

HONORING MICHEL A. LAJOIE
FIRE CHIEF, LEWISTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Chief Michel A. Lajoie of the Lewiston Fire Department. Chief Lajoie began his career as a firefighter in the Lewiston Fire Department in 1970. After taking a short break to pursue a career in the automotive industry in 1972, Michel Lajoie returned to the Lewiston Fire Department in 1976 and rose through the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and deputy chief, before finally becoming chief in 1994. This year he retires, having served over 30 years in Lewiston.

Chief Lajoie exemplifies what it means to be a public servant. In addition to managing a department of 79 uniformed and civilian personnel, he has earned an Associate Degree in Fire Science from Southern Maine Community College and is a graduate of the Androscoggin Leadership Development Institute. Chief Lajoie is a member of a Standing Ad-Hoc Committee for the State of Maine Bureau of Labor Standards and has been instrumental in the continued review and updating of the standards and requirements governing the State of Maine's Fire Service.

His colleagues in Maine selected Chief Lajoie as Fire Chief of the Year in 2003 and also nominated him for Fire Chief of the Year in 2003 for the Fire Chiefs Magazine. Chief Lajoie has served as President of the New England Division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, representing the fire service and the Fire Chiefs throughout the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. He also has served as President of the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, representing the fire service and Fire Chiefs throughout the State of Maine and he currently holds Board positions in several professional associations.

I am proud to honor Chief Lajoie as he embarks on a very well deserved retirement. The City of Lewiston and the State of Maine will miss him.

HONORING OPEN CITIES HEALTH
CENTER

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the ground-breaking work of the Open Cities Health Center. In a fitting celebration of African American History Month, Ms. Mary Stokes and Mrs. Timothy O. Vann will be remembered and celebrated at an awards ceremony on February 24, 2006. These two pioneering African-American women founded the center, providing the vision to provide culturally competent health care—a vision that has grown into a vital resource in the Twin Cities community for nearly four decades.

The Open Cities Health Center has become one of the largest nonprofit community health centers in the Twin Cities. The center was one of the first in the State of Minnesota to focus on providing health care to low-income residents, predominantly people of color. A group of Saint Paul residents began the center in a church basement in Saint Paul's Rondo neighborhood in 1967. Stokes and Vann addressed the health needs of our most at-risk citizens when no one else would. The all-volunteer clinic started out by providing immunizations and basic health education to African-Americans.

Today, due in part to Federal and local government grants over the years, the center has greatly expanded its outreach and become a well-known, multi-lingual clinic that continues to serve the African-American community as well as members of the East African, Southeast Asian, and Caucasian communities. The center provides a wide array of important physical, mental health, and dental services to residents from all over the Twin Cities.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to the vital work of the Open Cities Health Center. We must all work together to increase access to screenings and preventive care treatment for all Americans. I commend the Open Cities Health Center for working to eliminate the damaging health disparities that continue to exist among racial and ethnic groups.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH E.
THIRIOT

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Joseph E. Thirirot for 33 years of teaching in Nevada and a lifetime full of goodwill and service to the community. Joseph is recognized today at the dedication of Joseph E. Thirirot Elementary School which opened September 19, 2005.

Joseph was born August 20, 1906, in Provo, UT. When he was 13 he moved to Nevada and graduated from a one-room schoolhouse in Pahrnagat Valley in Lincoln County. He earned a teaching degree from Brigham Young University in 1930 and a masters of arts from Northwestern University. He then taught school in Lincoln County from 1932 to 39. The following year, Joseph and his wife, Ellen, also a longtime Las Vegas High School teacher, moved to Las Vegas, where they raised three children, all Las Vegas High School graduates. He finished his teaching career in 1966, after 26 years at Las Vegas High School. Some of the subjects that Joseph taught include drama, english literature, grammar, stagecraft, play production, debate, public speaking, chorus and typing. He also headed the Debate team and the Glee Club.

Joseph's students remember him for the fun and exciting classes that he taught and the long hours he put in after school to direct large productions, have extra rehearsals for the next choir concert or to help prepare for an upcoming debate. During these long hours students not only received help for their respective activity but benefited from the exam-

ple he showed as an outstanding educator and citizen. He had a dedication to educate his students both in and out of the classroom that will not be forgotten.

Outside of school, Joseph is very active in the community. He and his wife were longtime costume and makeup directors for the Helldorado parade and other local events. He also cofounded the Las Vegas Little Theater in 1945, helped to form the Las Vegas Classroom Teacher Association, and championed the construction of the old Las Vegas High School auditorium in 1953, where the first classes of what is now University of Nevada, Las Vegas were held. Joseph long performed as a member of the Westerner Quartet and was, for 11 years, a member of the internationally renowned Desert Chorale. An avid collector of rocks and gems, even at the age of 99, when he visits area schools to talk to students on behalf of the Las Vegas Gem Club, he at times meets youngsters whose grandparents were his former students.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Joseph E. Thirirot. He has lived his life full of integrity, enthusiasm, and hard work, dedicating it to education, family, students, and the community. He has been a mentor and inspiration to hundreds of students and to his family and I congratulate him today at the dedication of Joseph E. Thirirot Elementary School.

HONORING OF FRANK STATON

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who can only be described as truly American, Frank Staton.

Originally a California native, Mr. Staton moved to Fort Worth, Texas during his early childhood years. After graduating from I.M. Terrell High School and Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, Mr. Staton embarked on his career as an educator in Fort Worth. Mr. Staton worked for the Fort Worth Independent School District for more than 40 years. It was at this school district where he had served as a teacher, coach, and as a specialist on drug education for youths.

During Mr. Staton's tenure as an educator, he served as a board member of The Fort Worth Transportation Authority and was involved with United Community Centers, Longhorn Council of the Boy Scouts of America, American Heart Association, Safe Haven, the Fort Worth Classroom Teachers Association, and other organizations.

Needless to say, Mr. Staton has touched the lives of countless individuals as well as the community at large through his tireless efforts to promote education. Mr. Staton is now retired, but he still remains active in Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church since 1939.

Today, we honor Frank Staton for his commitment to education. He will always be remembered for his kindness and generosity to others, and may he serve as a role model for others in the future.