

the personal and institutional levels. We take pride in our colleagues' work and we champion the growth and development of all those whose commitment to the health professions is intertwined with our enlightened vision and valorous mission.

Our principles of excellence, service to all, diversity, integrity, academic freedom, collaboration and lifelong learning form the foundation from which the high vision and important mission of Texas A&M's Health Science Center is to rise to even greater national importance. We are unshakable in our commitment to these principles because they define who we are.

And, let me speak for a moment about who we are. The Health Science Center has an outstanding faculty, including sixteen Regents' Professors and four Distinguished Professors. We have faculty who have received national and international awards and grants, faculty who represent the cutting edge in their areas of study, and faculty who serve on national boards and organizations, thereby influencing public policy in significant ways. And, we have, if I may say so in all modesty, the first woman President of The American Medical Association.

Our faculty does not have the advantages of organizations and institutions with long histories and traditions, but their genius, efforts and results demonstrate fully the wealth of talent and brains we possess and of which we are so very proud. In fact, I am humbled by the many gifts possessed by our faculty.

Our students are very special indeed. We graduate very bright healthcare professionals who are not only devoted to caring for their patients and communities, but who also see themselves as guardians of the public good. They embrace their destinies as leaders and gladly accept their important roles as citizens of a larger community.

We must never forget that professional, cultural and social competence go hand in hand. We teach our young people the values and behaviors that are consistent with their expectations and responsibilities in their professions. We seek and enroll students from all walks of life whose inherent compassion and desire to serve ensure that they will adopt the best, tryout the unusual, and leave our institution with mature confidence in their extraordinary abilities to meet the challenges and opportunities their professions present now and tomorrow. And, as a result of our commitment and our students' determination to be leaders, we are confidently and proudly producing tomorrow's leaders in the healthcare professions.

Texas A&M Health Science Center has adopted and published its vision, mission and principles, with the appropriate goals, objectives and strategies attached thereto in honor of this inaugural convocation. The Pathways to Excellence 2015 is our declaration of our belief in who we are and what we are to become. We take pride in its publication, we honor those who helped write it, and we are devoted to seeing it carried out.

In closing, let me state emphatically that I am merely one of many here today. I am humbled and inspired by your devotion, labor and dreams. Our future is joined, and we march forward individually and collectively toward a future that is based upon ethics and science with the care of others foremost in our hearts and minds.

In a world where business claims more and more of our professions, we must never forget that love and compassion must attend the care and service that we provide. Our doctors, scientists and educators must not live in sterile environments ignorant of the daily toils of those whom they serve. We are devoted to the precept that all people, regardless of geography, economic status or

cultural differences, deserve the benefits of compassionate care, superior science and exceptional education.

Our health care professionals must maintain and build upon their intellectual curiosity. The future belongs to those who are willing to be a part of the world, learn something new everyday, challenge the status quo, break down unethical barriers, demonstrate integrity at every juncture, and lead by supreme example.

Our faculty and students have a splendid destiny before them because they have the gifts and the will to forge a future in which they will make the world a better and more humane place. This is the future of which I dream, this is the future that is possible, and this is the future that you will bring about. This is our commitment to and our hope for the Texas A&M University's Health Science Center.

TRIBUTE TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, Black History Month gives us an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the historical accomplishments of African Americans. This year's national theme—"Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civil Institutions"—reminds us that the strength of the African American community is rooted in its fraternal and civic organizations.

I have been privileged to have the opportunity to work with many of African American fraternal and social organizations that are active in my congressional district. They all do important work that makes a tangible difference to the quality of life in our community.

This year is the 100th anniversary of Alpha Phi Alpha, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight this fraternity's activities and initiatives in my district. Alpha Phi Alpha is dedicated to serving others and to inspiring and empowering people to achieve success in all aspects of their lives. One of its distinguishing achievements is the establishment of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation Project, which will pay tribute to one of the most influential figures in American history who worked to lead our nation towards greater justice and unity. The group's deep commitment to community empowerment through its numerous programs supporting education—its scholarship and mentoring programs and its efforts to inspire and motivate black youth through its Career Fairs and Black Youth Achievement recognition programs—have made a difference to countless young people.

For many years, I have welcomed the opportunity to attend the Montgomery County Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast program. This event, the success of which is evident in the consistent growth in the number of attendees and the county-wide praise it receives, is a service to Montgomery County. This gathering provides an opportunity for our community to rededicate itself to achieving equality and justice for all.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's impressive list of members includes Justice Thurgood Marshall and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The im-

portant and productive work of Alpha Phi Alpha and other organizations began decades ago, yet there is still much work to be done. We must redouble our efforts to provide the African American community, and all of our communities, with the tools needed to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to achieve his or her full God-given potential. During Black History Month, we must recommit ourselves to supporting the ideals of Alpha Phi Alpha and other great institutions as we continue to strive for a better America."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall votes Nos. 12 and 13. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote No. 12 and "no" on rollcall vote No. 13.

NATIONAL DISABILITY DAY RECOGNITION

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, recently we recognized National Disability Day. I'd like to share with my colleagues the many barriers to employment that people with disabilities face, such as transportation, environment, and stereotyping, though 11 years have passed since the landmark passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

People with disabilities continue to battle a 50 percent nationwide unemployment rate, and for those with severe disabilities, the rate is a shocking 70 percent. The key to changing this statistic is to focus on the ability of an individual, rather than the disability.

Hiring a deserving, qualified individual with a disability is not a charity. It's a smart economic decision. When a person with a disability is employed, they are transformed from a welfare recipient to a tax payer, and that positive economic benefit ripples out to all tax-paying citizens.

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program in particular has been a critical force in assisting people with disabilities and creating self-sufficient, independent productive members of society. The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products and services from community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. The people employed on JWOD contracts acquire valuable job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence.

The program serves 40,000 people with disabilities nationwide. Last year it generated approximately \$280 million in wages earned and nearly \$1.5 billion in products sold. In Georgia alone, approximately 1,000 people with disabilities earned nearly \$3 million in wages last year as a result of JWOD.

This is a program that truly makes a difference in the nation and in Georgia. I'm