

HONORING FORMER MINNESOTA
GOVERNOR HAROLD E. STASSEN

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, April 13, 2007, marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of former Minnesota Governor Harold E. Stassen.

I rise to pay tribute to the life of this remarkable Minnesotan and true patriot, who dedicated his life to serving our country.

Born on a farm in West St. Paul, Minnesota, Harold Stassen graduated from law school and earned the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the ROTC by the age of 21. At just 22, he was elected Dakota County attorney, a position he held for 9 years.

In 1938, Harold Stassen was elected Governor of Minnesota, taking office at the age of 31. He was the youngest person ever elected governor of any state, a distinction that lasts to this day. During his tenure, Harold Stassen was a visionary and creative leader.

In his 1942 campaign for reelection, Governor Stassen said that if he was reelected, he would resign after the legislative session to join the U.S. Navy, saying, "Our boys are fighting for the right of freedom, and I want to be with them."

As promised, following the 1943 legislative session he resigned as governor and joined the U.S. Navy on the Battleship USS *Missouri* in the Third Pacific Fleet. He was awarded three battle stars, led the Navy's POW evacuation program in Japan and was on duty on the main deck of the *Missouri* when the message came that the Japanese had surrendered. In fact, he entered the receipt of that historic message in the USS *Missouri's* log book.

In February of 1945, President Roosevelt named Harold Stassen as one of eight members of the American delegation to the Founding Conference of the United Nations in San Francisco, where he was later named one of the two most influential people in drafting the United Nations Charter.

Stassen later played a key role in convincing Dwight D. Eisenhower to run for the Republican nomination for President. Upon his election, Eisenhower appointed Stassen Director of Mutual Security, which carried a Cabinet rank and included all foreign operations, foreign aid, relief, military and assistance programs, distribution of arms and technical and educational assistance.

As a member of President Eisenhower's Cabinet, Stassen was also active in implementing the 1955 Geneva Summit, for which he drafted the Arms Limitation and "Open Skies" proposals initiated by GEN James Doolittle and presented by President Eisenhower at the summit. Having experienced first-hand the horror of war, Stassen spent the remainder of his political and public life working for world peace.

Harold E. Stassen dedicated his life to serving our country, both in the armed forces and as a public servant and elected official. The country is grateful for his meritorious contribution to the security and national interests of the United States and his long legacy of public service. He died 40 days short of turning 95, on March 4, 2002.

DOROTHY IRENE HEIGHT, CHAIR
AND PRESIDENT EMERITA, NA-
TIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO
WOMEN

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 20, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a national treasure and American icon on the occasion of her 95th birthday. I am speaking, of course, of the incomparable, irrepresible, and legendary Dorothy Irene Height. For more than half a century, Dorothy Irene Height has played a leading role in the never ending struggle for equality and human rights here at home and around the world. Her life exemplifies her passionate commitment for a just society and her vision of a better world.

Dorothy Height was born in Richmond, VA, on March 24, 1912, and educated in the public schools of Rankin, PA, a borough of Pittsburgh, where her family moved when she was four. She established herself early as a dedicated student with exceptional oratorical skills. After winning a \$1,000 scholarship in a national oratorical contest on the United States Constitution, sponsored by the Fraternal Order of the Elks, and compiling a distinguished academic record, she enrolled in New York University where she earned both her bachelor and master's degrees in just 4 years. She continued her postgraduate studies at Columbia University and the New York School of Social Work.

In 1933, Dorothy Height joined the United Christian Youth Movement of North America where her leadership qualities earned her the trust and confidence of her peers. It was during this period that she began to emerge as an effective civil rights advocate as she worked to prevent lynching, desegregate the armed forces, reform the criminal justice system, and provide free access to public accommodations. In 1935, Dorothy Height was appointed by New York government officials to deal with the aftermath of the Harlem riot of 1935.

As Vice President of the United Christian Youth Movement of North America, Dorothy Height was one of only ten American youth delegates to the 1937 World Conference on Life and Work of the Churches held in Oxford, England. Two years later she was selected to represent the YWCA at the World Conference of Christian Youth in Amsterdam, Holland.

It was in 1937, while serving as Assistant Executive Director of the Harlem YWCA, that Dorothy Height met Mary McLeod Bethune, founder and president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). Mrs. Bethune was immediately impressed with young Dorothy Height's poise and intelligence and invited her to join the NCNW and assist in the quest for women's rights to full and equal employment, pay and education.

In 1938, Dorothy Height was one of ten young Americans invited by Eleanor Roosevelt to Hyde Park, NY, to help plan and prepare for the World Youth Conference to be held at Vassar College.

For the next several years, Dorothy Height served in a dual role: as a YWCA staff member and NCNW volunteer, integrating her training as a social worker and her commitment to

rise above the limitations of race and sex. She rose quickly through the ranks of the YWCA, from working at the Emma Ransom House in Harlem to the Executive Directorship of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA in Washington, DC, to the YWCA National Headquarters office.

For 33 years, from 1944 through 1977, Dorothy Height served on the staff of the National Board of the YWCA and held several leadership positions in public affairs and leadership training and as Director of the National YWCA School for Professional Workers. In 1965, she was named Director of the Center for Racial Justice, a position she held until her retirement.

In 1952, Dorothy Height lived in India, where she worked as a visiting professor in the Delhi School of Social Work at the University of Delhi, which was founded by the YWCAs of India, Burma and Ceylon. She would become renowned for her internationalism and humanitarianism. She traveled around the world expanding the work of the YWCA. She conducted a well-received study of the training of women's organizations in five African countries: Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria under the Committee of Correspondence.

Dorothy Height loved and led her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta. She was elected National President of the sorority in 1947 and served in that capacity until 1956. She led the sorority to a new level of organizational development, initiation eligibility, and social action throughout her term. Her leadership training skills, social work background and knowledge of volunteerism benefited the sorority as it moved into a new era of activism on the national and international scene.

In 1957, Dorothy Height was elected the fourth National President of NCNW and served in that position for 40 years, when she became Chair of the Board and President Emerita.

In 1960, Dorothy Height was the woman team member leader in the United Civil Rights Leadership along with Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney H. Young, A. Philip Randolph, James Farmer, Roy Wilkins and John Lewis. In 1961, while Dorothy Height was participating in major Civil Rights leadership, she led NCNW to deal with unmet needs among women and their families to combat hunger, develop cooperative pig banks, and provided families with community freezers and showers.

In 1964, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, Dorothy Height with Polly Cowan, an NCNW Board Member, organized teams of women of different races and faiths as "Wednesdays in Mississippi" to assist in the freedom schools and open communication between women of different races. The workshops which followed stressed the need for decent housing which became the basis for NCNW in partnership with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop Turnkey III Home Ownership for low-income families in Gulfport, MS.

In 1970, Dorothy Height directed the series of activities culminating in the YWCA Convention adopting as its "One Imperative" to the elimination of racism. That same year she also established the Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement in New York City to prepare women for entry-level jobs. This experience led her in 1975 to collaborate with Pace College to establish a course of study leading to the Associate Degree for Professional Studies (AAPS).