

their country. The lethal legacy of U.S. dropped unexploded ordinance from the era of the Vietnam War continues to plague the Lao people. UXO are a constant reminder of the obligation we have as a government to clean up a mess that continues to kill innocent Lao citizens and impedes economic development on lands all across Laos.

It is my feeling that dialogue, cooperation, and common interests will allow the U.S.-Lao bilateral relations to improve significantly in 2016. Both the Obama Administration and Ambassador Sayavongs have my full support in this goal.

The following are remarks I delivered at the December 4th celebration of U.S.-Lao Relations.

Good evening. Ambassador Sayavongs and Madam Sayavongs, I am honored to be with you tonight to celebrate sixty years of diplomatic relations between our countries, as well as the fortieth anniversary of the Lao PDR.

My relationship with the people of Laos is very special and I strongly support strengthening our bilateral relations.

My home is Minnesota. In my congressional district, I represent tens of thousands of Hmong and Lao-Americans who call Laos their ancestral home. They have family in Laos. Their traditions come from Laos. And, they care deeply about the future of Laos.

More than anyone, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Chao Lee who has been on my congressional staff since 2001, for guiding me and advising me. He is with us tonight and I would like to thank him for his work on behalf of U.S.-Lao relations.

Over my fifteen years serving in Congress I have taken many steps to strengthen this relationship. I was a supporter of normalized trade relations with Laos at a time when many people were fighting about the past rather than working to build a new future. I have always supported increased U.S. funding for UXO clean—a terrible legacy of war that harms the Lao people. And, in 2006, I had the pleasure of celebrating a very special Christmas in Vientiane during a visit to your beautiful country.

Ambassador, I am committed to working with you to strengthen our future together. We will work as partners to address issues important to both our countries—economic development, increased trade, and access GSP, as well as improving human rights and human development to ensure that all Lao people, including women and girls, are free to live full, productive lives.

Ambassador, I wish your government much success as Laos chairs ASEAN next year. I know the Obama Administration will work as a partner to ensure next year's ASEAN Summit is a success and they will have my full support.

Again, congratulations Mr. Ambassador on your country's 40 years.

Thank you.

#### HONORING GEORGE BURKE

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember and honor a dear friend and colleague, George Burke. Full of passion and energy, he dedicated his life to fighting for our progressive Democratic values. A trusted, wise and gifted political mind, George's vision

and leadership helped build and grow our Democratic Party of Virginia.

A man of many talents, he was an accomplished journalist, photographer, congressional staffer, senior labor leader with the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Chair of the 11th Congressional District Democratic Committee, and my trusted confidant and Communications Director.

A constituent and friend of both George and mine, Mike Burke Kirby, recently endeavored to interview many of those who knew George and capture what George meant to so many. I submit Mr. Kirby's eloquent tribute to George.

For more than 30 years I have been fortunate to call George my close friend. We will all miss his stories, his unwavering optimistic approach to life, and his love for his friends and family. His loss will leave a great void in all our lives and I will miss him dearly. I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering George Burke.

GEORGE BURKE [1951-2015]

(By Mike Burke Kirby, Former Chair Fairfax County Democratic Committee)

With all of his spirit, I thought George Burke was going to keep beating cancer for another ten years. He certainly had ten more years of wisdom and advice, laughter and courage for all of us.

After centuries of subjugation on their own island, many Irish Americans were conditioned to thrive in politics in this huge nation of democracy. Fighting for their own freedom here, and for the rights of other minorities and women. Those include Gerry Connolly and Jim Moran. George has been a hero in many of those fights.

George was a "Connector," like Paul Revere. Many people rode from Boston to tell people that the British were sending troops west from the city. For weeks, panicky calls were made. Finally, they only listened to Paul Revere because everyone knew and trusted him. George knew 50 times as many people as you and I. They all thought George was one of the best people they ever met.

George never seemed to parse the issue differences among Democrats. He simply thought that any Democrat was more of a democrat than any Republican. He fought to make sure the nominating processes were fair. With a nominee, he put his shoulder to the wheel.

The print and broadcast media industries declined early in the 21st Century. When George got young people, journalists, press staff and politicians, into the "Burke Zone," he mentored them into the integrity and responsibility, the professionalism and punctuality from that loss. George's effect on Hill staffers was evident the week after his death—with a hundred young faces gathered outside of Rayburn Building for a memorial.

For those who lived through the 1960s, the memory of Civil Rights, the Viet Nam War, the draft, the Kennedy and King Assassinations, the demonstrations, the politics and music can all come through with just a few words, which mean little to later generations. Many of us shared that with George, especially Gerry Connolly who was with him daily for many years.

George often bragged about his independent ways, including his own travel routes. In the Snowmagedon, George left the office well after Gerry and James. Six hours after they left DC, the two were only at Bailey's Crossroads, and on a radio station by phone. George called to say "hi." He had been home already, far beyond Bailey's, had a coffee from Starbucks and was on his way back to Sears to buy a washing machine on

sale. Gerry asked where he was; actually George could see them from his inbound car across the street.

