

Social Service Agency of Greater Washington, 1984–86, and currently serves as the co-chairman for St. Luke's House Building Fund.

Mr. Lessenco is also a dedicated husband, father and treasured mentor.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my sincere congratulations to Gil Lessenco as he celebrates a distinguished career and lifetime of learning and serving our community. I ask my colleagues of the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the many accomplishments of this extraordinary man.

#### MOURNING THE DEATH OF MAJ JOSEPH "TRANE" MCCLOUD

#### HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wish to mourn the death of Major Joseph "Trane" McCloud, 39, who was planning to celebrate his 40th birthday next week, but instead tragically died on Sunday, December 3, when the CH-46 helicopter he was riding in crash-landed in a lake in the Anbar province of Iraq. Additionally, I urge my colleagues to mourn the deaths and honor the lives of all of our soldiers who have died defending our country.

Major McCloud was a career marine who had been in Iraq for 3 months as the operations officer with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. Major McCloud was described by his family as "a Marine's Marine." He sacrificed the most active years of his life while in armed combat as a platoon and company commander defending the United States of America.

This was the second war in the Middle East that Major McCloud had served in. His service in the Persian Gulf war in 1991 was equally commendable. During the Persian Gulf war in 1991, McCloud served on the USS *Missouri*, as part of the final group of Marines to work aboard the ship before it was decommissioned.

Major McCloud's tremendous service to his country was not limited to the Armed Forces. He also worked at the Pentagon, completed a fellowship here in the U.S. House of Representatives, and served as an instructor at the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, VA. His dedication to teaching was just as strong as his dedication to the protection of this Nation. When Major McCloud worked for Representative JOE WILSON (R-S.C.), he assisted on military issues and took a special interest in a loan forgiveness program for inner-city teachers. This gentleman was the absolute prototype of the compassionate and dedicated soldier.

Shortly after President Bush declared the war on terrorism, McCloud was deployed to Zamboanga, in the Philippines, in charge of a small Marine unit during a time of intense violence and bombings.

McCloud was remembered yesterday as a good-natured man with a wonderful sense of humor who cherished his family above anything else.

A 1989 graduate of the University of Tennessee, Major McCloud leaves behind his wife Maggie and three children: Hayden, 7, Grace, 5, and Meghan, 2.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to mourn the death of a great soldier, husband, and father, MAJ Joseph "Trane" McCloud, and all the soldiers who have fallen while defending our Nation's freedom.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE BIOGRAPH THEATER

#### HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 7, 2006*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud recognition of The Biograph Theater, recently acquired by the Victory Gardens Theater, and located in the vibrant and multicultural neighborhood of Lincoln Park.

Since 1914 the Biograph Theater has been a symbol of art in a dense metropolitan area, and thanks to The Victory Garden Theater, it will remain in operation as the new main stage for theater company that has been in business since 1974.

After 90 years as a movie theater, under various owners, in July 2004, Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater announced it had purchased the Biograph for use as a live venue. The theater has been completely renovated by architect Daniel P. Coffey, who constructed a large state-of-the-art stage, with seating for 299 people.

The Biograph Theater will house a state-of-the-art stage guaranteeing the intimacy for which Victory Gardens' performances have become known, while providing greatly enhanced technical production capabilities. The new theater will have the very latest lighting and sound equipment as well as generous wing-space, dressing rooms, and a trap system under the stage, allowing for all kinds of theatrical magic.

In a city with such a rich history in the arts, The Biograph Theater is just one more example of thriving theater in the nation's Second City.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus I believe that it is important to support and recognize The Biograph Theater, Victory Gardens Theater and the Arts in Chicago. The Biograph Theater is an example of a new breath in an old Chicago landmark. I am proud of the storied history of The Biograph Theater and the work that the Victory Gardens Theater does and I wish them continued success in the coming years.

#### EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE RE- GARDING HIRING OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES

SPEECH OF

#### HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 5, 2006*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sentiment that motivated the gentleman from California, Mr. HUNTER, to offer this resolution. I agree with him that our Government must set the example when we choose to exhort employers to hire veterans. That's why I was pleased that in July of this year, the House passed by voice vote a concurrent resolution

I offered with Mr. BROWN of South Carolina that calls upon the President to establish a permanent national "Hire a Veteran Week."

The purpose of our bipartisan bill is simple. On a yearly basis, the President would lead a week-long effort to remind employers—both government and private sector—of the importance and value of hiring veterans. According to the most recent U.S. Labor Department data, in August 2005, 20- to 24-year-old veterans had an unemployment rate of 18.7 percent compared with their nonveteran counterparts. For all of 2005, the annual rate was 15.6 percent for 20- to 24-year-old veterans compared with 8.7 percent for non-veterans in that age group. Women veterans also suffer higher rates of unemployment than non-veterans. The unemployment rate for women veterans aged 25–34 stands at 6.9 percent versus 6 percent for their civilian counterparts. More alarmingly, women veterans aged 45–54 have twice the rate of unemployment than their non-veteran counterparts—7.1 percent versus 3.3 percent.

These aren't simply numbers; these are men and women who put on our country's uniform to protect each and every one of us. We can and must do more to help them find good-paying jobs that allow them to build a career and a life in the Nation they served and protected. That process should begin with a yearly reminder to all employers to actively seek out veterans as potential employees. I have been deeply disappointed that to date the Senate has not elected to follow the House's lead and pass my "Hire a Veteran Week" legislation. Should the Senate not pass this bill before the 109th Congress adjourns sine die, it will represent yet another failure of this Congress to meet the real needs of veterans.

My colleague from California, Mr. HUNTER, is correct that Congress should take the lead and set the example when it comes to veterans' employment issues. That's why in 2005 I introduced the American Veterans Congressional Internship Program, H.R. 1242, a bipartisan bill that would allow each Member of Congress to hire a veteran as a paid intern for 1 year.

The benefits of this bill are clear. House and Senate Members would be able to take advantage of the experience and can-do work ethic of veterans, while veterans would get the chance to directly influence policy decisions and contribute to legislation that will affect them and their fellow veterans. I regret the 109th Congress failed to act on this common-sense bill, and I intend to reintroduce it and push for its speedy passage in the 110th Congress.

One thing we should all be able to agree on is that our outreach to veterans seeking jobs should be buttressed with concrete action by Congress to fund job training and placement programs, particularly for young veterans and women veterans.

That we have a long way to go in meeting the employment and training needs of our veterans was made clear by John Rowan, the current president of Vietnam Veterans of America, in testimony he gave before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on March 30 of this year. Mr. Rowan noted that:

In fact, there is no real national strategy to assist returning veterans, including National Guard and Reservists, who are unemployed or under-employed—and some 15 percent of our newest veterans have yet to find