RECOGNIZING 188TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the glorious contributions of Greek civilization to the world, and to congratulate the people of Greece on the 188th anniversary of their independence.

I can speak no more simply than Edith Hamilton who wrote in her classic 1930 study of Greek civilization that ''the Greeks came into being and the world, as we know it, began.''

I stand here as the Member of an institution whose very existence is owed to the Greek imagination and beneath a dome supported by columns of Greek inspiration. The principles of democratic governance, the ones which our Founders drew upon heavily to establish this republic, were first expounded upon in ancient Greece, and it is to that first age of reason that all democratic civilizations owe a debt of gratitude.

But it was not only the political philosophy of Greek civilization that left its mark on the world. One cannot walk the streets of this city without noticing its obvious tribute to the architecture of our democratic forebears. Stone columns line our most important buildings and stand guard our most cherished documents.

In addition to the philosophical and physical structures we honor in our own time from Greece, we also pay tribute on this day to its legacy in the arts and sports. The epic of Homer, the poetry of Pericles, Pindar and Aeschylus, the comedy of Aristophanes, the history of Herodotus, the Olympics and the marathon—any simple recitation will be incomplete and not wholly do justice to the accomplishments of centuries. But, let it be said that time has shown the greats of their time to be the greats of all time.

Our more recent histories our bound together as well. Just as our independence was a tribute to the ideas of ancient Greece, so too was Greek independence inspired by the American Revolution. Greek Commander in Chief Petros Mavromichalis, founder of the modern Greek state said to the citizens of the United States in 1821 that ''it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode and . . . in imitating you, we shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you.''

Since that kind and graceful message so long ago, the relationship between the United States and Greece—allies in times of both peace and conflict—grows stronger. Generations of Greek-Americans have maintained their traditions here, just as other civilizations for centuries have passed on the guiding lights of Ancient Greece. I am proud to join the Greek-Americans of New York's Second District in celebrating the 188th anniversary of their independence day.

82ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF CESAR CHAVEZ

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life, work, and 82nd anniversary of the day Cesar Chavez was born.

He was born on March 31, 1927 near Yuma, Arizona. Chavez was a civil rights, Latino, farm worker, and labor leader. To some he was also a religious and spiritual figure; and to all, he was a community servant and a crusader for nonviolent social change. He also spent his time as an environmentalist and consumer advocate. But above all, he was a person who had the strength and courage to fight for what he knew was right and to try and rid the world of injustice.

After spending most of his childhood as a migrant farm worker with his parents, Chavez joined the U.S. Navy in 1946 and served in the Western Pacific just after WWII.

For more than three decades Chavez led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and humane living conditions, as well as countless other rights and protections for hundreds of thousands of farm workers. Against previously insurmountable odds, he led successful strikes and boycotts that resulted in the first industry-wide labor contracts in the history of American agriculture. His union's efforts brought about the passage of the groundbreaking 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act to protect farm workers. Today, it remains the only law in the nation that protects the farm workers' right to unionize. We must continue to protect farm and agricultural workers who are a dedicated labor force and a vital contributor to our economy.

As I reflect on his life and work, I am privileged to be a fellow Veteran of the U.S. Armed Services and a fellow Mexican American. It was my honor to serve the country that we both felt strongly enough to continue to fight for its betterment. Chavez not only fought for Latinos, but he fought for the dignity of this nation, and for that we are forever grateful.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on rollcall Nos. 163 through 165. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on each.

HONORING AAUW OF NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the American Association of University Women of Napa County on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of their founding. AAUW–Napa County has done visionary work to serve the community as well as fulfill their charter of advancing justice and equality for women.

Over 80 years ago, inaugural President Stella Linscott and a band of determined Napans started the AAUW Napa County branch with the goal of promoting equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research. This organization that began as a response to sexism and discrimination in our society has become a pillar of our community.

Their endless contributions to the Napa Valley over the years include annual scholarships for local women, voter education forums, the Adopt-A-Road program and contributions to AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund and Educational Foundations. The Napa County Branch of AAUW is an important component of a statewide organization that has played a crucial role in finally achieving gender equity in college enrollment in California.