After a broken neck George's hearing suffered enough that he couldn't pick up the vibrator on his phone. So, he never turned off the sound. In a medium sized event with President Obama, George's phone went off. With everybody looking, he answered it. It was Rachel.

An "8 X 10 Glossy" Penny called him, with vast brain power, a pure political analyst and tactician. A total friend who always remained common, who persevered with a lot more than grace through four bouts with cancer. He attended all of her weekly campaign staff meetings until he went into the hospital for the last time.

George held court at the Mason District Crab Feast. The next day, he showed up again to help dismantle the "God awful tent." Even with the broken neck he still came to sit under the porch and spin tales.

Rachel pestered him early to write the Mason Precinct Letter. George waited until the issues were ripe. Letters almost always perfect.

Mark Levine got George into Public Access TV, where he covered local politics. The stage may have been small; but George covered it like Dan Rather. He was proud of a large new set, and was completely unfazed when the lighting panel dropped and other parts of the set disintegrated.

George's last student, Jake, was grateful for the little time he was able to spend with George. No conversation, no detail, and definitely no person was too big for George—it all mattered to him. Over their 20 to 30 to 90 to 180 minute phone conversations, everything mattered. Every question deserves a well thought out response, every roadblock mandates a thoroughly strategized plan to go around it. George's main lesson, looking back on it, was to "pay attention" and not to let any opportunity, no matter how small, be wasted.

George hosted the debate among the seven Democratic candidates for the 8th Congressional District nomination in 2014. On the race, he gave political advice to all of them.

George spent 16 years as head of Communications at the International Association of Fire Fighters, a job he loved and talked about all the time. Even after he left the IAFF, at every big political dinner, no matter what other hat he was wearing, he always sat at the Fire Fighters table. He served with the Fire Fighters through September 11.

In Fairfax County, the Fire Fighters called George a mastermind. After years of failing to get a federal grant for the Safety for an Adequate Fire Emergency Response, George and Gerry Connolly stepped in. They now have a grant for millions of dollars that gives the County 49 additional staff on ladder trucks.

George took care of any issue, knew how the legislatures work and could always find a way to fix any problem. John Niemiec, said as a friend, George even helped people get recommendations.

Dan Duncan was Communications Director for the Seafarers Union, while George was president of the International Labor Communications Association. George worked hard to get labor press respected both within the union movement and among the general media. They were all propagandists of one kind or another because, if they didn't promote their members, they certainly could not expect any one else to do so. George understood that and worked hard to transition labor media from membership newspapers and magazines to the emerging world of what would become social media.

Dan Duncan knew George when he was on the 11th District Democratic Committee,

which George chaired. When Dan presided at the NoVA Labor Federation, George knew the numbers and he knew the people. He worked hard for consensus, but allowed those with opposing views about candidates and/or issues to get their points across without folks becoming alarmed or challenged.

Long discussions with Cathy Hoffman, a boss at Liberty Mountain Resort in near Gettysburg, of the triumphs and challenges of their teenage kids. Many stories of George, the very patient instructor of the most timid skiers. Many ski instructors are prima donnas, but not George. George's name is still on the instructor schedule at Liberty for this winter. They can't seem to take it off.

Kelly Kurtyka also instructed at Liberty. She tried her son, Spenser, at skiing at the age of three. His response of "It's really cold, Mommy" devastated her. The next year, Cathy put Spencer with George Burke. "Mr. George" worked on his own time and waved his magic wands, and Spencer joined his family as a great skier. George brought him stuff from skiing in Switzerland, and Spenser drew pictures of him in school.

After George travelled across the U.S., he met Sharon the Nurse, who, "took him into the woods." Great couple for hiking, kayaking, camping in New England. Not many spouses are blessed with a partner who loves the outdoors so. That worked really well for Sharon and George for 45 years.

With different knee and ankle strengths, Sharon lost her downhill ability, but cross country skied a lot. George was better at downhill and loved it, and taught it. Still, he often cross country skied with Sharon.

None of us can quite remember what George was like before he had two cell phones, on in any environment. With the blue tooth in his ear in New England, a little kid walking down the beach noticed that his arm was raised: George's hand with the phone in it, way up to get better reception. An hour later the kid came back and noticed that George's arm was still in the air.

George and Sharon were a team, and you could see that whenever and wherever they were together, more often at Labor events than political ones.

While folks in local politics never knew where he got the time, George was a five star dad. He changed the diapers. Mom nursed on the weekends and dad was full time. Skiing of course, but also an indulgence in swimming, crew, marching band at Jeb Stuart. The Burke kids loved the outdoors with their parents.

None of George's kids got the political infection. But they did get his love of music: the Allman Brothers, Eric Clapton, B.B. King. They still mostly do the music. The youngest however follows more rap and ski boarding.

Family holidays were always a very big event with them. Sharon will especially miss the big holiday related events.

In the spring, Sharon will take Georges' ashes on a two hour hike to his favorite ravine in New England.

