

her professional life as well as her work with children, families, staff and community stakeholders.

Asneth attended and graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Behavioral Science from Mercy College. She continued her studies at Teachers College of Columbia University where she earned a Master of Arts Degree in Social and Organizational Psychology. Her love of learning propelled Ms. Council to return to Long Island University where she completed a second Master's Degree in Public Administration in May 2007. She is presently enrolled in Doctoral Studies with a concentration in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Starting at the Joseph DiMarco Head Start program where she worked with children and their families, she continued working in Head Start by setting up a joint Head Start program with Broadway Housing and Center for Urban Community Services.

In December 2005, Asneth Sydonnie Council joined the Police Athletic League where she was quickly promoted from Deputy Director to the Director of Head Start programs and in August of 2007, was promoted to her current position as Director of Childcare and Nutrition. Moreover, Ms. Council is also a member of the Police Athletic League Strategic Planning Committee.

Ms. Council and her husband, Herbert, are celebrating seven years of marriage and are the proud parents of five children who continue to excel in their educational pursuits. Keeping with the tradition of her family's motto, Asneth also believes that "every individual is important and has something to offer."

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to honor Asneth Sydonnie Council for her important role, her unwavering dedication and valuable contributions on behalf of young children. She is selfless and gives all of her heart to the very young who need her compassion the most.

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STEPHANIE MORROW

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Stephanie Morrow of Blue Springs, Missouri. Stephanie is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Stephanie has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Stephanie has completed all seven requirements that promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Stephanie Morrow for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scout Gold Award.

HONORING NANCY PORTER  
MORRILL

**HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Nancy Porter Morrill—the 2008 recipient the Bucks County Women's History Month Award. Ms. Morrill is being recognized by the Bucks County Women's Fund for her hard work and exceptional achievements in working to improve her community.

Ms. Morrill has a long and distinguished career of service to Bucks County. Committed to improving Bucks County. Ms. Morrill dedicated herself to working for various organizations, such as Community Development Advisory Council, Human Services Advisory Council and the Operations Review and Evaluations Committee.

Ms. Morrill has also worked to improve the scholastic and cultural environment of Bucks County. She was an important member of both School Works! and the Pennsbury School District, working to advance the relationships between businesses, teachers, students, and parents.

She has had an impact on the arts as well. She helped create the Arts and Cultural Council of Bucks County and the Food and Wine Festival in Bucks County which she co-chaired for 5 years. Ms. Morrill was also an active member of the Pennsbury Arts Foundation and the Art Committee of the Phillips Mill Community Association.

Of all Ms. Morrill's outstanding achievements, her most important work has been done fighting for women's rights in Bucks County. Over many years, Ms. Morrill worked tirelessly for the Planned Parenthood organization. She was head of the fundraising committee for the Planned Parenthood clinic in Doylestown and she went on to serve as the president of Bucks County Planned Parenthood organization. Also, Ms. Morrill was named the secretary of the board of the Family Planning Association of S.E.P.A, and helped to build the Bucks County Women's Fund.

As her outstanding resume shows, Nancy Morrill has pledged her life to helping those in her community. Through her tireless work, Ms. Morrill has changed Bucks County for the better. Madam Speaker, I am proud to recognize Ms. Morrill for her extraordinary accomplishments and extremely honored to serve as her Congressman.

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HONORING OLD FIRST CHURCH IN  
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I would like to commemorate the First Church of Christ, Congregational, located in Springfield, MA, commonly known as "Old First Church." The congregation first established on the banks of the Connecticut River in 1637, conducted its last service on Sunday, December 31, 2007. Its steeple bells tolled for

the last time after the service was concluded and rang out over Court Square and downtown Springfield in its entirety. Its closing should not go unreported.

Old First Church was founded by settlers, including William Pynchon, who came to the banks of the Connecticut River from Roxbury, MA, in 1636. The settlers began worshipping in settlers' homes in 1637 with the Reverend George Moon. The First Meeting House was built in 1637, the second in 1677, the third in 1752 (during the ministry of the Reverend Robert Breck), and the fourth, and current, Meeting House was built in 1819. The dedication of the building took place on August 19, 1819. Three thousand people, essentially the entire population of Springfield and the surrounding area were in attendance.

