leaders (NetKAL), a leadership program organized by the Center for Asian-Pacific Leadership at the University of Southern California for the purpose of incubating the next generation of Korean-American leaders. In 2014, the eighth class of leadership fellows convened in New York City over the course of six months and, as in years past, was challenged to come up with a community service project with far-reaching impact. The creation of "Korean-American Service Day" was an idea put forth by the 2014 class of NetKAL fellows.

The five-city service day aimed to encourage Korean-Americans across the nation to give back to their local communities. Some of the volunteer opportunities ranged from food pantries and meal programs to outdoor restoration projects. They partnered with non-profit organizations, such as City Harvest to distribute fresh produce in the South Bronx neighborhood of my congressional district in New York City. From sorting donations to the Downtown Women's Center in Los Angeles and planting trees in a community greenspace in Atlanta, volunteers on KA Service Day demonstrated their collective will and power to become positive agents of change in our society. I hope that the huge success of the inaugural KA Service Day will inspire thousands of dedicated volunteers to help grow it into one of the largest days of service in America.

As a Korean War veteran, I have been proud to witness the Korean community flourish across our nation. Since 1903, when they first came to America, Korean immigrants have played a vital role in shaping our society through their strong family ties and hard work. They have inspired us with their entrepreneurialism and perseverance toward building success and wealth for their families and communities. As a Congressman representing the communities in the New York metropolitan area I have been greatly impressed by the tremendous contributions made by half-a-million Korean Americans and 1,000 professional, educational, religious, and trade organizations, as they play a vital role in the Great City of New York. I am grateful to them and the members of NetKAL for their leadership in making a positive impact on our society.