Madam Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we thank AAUW–Napa County for the remarkable work they have done for everyone in our County. It is through the hard work and generous contributions of many members of our community that this branch has thrived for the past 80 years, and I know that we will continue to see progress for many years to come.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, as a leader on earmark reform among House Republicans, I am committed to honoring House Republican rules that provide for greater transparency. H.R. 1105 The Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations contains the following funding that I requested:

Requesting Member: Rep. ZACH WAMP

Account: Army Corp of Engineers—Construction

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: United States Army Corp of Engineers—Nashville District

Address: 110 9th Avenue South Nashville, Tennessee 37203–3863

Description of Request: Funding in the amount of $42 million is required for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to replace the Chickamauga Lock. The lock is a major economic engine in the Tennessee Valley region. Commodities passing through the lock have origins and destinations in 17 states in the South, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions, traveling an average 1,400 miles. Over the last several years, 2.5 million tons passed through the lock annually, and the forecasted traffic demand is expected to grow considerably. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers indicates that replacement of the existing lock is far more economical than continuing costly maintenance and repair.

Distribution of funding:

Construction: 100%

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, on March 30th, I was detained in my district and therefore missed the three rollcall votes of the day. Had I been present I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall vote No. 163 on the Motion to Table the Privileged Resolution. Had I been present I would have also voted ''yea'' on rollcall vote No. 164 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 20—Melanie Blocker Stokes Mom's Opportunity to Access Health, Education, Research, and Support for Postpartum Depression Act. Lastly, had I been present I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall vote No. 165 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 479—Wakefield Act.

HONORING HANK PITTMAN

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hank Pittman upon being named as a ''Distinguished Life Member'' by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 9896. Mr. Pittman was honored on Saturday, January 31, 2009.

Mr. Pittman was born in Madera, California in September 1947. He was raised in Chowchilla, graduated from Chowchilla High School in 1965 and immediately enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He completed Navy boot camp in San Diego and was designated as a shipfitter. He was assigned to the USS *Long Beach*, a guided missile cruiser, and in 1966 was deployed to the Western Pacific. The cruiser served in the Gulf of Tonkin to detect enemy aircraft attempting to evade identification by hiding among U.S. aircraft returning from missions over North Vietnam. The USS *Long Beach* also provided support for Search and Rescue helicopter units that rescued downed fliers. During this tour, the ship was responsible for downing Soviet-made North Vietnamese An–2 planes attempting to fire on South Vietnamese Navy units. In July 1967 the USS *Long Beach* was re-deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin and shot down two MiG fighters with RIM–8 Talos missiles. Crew members were awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation for these actions.

Upon returning to the U.S., Mr. Pittman was selected for a two month training course at the Navy Divers' School in San Diego. When he completed the course he was designated as a Hull Maintenance Technician (Diver). His next duty station was with the USS *Simon Lake*, a submarine tender in Holy Loch, Scotland. During the next eighteen years he completed more courses and steadily progressed in rank while serving on a number of ships, naval air stations and bases.

In 1976, while serving aboard the USS *Holland*, Mr. Pittman received a letter of commendation for superior performance in critical operations repairing the hull of the USS *Batfish*, a nuclear-powered attack submarine. Two years later he successfully completed a seventeen week Deep Sea Diving and Salvage Course at the Washington Navy Yard. Mr. Pittman was promoted to Chief. Throughout his career he served on many ships and at many stations around the U.S., Southeast Pacific, Europe, the Indian Ocean, Australia, the North Atlantic, Africa, Panama and the Caribbean. Chief Pittman retired in February 1987. For his service he was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device, three Meritorious Unit Commendations, four awards for the Good Conduct Medal, the Navy Expeditionary Medal, the M–14 Rifle Ribbon, the .45 Pistol Ribbon and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

After retiring from the Navy, Mr. Pittman worked as a security officer, forklift operator and wood cutter. He is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 9896, where he served six years as Post Commander and attends the Church of Latter Day Saints. He has three children and three grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Hank Pittman upon being named as a ''Distinguished Life Member'' by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 9896. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Pittman many years of continued success.