Old First Church is the "mother church" for 15 congregations throughout the Connecticut River valley and over 30 churches can trace their roots to Old First Church. Several of the churches were established for reasons of theological difference and sometimes because of differences relative to a particular pastor's style and perspective. Among the active "daughter" churches are: First Church of Christ, Congregational, Suffield, CT; Enfield Congregational Church, Enfield, CT; First Congregational Church UCC, West Springfield, MA; Wilbraham United Church, Wilbraham, MA; First Congregational Church, Brimfield, MA; First Congregational Church UCC, Chicopee, MA; First Church in Ludlow UCC, Ludlow, MA; The Thirds Congregational Society; South Congregational Church UCC in Springfield, MA; and First Church in Longmeadow, MA. The members of Old First Church hope that their legacy, which includes a commitment to social justice and to serving the people of Greater Springfield in countless ways, will continue through the members of those "daughter" congregations.

The current Meeting House was designed and built by Captain Isaac Damon, with a steeple alter the manner of Christopher Wren. Captain Damon originally traveled to Western Massachusetts from Weymouth, MA, to work on the First Church of Christ in Northampton. Subsequently he worked on additional projects in the Northampton area and it was his work in that area that caused the members of Old First Church to seek him out.

From its position atop the steeple of Old First Church, the Rooster weathervane (which was first placed on the third Meeting House in 1768 and on the current Meeting House when fully constructed in 1819) has been a witness to Springfield's rich and important New England history including: George Washington passing by on June 30, 1775, to take charge of the defense in Boston; the travel of Henry Knox and his train of artillery on January 26, 1776; the selection of Springfield as the site for the first United States Arsenal; General Burgoyne's army after its defeat in Saratoga, New York in 1777; and the defense of the Springfield Armory from rebel forces lead by Daniel Shays in 1787. In more current times, it has gone on to witness community celebrations and commemorations, demonstrations and festivals. It has remained steady and devoted to the City of Springfield and its citizens, just as the members of the Congregation of Old First Church have for hundreds of years.

There are many events and activities of note which have taken place at Old First Church over the centuries, which include the

body of President John Quincy Adams laying in state, and the famed Swedish soprano, Jenny Lind, performing at the Church in July 1851. Samuel Chapin, the subject of the St. Gaudans "the Puritan" statue, was an early deacon of the Church. Old First Church played a role in the Underground Railroad. In fact, Reverend Osgood brought in leading abolitionists from England to give speeches advocating against slavery. Daniel Webster attended Old First Church on more than one occasion.

The church also organized and annually hosted a series of musical presentations called "Music at First" which featured individual artists, chambers music, ensembles and choral groups. The New England Academy of Academic Artists was also annually provided with a venue for its Juried Show.

Old First Church, until its closing, hosted the largest and longest established Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in Western Massachusetts.

Beginning in 1977, Old First Church began to house "Open Pantry" the largest food distribution service for the needy in the Greater Springfield area. It also hosted and regularly staffed "Loaves and Fishes" providing two meals for the homeless each Saturday and Sunday. In recent years, during the winter months, the Church opened its door to "The Warming Place" supplying emergency shelter to the area's homeless.

Public Vigils to raise consciousness surrounding the issues of AIDS, domestic violence and other social issues have regularly been held at Old First Church as well as memorial services for the New England Association of Fire Chiefs.

The members of the congregation embraced and actively participated in "Walking United" a program designed to gather and distribute unused prosthetic devices in the United States to a clinic it established to aid the people of Nicaragua who suffered as a result of land mine and other catastrophic injuries.

Despite its conservative New England roots, Old First Church has been among the most socially progressive churches in Massachusetts. It has been a church which has paved the way for other congregations to follow and one that has always provided unconditional resources and support to those in need within and beyond the City of Springfield.

At the "Celebrations of the Life of Old First Church 1637 to 2007" those in attendance were invited by the Reverend Dr. J. Thomas Gough, the 23rd settled pastor of Old First Church, to come forward and accept "packets of seed" while offering this prayer:

"Gracious God, Creator of earth and sky, author of all living things, spirit of hope and grace and promise, be part of us now as your people here at Old First Church prepare to offer themselves as seeds of your love. Bless these packets of seed as symbols of your intention for us that we might venture forth into the world bearing what is necessary to grow in other soil.

