

## TRIBUTE TO MARGO WELS JESKE

**HON. JIM RAMSTAD**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay special tribute to Margo Wels Jeske, a great American who exemplifies all that is special about our Nation of hard-working, visionary business leaders. Margo has followed a path that all of us in this chamber should strive to emulate—she cares about people first.

Well before the age of computers, in 1966, when jet travel was still rare and gas was 35 cents per gallon, a young woman named Margo Wels from Nicollet, Minnesota, joined the North American Life and Casualty Company as a cashier in its New Ulm office.

Margo served North American Life and Casualty and its successor company, Allianz Life, for 42 outstanding years. She held a series of important positions, including Executive Assistant to the President and other key company officials. Margo retired in early February.

Today, we salute Margo Wels Jeske for her leadership and hard work in protecting people and families and helping our area keep and develop good jobs.

Madam Speaker, we all know from our experience in Congress the importance of people like Margo. They have tremendous institutional knowledge, mentor younger workers and help bring order to the lives of the people with whom they work.

Throughout her entire career at Allianz Life, Margo earned the deepest respect and affection of the thousands of people with whom she came in contact. Her humor, personal kindness and professionalism made her a crucial part of the company.

We live in a time when connections between people are not as strong as they were in the past. But when we examine the life of Margo, we recognize the real importance of those connections. We are worse off for the lack of the personal touch. To thrive, all institutions need committed people, and no one exemplifies this better than Margo Jeske.

Every season of life has its own unique pleasures and Margo has decided it is time to retire, travel and do other things that she enjoys.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend Margo for her successful career and extend my best wishes to her and Wayne and their son, Eric, for health and happiness in the years ahead. America salutes Margo and all our citizens like her who bring a caring and committed attitude to the job each and every day.

I hope that each of us in the U.S. Congress seek to serve our constituents with the same dedication shown by Margo Wels Jeske each and every day.

CONGRATULATING THIRD DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOL PATRIOTIC ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

**HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, this year marked the first-ever Third

District Middle School Patriotic Essay Contest. Students living in the Congressional "District" wrote a patriotic essay on a topic of their choice. Over 275 students submitted essays for this first time endeavor. I must give special credit to Murphy Middle School's award-winning teacher Donna Jenkins. Her students authored the most essays and contributed greatly to this inaugural contest.

Today I'm proud to share the essays from the three winners. From here on out they'll be preserved for antiquity in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Someday, each winner will be able to share with children and grandchildren—"In middle school I wrote a patriotic essay and my work will always be recognized in the official CONGRESSIONAL RECORD."

1st Place: Kayla Hudgins, 8th Grade—Age 13, Murphy Middle School, Teacher: Donna Jenkins, Lives in Wylie.

2nd Place: Sai Pranathi Baddipudi, 8th Grade—Age 13, Staley Middle School, Teacher: Tammy Brightwell, Lives in Frisco.

3rd Place: Rebecca Beverly Kow, 6th Grade—Age 12, Faubion Middle School, Teacher: Debbie Bennett, Lives in McKinney.

I want to thank the 275+ students who participated in the contest. The outstanding level of participation shows great promise for the future. To the winners, you're the voices of the future and I salute you. God bless you and God bless America.

## 1ST PLACE WINNER

(By Kayla Hudgins, Grade 8, Murphy Middle School)

Veterans mean the courage to believe in something bigger than your own prosperity and to risk the ultimate sacrifice of your life. These brave soldiers fought for something that deserves our complete gratitude: our freedom. Veterans have a powerful love for their countrymen. But still, we do not seem to fully grasp the importance of their mission.

When the veterans left to war, they never knew if they were coming back alive or not. And still they went, for they believed in the freedoms that the founders of this country did. They went so that their families and friends could remain Americans. Veterans fought, not only for their freedom, but for others' freedom as well. They fought for future generations and the present generation. They suppressed their fears to bring peace to all of mankind.

This love, for country and fellow citizens, is the epitome of selflessness. Veterans are role models of self-sacrifice and brotherly love. Their love for our country and its beliefs lead some of them to give their lives for the sake of others. The veterans do not know if their efforts to bring peace will be in vain. They do not expect thanks for their sacrifices, and that makes them all the more heroes in my eyes.

And though these brave soldiers risk everything, I am not sure people fully grasp the importance of the existence of veterans. The rights and freedoms these women and men fight for are abused and taken for granted. We seem to forget that, if not for them, our lives would most likely be run by a corrupt communist government. But people continue to march off to war, to protect a nation that may very well never even know they were here, to keep us from invading evils.

Veterans, to me, are the last remaining people who truly understand what it means to be an American. They are the remnant souls of the soldiers of the Revolution. They are everything America was built upon, and they fight to keep it alive. Veterans stand

for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They do not exist to go to war but to protect thousands from its consequences. The world may never know their names or stories, but they are the only thing that has kept this nation where it is. What drives them, we may never fully understand, but I am thankful for their determination and neighborly love that has no bounds. Maybe one day, the world will fully comprehend how sorrowful and devastating everything would have been without them; hopefully for now they will be satisfied by the innocent smile on their child's face when they return. Veterans are more than heroes; veterans are America.

## 2ND PLACE WINNER

(By Sai Pranathi Baddipudi, Grade 8, Staley Middle School)

Herbert Hoover, our 31st president, once said, "Older men declare war, but it is youth that must fight and die. And it is youth who must inherit the tribulation, the sorrow, and the triumphs that are the aftermath of war." Those words ring as clearly in my head as the liberty Bell rang for this very nation many years ago. Everything I treasure: my family, my friends, my life, wouldn't be the same if it hadn't been for the veterans who jeopardized their lives in the name of autonomy.

That ultimate sacrifice made by those courageous young men and women who fought not just for the well being of the world, or our nation, but for each and every person that resides in this country, are commemorated till this very day.

Like many other people living in the U.S.A., I too took freedom for granted. But my perspective on the matter changed one Veteran's Day when my class talked about the Vietnam War, the war in Iraq, and saw pictures of the shocking conditions these soldiers had to endure. We also read letters that were written by those soldiers, talking about the adversities they were facing, and how much they missed their families, of how eager they are to see their newborn baby boy or girl. Through their words, I realized the true value of freedom and how much people in this world were willing to give up for it; I was also able to build great respect for the heroes who put their lives at stake for our liberty.

Ever since, I cherish freedom as a gift. Every day that I am presented with a decision to make, I am thankful that I possess the choice to make that decision. Some of the choices that I have made, and that I will make in the near future will alter my life tremendously. But, I am obliged that I live in a country where it is a right granted to the people to make the decisions that will shape their own lives. I am forever in debt and thankful to those who risked their lives, and to those who lost someone dear to them just so that I could make the decisions that I now make freely on a daily basis.

This nation would not be near as great as it is now if it hadn't been for those noble young men and women who risked their lives for it. So, each day that I'm alive, I prize that gift of freedom, and in remembrance of the American heroes; our veterans, I offer my thanks and gratitude.

## 3RD PLACE WINNER

(By Rebecca Beverly Kow, Grade 6, Faubion Middle School)

## "PATRIOT"

Patriot: a word that gets jumbled in the Vocabulary Vat of our brains. Most of us don't realize that it's the blood, sweat, and tears sacrificed by the person to make our lives easy.

March 10th

Dad has a new job. I wasn't paying attention at dinner, I was busy forking my peas