My sisters would tell you that no matter how much we loved him, he loved us more. Listening to my sisters remember him, hearing my mom mourn—I've come to understand that he taught us about many things, but the most important thing he taught us about was love. He showed us that love was not to be spent on material things, but to be given to people who are close to you. He taught us that love, above all other things, was of paramount importance in this life—that without love we have nothing. And he didn't just say these things; he lived his life inspired by these ideals.

My father wrote me a letter seven years ago, a letter I have carried around in my wallet ever since. In the letter he wrote—with touching simplicity and sincerity—to tell me how much he loved me, how proud he was of me, and how he hoped that I would follow my heart and make all my dreams come true. I didn't need to carry it around—I mean, I never needed any reminder of how he felt—but I whenever I touched the folded up paper, no matter where I was or what I was doing, I felt as though everything was going to be okay. And that's how he made all of us feel—warm and loved and safe. I was not surprised when, on Friday night, my mom showed me a note he had written her—also folded up and tucked into her purse. He had that effect on all of us.

My father had so many things to look forward to—he was going to retire this summer after 35 years of service and travel around the world with my mom. He was going to watch his lovely granddaughter Caitlin grow up. He was finally going to get a chance-after all those years of struggling and working—to take a deep breath and relax. No man has ever deserved to enjoy the fruits of life after retirement more than he. Yet there he was, crossing the street, on the cusp of a whole new chapter in life—and he was taken from this world . . . not by illness or old age, but by cruel, cruel chance. His death was a senseless tragedy—proof of what an unfair and senseless world this can be—but today I beg you instead to remember how he lived his life . . . for his kindness, grace, and generosity should be an example to us all. He would not want us to harden our hearts and spend this time burning with anger at the enormity of this tragedy. Instead remember what a wonderful, beautiful man he was, the kind of man who gave so much and took so little. Remember how a man who had seen so much and worked so hard somehow managed to keep his heart so pure, and his soul so gentle. For who here ever knew a man as gentle as he?

Yesterday I said that my dad was lucky to have met his granddaughter Caitlin—for she was born only 14 months ago—and my sister Kim corrected me and said that Caitlin was lucky to have met him. And that is the truth of it—we all were lucky to have known him. He was the best of men . . . the very best. He will be missed more than anyone can possibly imagine.

Again, my thoughts and prayers go out to the Torta family.

RECOGNIZING WAYNE VIGER, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS NATIONAL HERO OF THE YEAR

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 20, 2007

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Mr. Wayne Viger, this year's recipient of the National Association of Letter Carriers' National Hero of the Year Award.

We are all familiar with the unofficial motto of the letter carriers which says that ''neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.'' Mr. Viger went above and beyond even this solemn promise, putting himself at risk to evacuate residents of a burning apartment building.

While completing his rounds, Mr. Viger smelled smoke at an apartment building on his route. Hearing a smoke alarm and seeing smoke pouring from the door and windows of a ground floor apartment, he entered the apartment to find an elderly woman with clothes aflame and hair singed. Viger pulled the woman to safety and extinguished her burning clothing. He proceeded to alert and evacuate other residents of the building, providing comfort and care wherever he could.

I am very proud to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Wayne Viger for his actions and for receiving the National Association of Letter Carriers' National Hero of the Year Award. His actions speak to deep-rooted courage and compassion for others as well as quick thinking and decisiveness, qualities which make him a role model for others and a deserving Hero of the Year.

HONORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF MAX ROACH

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 20, 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the incredible life and work of legendary jazz drummer and composer Max Roach.

Few of the musicians remain who were there with Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk as they created a new more adventurous, unbridled form of jazz: bebop. The passing of Max Roach on August 16, at age 83, marks another step towards the end of the modern jazz world's greatest generation.

Roach's style, marked by its awe inspiring clarity and control, would come to redefine and expand the role of jazz drummers. In the mid-1940's he transformed the sound of jazz percussion from an easy-going, head-swaying swing sound, with just a dash of horn-led syncopation, to a sound that had a propulsive drive. After Max Roach, being a jazz drummer meant more than being a mere tempo-keeper. With Roach the cymbals led the way, not just followed the chart; and, every now and then, Roach would accent a beat or drop an explosion on the tom-tom, to carve up the rhythm and extend the horns' liberties. Even the most casual listener could not help hearing the difference. Throughout the next 47 years his virtuosity would change the way drummers and musicians looked at playing jazz.

Max Roach was a prolific performer and recording artist; indeed, he was the percussionist on many of the seminal jazz recordings of the last half century.

Renowned throughout his performing life, Roach has won an extraordinary array of honors. He was one of the first winners of the MacArthur Foundation ''genius'' grant, cited as a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters in France, twice awarded the French Grand Prix du Disque, elected to the International Percussive Society's Hall of Fame and the Downbeat Magazine Hall of Fame, awarded Harvard Jazz Master, celebrated by Aaron Davis Hall, given eight honorary doctorate degrees, including degrees awarded by the University of Bologna, Italy and Columbia University.

He is survived by five children: sons Daryl and Raoul, and daughters Maxine, Ayo and Dara. My heart goes out to them and I wish them all well in this time of difficulty. It is unlikely that we will ever see another Max Roach, but we were blessed to have had him while we did.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. LILLI LAND

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 20, 2007

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask the House's attention today to recognizing a highly distinguished educator in my Congressional district, Dr. Lilli Land. Dr. Land is the principal of the Auburn Early Education Center, and recently received a National Distinguished Principal award from the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Dr. Land is a graduate of Auburn University, and holds the following degrees in Early Childhood Education: Bachelor of Science, Master of Education, Specialist in Education, and a Doctorate in Philosophy. She has been a part of the Alabama Public School system since she first taught second grade in Tallapoosa County in 1981, and has more recently served as a kindergarten teacher and in various administrative capacities. In 2000, Dr. Land joined Auburn City Schools and now serves as AEEC's principal.

During Dr. Land's tenure, AEEC has become a renowned example of excellence in early childhood education. Her educational philosophy promotes original, student-driven content and individual attention to help maximize every student's potential. AEEC has also received numerous awards for outstanding integration of new technologies into their curriculum.

I congratulate Dr. Lilli Land for her years of service and outstanding leadership in helping educate Alabama's children.