

In addition to his spiritual and community work, Rev. George is also a devoted husband, father and grandfather. Rev. George and his wife, Kiyoko "Kay" Matsubayashi, have four children: Craig and his wife, Raquel; Dean and his wife, Kim; Tina and her husband, Howard; and Erik and his wife, Cindy. They are also the proud grandparents of Jared, Lindsay, Chase and Emma.

Madam Speaker, on the occasion of Rev. George's retirement, I ask my congressional colleagues to please join his dutiful congregation, his family and me in thanking him for his many years of service to the Buddhist Churches of America and our community. While we wish him well in this new phase of his life, Rev. George will always be Sensei, or teacher, in the hearts and minds of the generations of families whom he has touched during his many years of ministerial service.

HONORING MR. JOE PANIAGUA

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the loyal service rendered to the City of Fort Worth, Texas by Mr. Joe Paniagua from 1986 until his retirement in December 2008.

As a former member of the city council and Mayor of Fort Worth, I had the opportunity of working directly with "Joe P.," as he is known by all at City Hall.

Although a native of Corpus Christi, Joe P. joined the City of Fort Worth's employment rolls in 1986 as a Municipal Courts customer service representative. He held a series of positions before being promoted to be the city's chief state and federal legislative program coordinator and grants manager. In that capacity, he faithfully and tirelessly represented the city through six Texas Legislative Sessions, from 1991 through 2001.

Joe P. spent countless hours driving that long and lonely stretch of I-35 back and forth each week between Fort Worth and Austin in loyal service to our city. I have heard stories of his sleeping on friends' couches in Austin in the early days in order to save the city money.

His hard work paid off on many issues that benefitted our community including the successful passage of legislation creating a revenue-sharing program between Fort Worth and Dallas, which supports DFW Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world. Joe P. also worked to streamline Texas crime district laws and to secure legislation allowing municipalities to include "best value" as consideration for purchases.

Joe P. was promoted to Assistant City Manager in September 2001 and retired as First Assistant City Manager on December 31, 2008.

Not only has Joe P. been a loyal public servant to our city, but he and his wife Elsa and their two children, Jose Francisco and Elissa, are well known and beloved citizens of our community.

In closing, I can say without reservation that the City of Fort Worth, Texas and our community at large have benefitted from the service of Joe Paniagua. I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Joe Paniagua and his family upon the occasion of his retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF RODEL RODIS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, Rodel Rodis, attorney, author and educator, has been a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees of San Francisco Community College District for eighteen years from 1991–2008. Since his appointment in 1991, Rodel was elected and re-elected by San Francisco voters in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. During his tenure, he was chosen by his peers to serve as President and Vice President of the Board three times.

In addition to his service on the Board, Rodel has volunteered his limited additional time but abundant energy to serve as Chairman of the Association of Community College Trustees, National President of the Association of Asian/Pacific Islander Community College Trustees, founder and Northern California Chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations and President of the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California.

A natural leader, Rodel previously served two terms as President of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission where he was instrumental in the decision to transfer fifteen acres of SFPUC property in the South Balboa Reservoir to City College where it will be put to great use for the benefit of the general public, hosting, among other projects, a Joint Use Facility and Performing Arts Center.

Rodel Rodis' achievements are many. While a Trustee, he worked with the Board to advance equality of opportunity through the Latina/Latino Services Network; African American Scholastic Program; Asian Pacific American Student Success; Women's Resource Center and Multicultural Infusion Project. He was also instrumental in passing local bond measures for renovating campus facilities and expanding the use of technology throughout the system.

As we both know, Madam Speaker, San Francisco is a community of diverse neighborhoods. Mr. Rodis recognizes this and has been a strong advocate for the new Mission Campus, the Chinatown/North Beach Campus and the Wellness Center.

Throughout Rodel's career, he has been far more than just an elected representative. His passion for education and his commitment to fairness, equality and the expansion of opportunities for all San Franciscans has made Rodel something of a community touchstone—a person whose wisdom, good humor and professionalism remind us all of what it means to be a citizen.

Madam Speaker, the good work of the San Francisco Community College District makes all of us proud. I am confident that it will continue to provide excellent educational opportunities and career training even without Rodel Rodis' leadership, but his shoes will no doubt be hard to fill and his nearly two decades of public service will long be appreciated.

TRIBUTE TO HRANT DINK

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Hrant Dink, a beloved journalist, activist, and a man of conscience. Two years ago, on January 19, 2007, Mr. Dink was assassinated in front of his office building in Istanbul.

As a Turkish Armenian, he worked tirelessly to unite the Armenians and the Turks. Serving as the editor-in-chief of Agos, Turkey's only bilingual Armenian and Turkish newspaper, Hrant Dink was a leader. When it came to the Armenian Genocide, he rejected the Turkish government's subversion of history. Instead of accepting state denial of the Armenian Genocide, he advocated for truth and battled Turkey's strangling grip on freedom of speech.

For these convictions, Hrant Dink was tried for insulting Turkishness under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. For these convictions, Hrant Dink was brutally assassinated.

Two years later, Turkey's citizens who speak honestly about the Armenian Genocide still face potential prosecution and imprisonment for publicly denigrating the Turkish Nation or Turkish Republic. This ultra-nationalism hijacks history at the expense of freedom of speech, stifling discussions by the Turkish people.

Two years later, the investigation into Hrant Dink's murder is in disarray, corruption in the judicial and police system runs deep, and Turkey's moral authority is weakened. The many involved in Hrant Dink's killing, from members of the gendarmerie to extremist nationalists, have been charged or imprisoned for their actions, but it has become apparent that Istanbul and Trabzon's security departments had information that Hrant Dink would be killed, but failed in their duty to protect him. Turkey should act swiftly to bring justice to the memory of Hrant Dink.

This hate and denial produces an environment of fear. This environment produces extreme nationalist organizations that manipulate young men to kill in the name of the Turkish Republic. The law enforcement community was tainted by officers who portrayed Hrant Dink's assassin as a proud Turkish citizen, placing a Turkish flag in his hand and flashing photographs to celebrate a murder.

Now, more than ever, Turkey must shun this behavior and embrace the lessons that Hrant Dink taught—the need for reconciliation between the different realities in Turkey.

There are those on the extreme fringe who stone Armenian Churches and in the midst of soccer matches chant in jubilation the name of Hrant Dink's killer. These individuals may be extreme, but the Turkish government fosters their existence through laws like Article 301.

But there also exists the people in Turkey who see past government intimidation and chant "We are all Armenian, we are all Hrant's," as they gather in thousands upon thousands to celebrate his life.

On the wake of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Genocide, thousands of Turkish intellectuals signed on to a letter apologizing to the Armenian people for the genocide. This promising show of empathy amongst the Turkish people is welcome.