

kept a clean home rather she wanted to be remembered for having helped others.

My friend, your wish has been granted. Through your words and deeds you have left an indelible mark on both the great state of Texas and on our Nation.

[From the New York Times,
September 14, 2006]

FORMER TEXAS GOV. ANN RICHARDS DIES
(By The Associated Press)

AUSTIN, TEXAS (AP)—Former Gov. Ann Richards, the witty and flamboyant Democrat who went from homemaker to national political celebrity, died Wednesday night after a battle with cancer, a family spokeswoman said. She was 73.

She died at home surrounded by her family, the spokeswoman said. Richards was found to have esophageal cancer in March and underwent chemotherapy treatments.

The silver-haired, silver-tongued Richards said she entered politics to help others—especially women and minorities who were often ignored by Texas' male-dominated establishment.

"I did not want my tombstone to read, 'She kept a really clean house.' I think I'd like them to remember me by saying, 'She opened government to everyone,'" Richards said shortly before leaving office in January 1995.

Whether or not she succeeded at that, there was no question she cracked open the door.

Her single term as governor had ended in a 1994 defeat to George W. Bush, who went from besting his father's silver-haired critic to the governor's office to the presidency.

"Texas has lost one of its great daughters," President Bush said in a statement after learning of Richards' death.

Two years before she was elected governor of Texas, Ann Richards electrified the 1988 Democratic National Convention with a keynote speech in which she joked that the Republican presidential nominee, George H.W. Bush, had been "born with a silver foot in his mouth."

A longtime champion of women and minorities in government who was serving at the time as Texas state treasurer, she won cheers when she reminded delegates that Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, "only backwards and in high heels."

As governor, Richards appointed the first black University of Texas regent, the first crime victim on the state Criminal Justice Board, the first disabled person on the human services board and the first teacher to lead the State Board of Education. Under Richards, the fabled Texas Rangers pinned stars on their first black and female officers.

Ron Kirk, the black former mayor of Dallas, said Richards helped him get his first political internship during a state constitutional convention in 1974 and later, as governor, made him secretary of state.

"She set the table so somebody like me could become mayor of Dallas," Kirk said.

She also polished Texas' image, courted movie producers, campaigned for the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico, oversaw a doubling of the state prison system and presided over rising student achievement scores and plunging dropout rates.

Throughout her years in office, her popularity remained high. One poll put it at over 60 percent the year she lost her re-election bid to Bush.

Republican Texas Gov. Rick Perry described Richards as "the epitome of Texas politics: a figure larger than life who had a gift for captivating the public with her great wit."

"Ann loved Texas, and Texans loved her," President Bush said. "As a public servant,

she earned respect and admiration. Ann became a national role model, and her charm, wit and candor brought a refreshing vitality to public life."

U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, said Richards never lost her zest for life.

"I wrote her a note when I heard about her cancer and she wrote me back a wonderful letter. She was upbeat and positive and I think she was going to go out with guns blazing," Hutchison said Wednesday night.

Richards was diagnosed with cancer in March and underwent chemotherapy treatments.

Her four adult children spent the day with her before she died Wednesday night at her home in Austin, said Cathy Bonner, a longtime family friend and family spokeswoman.

Born in Lakeview, Texas, in 1933, Richards grew up near Waco, married civil rights lawyer David Richards and spent her early adulthood volunteering in campaigns and raising four children. She often said the hardest job she ever had was as a public school teacher at Fulmore Junior High School in Austin.

In the early 1960s, she helped form the North Dallas Democratic Women, "basically to allow us to have something substantive to do; the regular Democratic Party and its organization was run by men who looked on women as little more than machine parts."

Richards served on the Travis County Commissioners Court in Austin for six years before jumping to a bigger arena in 1982 when her election as state treasurer made her the first woman elected statewide in nearly 50 years.

But politics took a toll. It cost her a marriage and forced her in 1980 to seek treatment for alcoholism.

"I had seen the very bottom of life," she once recalled. "I was so afraid I wouldn't be funny anymore. I just knew that I would lose my zany and my sense of humor. But I didn't. Recovery turned out to be a wonderful thing."

After her re-election defeat, Richards went on to give speeches, work as a commentator for Cable News Network and serve as a senior adviser in the New York office of Public Strategies.

In her last 10 years, Richards worked for many social causes and helped develop the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders, scheduled to open in Austin in 2007.

Richards said she never missed being in public office. She grinned when asked what she might have done differently had she known she would be a one-term governor.

"Oh," she said, "I would probably have raised more hell."

HONORING OCTOBER AS NATIONAL
SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2006

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate October as National Spina Bifida Awareness Month. There are an estimated 70,000 people in the United States who are affected by Spina Bifida, the most common, permanently disabling birth defect. Of particular concern is that members of the Hispanic community are disproportionately at risk of a Spina Bifida pregnancy. The rate of Spina Bifida in the Hispanic population is almost seven in 10,000 births, nearly 40 percent higher than the non-Hispanic rate. However, fortunately there are steps that can be taken to reduce that risk.

An important goal of National Spina Bifida Awareness Month is increasing awareness and consumption of—a simple vitamin that can help reduce the risk of Spina Bifida. Recent studies have shown that if all women of childbearing age were to consume 400 micrograms of folic acid daily prior to becoming pregnant and throughout the first trimester of pregnancy, the incidence of Spina Bifida could be reduced by up to 70 percent. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), all women of child-bearing age should consume a vitamin every day which provides them with 400 micrograms of folic acid. Multi-vitamins with folic acid or folic acid supplements can be found in the local grocery, pharmacy, or discount store.

Unfortunately at the current time, imported corn flours—unlike most wheat flour and cereal products—are not enriched with folic acid. Which means a majority of the corn-based products sold in the United States and consumed by the Hispanic community does not contain this important vitamin. To address this disparity and ensure that the foods consumed by the Hispanic community in the United States are enriched with folic acid, in July of this year, CDC, SBA, the National Council of La Raza, Wal-Mart, and Gruma announced an important initiative that has the potential to reduce the incidence of Spina Bifida among all babies by 70 percent by helping increase the intake of this nutrient among women.

With proper health care and support, people affected by Spina Bifida can live productive and fulfilling lives. In addition to supporting efforts to prevent Spina Bifida, I also urge additional federal attention to—and funding of—efforts, like the National Spina Bifida Program, to improve the quality-of-life for all who are affected by this birth defect. I would like to thank the SBA and its Florida chapters for their work on Spina Bifida Awareness Month and for being steadfast in their commitment to helping prevent and reduce Spina Bifida, particularly among the Hispanic community in the United States.

HONORING CHUCK GESCHKE AND
JOHN WARNOCK FOR THEIR IN-
NOVATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN
THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2006

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Chuck Geschke and Mr. John Warnock, founders of Adobe Systems, Inc. Although each man is most definitely worthy of his own separate congressional accolade, it is their teamwork and their shared passion that created a company that invented new forms of communication that assists thousands if not millions of people on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Geschke and Mr. Warnock are industry pioneers in the true spirit of Silicon Valley. Prior to co-founding Adobe, Geschke and Warnock worked at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center, PARC. Unable to convince