"May it be your breath that blows us to other places. May it be your call that leads us to go forth from this place to be your people scattered in the world. May we follow in the paths you set before us and take root where next you plant us. Help us, above all, to flourish in new places and to bring the fruit of Old First Church to ripeness in other communities of faith. Let what we have learned in this place, what has given us life and meaning and purpose, create new and holy spaces wherever we are taken in your name."

Madam Speaker, it is my hope that Old First Church will continue to remain a historic landmark and preserved, as it is truly one of the most significant buildings in the city. The parish house has potential valuable uses for the city and it would be a tragedy if we did not do everything in our power to preserve this building. The memories made at the church will continue to live on in the hearts and spirits of the members.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on March 12, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my votes for Rollcall Nos. 124–134.

Had I been present I would have voted:  
Rollcall No. 124—"no"—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 125—"no"—Resolution Raising a Question of the Privileges of the House.

Rollcall No. 126—"no"—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 127—"no"—On Motion to Adjourn.

Rollcall No. 128—"yes"—On Motion to Table the Resolution.

Rollcall No. 129—"yes"—Providing for the consideration of H. Con. Res. 312, Congressional Budget for the U.S. Government for Fiscal Year 2009.

Rollcall No. 130—"yes"—Providing for the consideration of H. Con. Res. 312, Congressional Budget for the U.S. Government for Fiscal Year 2009.

Rollcall No. 131—"yes"—Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act.

Rollcall No. 132—"yes"—Providing for an adjournment or recess of the two Houses.

Rollcall No. 133—"yes"—Honoring the 200th anniversary of the Gallatin Report on Roads and Canals, celebrating the national unity the Gallatin Report engendered, and recognizing the vast contributions that national planning efforts have provided to the United States.

Rollcall No. 134—"yes"—To temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

#### HONORING FRANKLIN SCHOOL FOR BEING NAMED AN ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF HONOR

### HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Franklin School, in Belleville, Illinois, for being named an Illinois School of Honor, one of only two schools in Illinois to receive this award.

The University of Illinois Extension has teamed with the Character Education Partnership (CEP) to conduct an award competition that recognizes schools that have implemented outstanding programs in character

education. Franklin School was selected in the state competition as one of only two Illinois Schools of Honor. This is a prestigious honor for Franklin School and brings well-deserved recognition to their very successful character education program.

With the emphasis in recent years on testing and meeting aggressive educational standards, it is refreshing to see that schools also realize that character counts. These schools demonstrate that well-rounded students can be developed by instilling values of respect for others and good moral judgment while also focusing on instruction in academic subjects.

The application process for the State School of Character competition is very rigorous and there are specific, objective criteria that must be met to qualify. In order to be considered, a school must demonstrate that they have implemented a comprehensive, effective and successful program for incorporating character development into their school environment. Winning this award reflects positively on the entire Franklin School community, administration, faculty and staff, students and families. All worked together to achieve this honor.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the administration, faculty, staff, students and families of Franklin School for their recognition as an Illinois School of Honor.

#### FREEDOM FOR RANDY CABRERA MAYOR

### HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Randy Cabrera Mayor, a prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Cabrera Mayor was imprisoned by the Cuban totalitarian dictatorship in 1989, a month before his 19th birthday. For his refusal to join the dictatorship's armed forces.

Eight months after his imprisonment, Mr. Cabrera Mayor courageously escaped the atrocious confinement facility known as "Ganusa", located in San Jose de las Lajas. He promptly built himself a makeshift boat and attempted to reach freedom in the United States. Unfortunately, Mr. Cabrera Mayor was caught ten miles off the coast of Matanzas by agents of the communist dictatorship. He was convicted by a sham tribunal on charges of "treason" and "illegal departure from the island." This would mark the first of many unsuccessful attempts by this brave political prisoner to achieve his god-given right to freedom.

My colleagues, I wish to bring to your attention the inhumane conditions Mr. Cabrera Mayor is currently living in. The food he is being provided is consistently under an advanced stage of decomposition to the point that it is propagating intestinal diseases. He spends long periods of time in solitary confinement without access to a bathroom and shackles have been attached to his ankles to hinder his movements. When not in solitary confinement, Mr. Cabrera Mayor and other political prisoners are held in the same cells as common criminals of the most dangerous kinds.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Randy Cabrera Mayor has engaged in numerous hunger strikes to