

Miguel tirelessly spent his life working to empower others, no matter their station in life.

While Miguel Contreras may be remembered most for his tenacity as a labor leader and role model for the Latino community, his efforts to secure a better future for American workers everywhere will live on.

My deepest sympathy goes out to his wife Maria Elena Durazo and their two sons, Michael and Mario.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am deeply saddened to inform you of the passing of Miguel Contreras, secretary-treasurer for the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. I would like to take a few moments to recognize the many important accomplishments of Miguel Contreras and the tremendous impact he made on the labor movement.

Miguel led the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor for nearly a decade. During his tenure, he continuously fought for the rights of laborers, and did so with great success. Through his guidance and leadership, The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor entered a period of unprecedented advancement and success.

Miguel Contreras was a man with humble beginnings. The son of farm workers, he began working in the fields of California's Central Valley at a very young age. With his early exposure to the difficult life of a farm worker, he quickly joined the ranks of political activists in labor as a volunteer with the United Farm Workers of America. He stood with Cesar Chavez and the UFW during their national grape boycott, and continued the fight for workers for the remaining years of his life.

In 1996, Miguel Contreras became the first Latino to win the post of secretary-treasurer for the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO—comprising 350 local unions and more than 800,000 members. Under his leadership, The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor had seen phenomenal growth. He coordinated many successful labor rights victories including the labor dispute of 2000 when 8,500 janitors from Service Employees International Union, SEIU, Local 1877 fought for and won a higher standard of living and better working conditions.

Fighting for the rights of laborers was at the core of Miguel Contreras' beliefs, an attribute which made him a great leader for laborers throughout the State of California. He cared about regular people and timelessly worked for their welfare.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me and the many mourning members of the labor community in recognizing and honoring Miguel Contreras for his guidance and life-long effort in fighting to improve the lives of laborers. He is survived by his wife Maria Elena Durazo and two sons, Michael and Mario.

RECOGNIZING LISA GUILLERMIN GABLE

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize and thank Ambassador Lisa Guillermin Gable of Virginia for her valued leadership as the United States Commissioner General to the 2005 World Exposition in Aichi, Japan.

The World Expo 2005 features national pavilions from 125 participating countries. Under the leadership of Ambassador Gable, the not-for-profit and privately funded organization, Aichi USA 2005, has successfully designed and built the U.S. Pavilion, which will be open to the public in Nagoya, Japan, through September 25, 2005. The showcase at the United States' pavilion honors America's first diplomat and innovator, Benjamin Franklin. The pavilion showcase promotes America's core values of hope, optimism, enterprise and freedom.

Under Ambassador Gable's stewardship, the U.S. Pavilion and related cultural activities were successfully and fully funded with 100 percent non-Federal financing. The hard work of this distinguished resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia will help promote U.S. economic development by fostering business relationships between Japan and the many participating countries and state sponsors.

I express my appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Lisa Guillermin Gable, U.S. Commissioner General to the World Expo, as named by President George W. Bush, for leading the way in making possible the United States' participation in the first world's fair of the 21st Century.

26 YEARS OF DEDICATED FEDERAL SERVICE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, as Members of Congress, we have the unique opportunity to participate in special exchange programs in which talented individuals from other branches of government can work temporarily in our offices as legislative fellows or detailees. These initiatives promote efficiency in the business of government by developing mutually beneficial relationships between the executive and legislative branches of government.

As Members, we have the opportunity to meet these experts and benefit from their insight, knowledge and experience. One such expert in my office just celebrated 26 years of service to the USDA Forest Service. Kenneth Karkula is currently serving a 1-year fellowship in my office through the Brookings Institute. Building on his extensive experience, he has made invaluable contributions to several issues important to Idaho in the area of natural resources, the environment and energy. In the short time since his arrival, he has become an invaluable asset to my staff, filling in during recent permanent staff vacancies and being willing to do whatever is asked of him.

Ken is on detail from his position as National Concessions Program Manager for the Forest Service. His public service career started when he fought wildland fires in the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. He then served as a District Resource Staff Officer in Arizona and New Mexico and, in 1992, moved to the position of Forest Recreation Staff Officer in Lake Tahoe, CA. In 1996, he took his current position at the USDA Forest Service Headquarters, a tremendous culmination of many hard-working years. Ken's knowledge of U.S. environmental and Federal land management policies, coupled with his experience in on-the-ground implementation of these policies over the years, gives him a unique and critical perspective of Federal land management issues that benefit me as I help explore updating and enhancing decades-old environmental policies and practices.

I congratulate Ken on his many years of successful work and dedication to the American public.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NEW ISLAMIC CENTER OF AMERICA

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to The Islamic Center of America, one of the first Islamic institutions in North America. On May 12, the Center will celebrate the completion of its new mosque complex in Dearborn, which will have the distinction of being the largest mosque in the United States. The festivities will continue with a grand banquet to be held on May 14. These events will bring together Muslims, as well as many others, from Michigan and around the country.

The Islamic Center of America traces its origin to the 1940s when Muslim immigrants from Lebanon and Syria began settling in Detroit and thus sought to bring a religious leader from the Middle East to the Detroit area to serve their community. A young author and scholar, Imam Mohammed Jawas Chirri, was the choice, arriving from Lebanon in February 1949. When the newly-formed Islamic Center Foundation Society was established in 1954, Imam Chirri became its new leader and soon after they decided to build a new religious center.

In his efforts to raise funds for the new center, Imam Chirri visited Egypt in 1959 and successfully secured support for the project. The Society purchased land owned by the Ford Motor Company located on Joy Road and Greenfield in Detroit. On September 20, 1963, the Islamic Center of America first opened its doors. The building consisted of a large domed prayer room, lecture hall, kitchen, offices, and two classrooms. Following the opening of the mosque, families of the Islamic Center began to move into the area. By 1967, the Center had already outgrown