When you get the vocation for public service, it can be joyful and rewarding. But you will miss a lot, mostly your wife and kids; and they'll miss you. This is a great country for public service: on the Hill, for the union, and in state and local politics. For almost 250 years, this nation has followed the path to ever more democracy. Rarely as good as spending all your time with your family, and certainly better than leaving your family a fortune, you can leave them a better country to live in. George Burke very much did that.

After he last got out of the hospital, George wanted a party, sort of an early Irish Wake. Some said he wanted his kids to know what he did; some that he wanted to critique

whatever we all said. His editing eyes are very much on my shoulder. We will still have George's party, maybe in January. Lots more of the best we know of him and very little of grief. Do you know many people who had such a good run?

Whenever I needed advice or had a question for 30+ years, every voice mail or e-mail got an immediate answer. Nobody else ever does that.

In writing this, I spoke to more than 30 people. Not all were included specifically here; but they brought a flood of great adjectives. Everyone said "true friend."

The list of candidates and campaigners who got great advice from George would take many pages. If you are reading this, you are probably one of them.

Whatever you think about after death, the memory of George is softly etched in all of our hearts. He will continue to live in each of us as we remember him almost every day.

Susie Warner with photo of smiling, skiing George on mountain in the west: "I love to remember George like this."

#### HONORING MR. JOSE HURTADO

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 7, 2015*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jose Hurtado, a faculty member at Napa Valley College, who is retiring this month after 38 years of service.

Mr. Hurtado's family immigrated to the United States in 1958. I had the pleasure of growing up with Jose, who went on to earn degrees from Napa Valley College, UC Davis, and Sacramento State College. He was the first in his family to earn college degrees, and his younger siblings quickly followed his lead.

In 1977, Mr. Hurtado began work as a counseling assistant at Napa Valley College. In 1980, he became the first Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) Counselor hired to a tenure-track position. Nine years later, in 1989, Mr. Hurtado moved to the Counseling Department. He subsequently served as Division Chair of Napa Valley College's Counseling Department, before working temporarily as the school's Coordinator of the non-Credit Matriculation Program. In 2003, Mr. Hurtado moved back to General Counseling on the Napa campus, and began working with the school's student-athletes in 2010. In 2013, Mr. Hurtado became Coordinator of the combined Career and Transfer Programs at Napa Valley College.

Over the course of his 38-year career, Mr. Hurtado earned numerous awards and accolades. He was elected to the Napa Valley Unified School District Governing Board in 2004, and in 2011, he joined Community Action Napa Valley, an organization of which he is currently Chairman. Last year, Mr. Hurtado was appointed by California Governor Jerry Brown to the Napa Valley Expo Board of Directors, and in 2015, he became a member of the Napa County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Looking back, Mr. Hurtado is especially proud of his children and grandchildren, his U.S. citizenship, and his election to the school board. His children's weddings remain among Mr. Hurtado's happiest moments. He remains lovingly quirky to the community, reading four newspapers every Sunday and cheerfully

interacting with Napa Valley students on a daily basis. Next year, Mr. Hurtado plans to complete a 500-mile trek on Spain's ancient Camino de Santiago trail.

Mr. Speaker, Jose Hurtado has devoted nearly 40 years to his community and to the education of our young people. He has demonstrated exceptional character, confidence, and compassion, and his community has benefited enormously from his efforts. For these reasons and others, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

#### PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

#### HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 7, 2015*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the victims who were killed during the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy. Seventy-four years ago today, more than 2,000 American citizens lost their lives and more than 1,000 others were injured in a surprise attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy.

The attack on Pearl Harbor shook our nation to its core. Up until this point, the United States had largely remained neutral during the Second World War. However, as a testament to our strength and our resolve, the United States declared war against the Japanese and entered World War II just one day following the attack. Contrary to what the Japanese had intended, the attack had only emboldened our nation to forge our own path to victory.

Tragedies such as the attack on Pearl Harbor serve as a stark reminder of the great personal sacrifices that our men and women in uniform must make in the service of protecting our nation. While many soldiers are fortunate enough to return from service, plenty of others have given up their lives in the act of duty. We are forever indebted to these men and women who have given their lives to protect our freedoms and way of life.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is also about paying tribute to those who served—and survived—during the attack. Petty Officer Doris "Dorie" Miller was one such American who fought bravely during the conflict. Petty Officer Miller displayed remarkable courage when his ship, the USS *West Virginia*, came under attack. As the fighting occurred, Miller dragged his ship's commander, who was mortally wounded by shrapnel, out of the line of fire to safety. He then manned a 50-caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun and shot down at least three of the 29 Japanese planes that went down that day until he was ordered to abandon ship. While Petty Officer Miller survived the attack on Pearl Harbor, he sadly lost his life during a second attack during the Battle of Makin Island when a Japanese submarine and aircraft attack sunk his ship.

Mr. Speaker, the attack on Pearl Harbor was a defining moment in United States history. Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day helps to remind us of the importance of defending our freedoms and the heavy cost of doing so. We are reminded on this day of those who lost their lives, but also the countless other veterans—such as Dorie Miller—who have made