REMEMBERING BILL TATUM IN THE PAGES OF THE NEW YORK CARIB NEWS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to submit a New York CARIB News tribute to the late Wilbert Bill Tatum, honoring the journalistic heavyweight for his commitment to his craft, his community, and to social justice and equality. He passed away in late February, ending a decades-long tenure as the owner, chairman, and publisher of the Amsterdam News—a premier and pioneering Black newspaper in the heart of Harlem. He wielded his pen as a sword, holding public servants' feet to the fire and rarely mincing his words in pursuit of truth. A philanthropist of formidable character and impassioned conviction, Tatum lent a powerful voice to the African American community through his words and his inspiration. The following article—''Wilbert Tatum Remembered,'' published on March 17 and written by Victoria Horsford—details the legacy of the great Bill Tatum.

WILBERT TATUM REMEMBERED

Wilbert Bill Tatum, Amsterdam News Chairman/CEO and publisher emeritus died, a long way from home, on February 26 in Croatia. The ultimate Fourth Estater, Bill Tatum was equal parts race relations maven, humanist, entrepreneur, and warrior. He left a legacy of integrity and passion in journalism.

Tatum was a face in the proactive Harlem crowd for almost four decades, which predates the $2.3 million purchase of the Amsterdam News in 1971, by him, Percy Sutton and other business associates. In 1983, Tatum assumes full control of the paper. By 1996, Tatum bought out all of his AmNews partners, became the sole owner and Begins the Tatum Era. Founded on December 4, 1909, the Amsterdam News emerged as one of the most important Black newspapers in the U.S. on par with the Pittsburgh Courier, The Afro-American, and The Chicago Defender. Tatum kept burnishing the paper's image while keeping a watchful eye as events unfolded of special interest to the Amsterdam News readers.

Tatum's editorials railed against inequities vis-à-vis the Black community re: housing, employment, term limits, the NYPD, immigration. No one nor organizations was off limits to the acidic Tatum editorial. He relished a good fight taking on mayors and local corrupt community leaders, businessmen and untoward clergy. For years, he ran acid-tinged ''Mayor Ed Koch must go'' editorials. In the 90s, he began a long run of ''Mayor Rudy Giuliani must go'' editorials. He allocated equal editorial space to unsung community heroes and contributed regularly to scores of charities.

Tatum was one of a few publishers who believed in the innocence of the young Black men convicted in the racially marred Central Park jogger rape case. He was best when he was opinionated and tapping into instincts. The AmNews had taken on a new life during his watch. It was the World According to Bill Tatum. And what a delightfully, crazy, unpredictable, diabolical, lovable, plot-rich moral world it was. He ceded control of the paper to his daughter Elinor in 1997. Last Friday, 2/27 during a NY1 TV interview, Elinor said ''My dad loved the Amsterdam News,'' she added. ''He was born in North Carolina, was one of 13 children, a descendant of sharecroppers whose granddad started a newspaper. He wanted to make this world a better place for people who looked like him.'' A Lincoln University and Occidental College alum, Tatum had a master's degree in Urban Studies.

The following are remembrances of Bill Tatum. Governor David Paterson reflects on Tatum ''as a decent person who stood out amongst the giants of NYC for his commitment to justice and social equality.'' Mayor Michael Bloomberg intones. ''The paper was really heard across the city...and on many occasions, around the world. He covered issues of concern to African Americans in ways that other media opportunities they might not otherwise have had. He was a real character in the nicest sense of the word!'' NYC Comptroller Bill Thompson says. ''Bill was a pioneer in publishing...who always stood up for causes he believed in and spoke out against injustice and highlighted issues too often forgotten and ignored. Bill always let you know when he disagreed with you in a genuine forthrightness,'' Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer says. ''NY lost one of our great citizens. . . . Bill wore many hats at the Amsterdam and its success is due to his dedication and vision.''

Reverend Al Sharpton remembers. ''Bill Tatum was an iconic and vitally important figure in both journalism and civil rights. We have lost a great advocate, a penetrating writer and unmatchable institution builder and for me a great friend and father figure.''

Survived by his wife Susan and his daughter Elinor, Bill Tatum's wake was held on Thursday, March 5, at the Provenzano Lanzo Funeral Home at 43 Second Avenue. His funeral was held Friday, March 6 at 10 am at Harlem's Riverside Church at 490 RSD, near 120 Street.

The family requests that you make donations to the Amsterdam News Educational Foundation, 34 East Third Street, NYC 10003.