

his coaches and teammates, not to mention the admiration of our community, which has cheered him along throughout his career.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in recognizing Dalton Pepper for his hard work and dedication to the Pennsbury High School boys' basketball team—he sets an example for student athletes everywhere and I am proud to represent him.

CONGRATULATING JIM YOUNG

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend Jim Young on his recent retirement as an Iowa Director for the National Education Association (NEA). Jim has dedicated his life to the education of children and the representation of teachers. Jim has been teaching in Cedar Falls, Iowa, for 25 years at the elementary school level.

Jim has been actively involved at all levels of the National Education Association. He has held virtually every leadership position at the local level serving as president, vice president, treasurer and building representative. Jim has also chaired several different association committees including Governmental Relations, Communications and American Education Week.

In 2003, Jim began his first 3-year term as a member of the board of directors for the NEA. As an NEA director, Jim advocated for issues affecting Iowa teachers at the national level of the NEA. Jim served two terms as an NEA director and retires from the position this year as it is term limited to two terms.

I'm happy to report that Jim will begin his 26th year of teaching this fall. He will be teaching 4th grade at Helen Hansen Elementary School in Cedar Falls. I congratulate him on all of his success and wish him the best in all of his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, from Tuesday, May 5 through Thursday, May 7, 2009, I was provided a leave of absence from the House of Representatives due to the hospitalization of my daughter, and thus I missed rollcall votes Nos. 231–242. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye” on Nos. 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 239, 240, 241, and 242, and “nay” on Nos. 237 and 238.

HANNAH CLAYTON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Hannah Clay-

ton who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Hannah Clayton is a senior at Compass Montessori High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Hannah Clayton is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Hannah Clayton for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her academic career to her future accomplishments.

ON THE RETIREMENT OF DR. LAVERNE RAGSTER FROM THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and much gratitude that I rise to salute Dr. LaVeme Erin Ragster as she steps down from the Presidency of the University of the Virgin Islands.

Dr. Ragster was born and raised on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, where she graduated, as valedictorian, from Charlotte Amalie High School in 1969. Her educational career includes completion of a bachelor of science degree in biology and chemistry, in 1973, from the University of Miami, a master of science degree in biology with an algal physiology concentration, in 1975, from San Diego State University, and a doctorate in biology with a plant biochemistry concentration, in 1980, from the University of California, San Diego.

Early in her career, Dr. Ragster served as a member of the teaching faculty at the College, which became the University of the Virgin Islands, where she was promoted from assistant professor to professor of marine biology. During that period she worked with a number of regional organizations, including the Caribbean Studies Association (past president), Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (former board member, past chair of the board), Caribbean Conservation Association (past vice president), Island Resources Foundation (board member), The Nature Conservancy (former board member) and the Caribbean Council for Service and Technology (USVI representative).

In addition to her professional activities, Dr. Ragster has always been actively involved in her community. She has served as president of the League of Women Voters of the Virgin Islands, and in a number of leadership positions in the territory in non-governmental organizations, particularly in the areas of education and the environment.

The second decade (and beyond) of Dr. Ragster's career has been devoted to professional pursuits leading to positions of progressively greater administrative responsibilities. She held positions such as: Chair of the Divi-

sion of Science and Mathematics; Faculty Trustee to the UVI Board of Trustees; Acting Vice President for Research and Land Grant Affairs; Vice President for Research and Public Service; and Senior Vice President and Provost at UVI. In addition, during this period Dr. Ragster published a number of papers on the role of natural resources in resource management and development, produced programs for the training of faculty and resource managers, and developed curriculum materials to teach natural resource management at the university level in the Caribbean.

Dr. Ragster helped to link UVI with other higher education institutions in the region when she served as sub-secretary general for the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA) and as the coordinator of the Caribbean Universities for Natural Resource Management. More broadly, Dr. Ragster has served as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Environment Program, as a member of the national Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee and as a member of the National Commission on Environmental Justice.

For the last seven years of her career, Dr. Ragster has served as President of the University of the Virgin Islands. She became the first female and fourth president of the University of the Virgin Islands on August 1, 2002. Dr. Ragster currently serves as a member of the UVI Research and Technology Park Board, past Chair and current member of the University Consortium for Small Island States Governing Board, Vice President for the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA), member of the Liga Atletica Interuniversitaria de Puerto Rico y las Islas Virgenes Governing Board, a member of the American Council on Education's Organization of Women in Higher Education, a facilitator for the American Council on Education's Institute New CAOs, member of the Alexander Hamilton Distinguished Public Service Award Selection Committee, and the Caribbean National Resources Institute Partner, since 2009.

During her tenure as President, Dr. Ragster's leadership and commitment to excellence has been recognized by those both at home and abroad. Among community groups that have honored President Ragster are the Business and Professional Women's Organization, which named her person of the year for 2003. In March 2009, The Rotary Club of St. Thomas II bestowed the Paul Harris Award upon Dr. Ragster, as did The Rotary Club of St. Thomas East. Dr. Ragster has also been an honorary member of The Rotary Club of St. Thomas II for the past three years.

In early 2006, around the mid-point of her Presidency, Dr. Ragster received a Drum Major for Justice Women Leadership in Higher Education Award from the SCLC/W.O.M.E.N., Inc in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Ragster is married to Lloyd Gardner, an environmental planner, and they have two sons, Adrian and Alex.

Madam Speaker, throughout her stellar career, Dr. Ragster has displayed academic and professional integrity which has translated into the advancement of her students, her peers and indeed the entire Virgin Islands community. As she steps down from the presidency of the University, we are sure that this is but a step in the direction of even more commitment to community and advancement in both the personal and professional sphere. On behalf of the people of the United States Virgin