RECOGNIZING MORRILL WORCESTER FOR HIS WORK IN HONORING OUR NATION'S FALLEN

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in recognition of Mr. Morrill Worcester of Harrington, Maine. Morrill is President of the Worcester Wreath Company, and he and his company have provided Christmas wreaths for Arlington National Cemetery since 1992.

Morrill Worcester's story begins in 1962 when at the age of 12 he won a trip to Washington, DC, from his local paper. After visiting Arlington National Cemetery, he was awestruck by the enormity of the cemetery and its perfectly aligned rows of headstones representing the thousands who have died in service to this country. The powerful imagery of Arlington left a lasting impression on Morrill, one that would stay with him long after he began his business selling Christmas wreaths.

In 1992, the Worcester Wreath Company had an overstock of Christmas wreaths. Unwilling to simply throw the extra wreaths away, and with the image of Arlington still a treasured memory, Morrill was inspired. With the help of volunteers, he spent 6 hours in the rain placing a wreath at each headstone. For 18 years, Morrill has taken time out of his busiest season to deliver handmade wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery and lead volunteers in laying them on the headstones.

When word of his efforts spread around the Internet, hundreds more Americans from across the country began to ask how they could get involved and show their respect for our fallen. Morrill soon expanded the project into Wreaths Across America, allowing anyone to donate a wreath to honor the fallen. As a result, Wreaths Across America have laid over 100,000 wreaths at numerous national cemeteries. Congress has recognized his work by declaring December 13, 2008 as ''Wreaths Across America Day.''

Madam Speaker, this gentleman's dedication and actions directly reflect his selfless resolve to honor and remember our Nation's fallen. Individuals like Morrill and the volunteers of Wreaths Across America embody the great respect that we as a nation have for those who have died defending our freedom. On the second Saturday of December this year, and hopefully for many more Decembers to come, Morrill will be at Arlington National Cemetery in solemn remembrance to lay more wreaths.

Mr. Morrill Worcester, thank you for remembering those who have given so much for our freedom, and thank you for sharing your passion to honor these brave men and women with the American people.

HONORING NORWICH UNIVERSITY AND ITS INAUGURAL DAY OF SERVICE

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Norwich University and its inaugural Day of Service.

Located in the foothills of the Green Mountains in Northfield, Vermont, Norwich University is the oldest private military college in the Nation. The university's founder, Captain Alden Partridge, believed in the importance of service and experiential learning. On November 7, 2009, over 150 alumni, undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and friends of Norwich University exemplified these principles by joining together in the university's inaugural Day of Service. The date was chosen specifically to coincide with Veterans Day, with most of the volunteer opportunities focused on supporting our Nation's veterans and active duty military.

Here in the DC area, dozens of alumni and friends volunteered at Walter Reed Army Medical Center's Fisher Houses, which are nonprofit homes where family members of injured soldiers can stay while their soldier recuperates from injury. Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, Norwich alumni visited with veterans at the local Veterans' Community Living Center and sponsored an afternoon of pizza and bingo. Norwich community volunteers in Massachusetts, New York, and Florida collected hundreds of toys and books to be distributed through the Armed Forces Foundation and Operation Paperback. Elsewhere around the country volunteers assembled care packages that will be sent to Norwich University alumni currently serving in Iraq. In North Carolina, alumni rallied to support Wakefield High School's anti-drunk driving efforts, and in San Antonio over 20 alumni and friends spent the morning volunteering in the fruit and vegetable gardens of the San Antonio Food Bank. In my home State of Vermont, over 50 students and alumni helped with local river cleanup, volunteered at the Vermont Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity, and provided logistical support for the White River Junction Mobile Vet Center.

At a time when so many of the men and women of our armed forces are serving around the globe, the Norwich Day of Service is a praiseworthy example of how those of us at home can volunteer our time to thank our servicemembers and veterans for their sacrifice.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF HUGH S. BRANYON UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the exemplary public service of Mr. Hugh S. Branyon who is retiring on December 11, 2009, after 35 years as superintendent of Gulf State Park on Alabama's Gulf Coast.

A native of Fayette in northwest Alabama, Mr. Branyon first came to Baldwin County in 1957 to work at Gulf State Park. His experience along the gulf sparked such a love of the outdoors that he devoted not only his career, but indeed, his life to the service of Alabama's state parks.

Mr. Branyon's labors have spanned a half century and the length of Alabama. After his first job at Gulf State Park, Mr. Branyon traveled upstate to Lake Guntersville State Park, where he rose to acting manager. Over the ensuing years, he traversed the state, heading back for a brief stint at Gulf State Park before being appointed ranger at Auburn's Chewacla State Park. In 1967, he was called to the State capital to become Chief of Operation in Maintenance to all Alabama state parks and fishing lakes. In 1972, Mr. Branyon returned to Baldwin County where he eventually became Superintendent of Gulf State Park and has since served continuously.

Mr. Branyon has always preferred to call his job a way of life. It was his dedication to the mission of preserving our outdoors that led Mr. Branyon to also assume the role of Southwest District Superintendent over five other south Alabama parks: Bladon Springs, Frank Jackson, Chickasaw, Florala and Meaher.

He has shepherded Gulf State Park through 13 named tropical storms and hurricanes. He oversaw the original construction of Gulf State Park's much-used fishing pier in 1967 and its reconstruction, nearly doubling its length. Under his supervision, Gulf State Park has steadily grown to become one of Alabama's most popular state parks.

No stranger to volunteer service in his community and across the state, he has also been active in many local civic clubs and organizations. His selfless service has led to his receipt of the highest awards from Rotary and Lions clubs international.

Mr. Branyon has been more than a park superintendent, but rather a friend, to so many of his employees and those who crossed his path over the decades in Alabama's parks. His devotion to preserving the treasures of Alabama's outdoors will be hard to match. All those who have enjoyed the beauty and splendor of our pristine parks owe Hugh Branyon a debt of thanks.

Mr. Branyon and his wife, Carol Wenzel Branyon, have two daughters and five grandchildren. Upon retirement, Mr. Branyon plans to devote even more time to his beloved outdoors, including fishing with his grandchildren.

I join thousands of Alabamians in wishing Hugh Branyon the best as he enters his well-deserved retirement.

TRIBUTE TO BROTHER BOB BEVINGTON

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to a beloved pastor from my District who was one of the most tireless servants of the Lord I have ever known.

I knew Rev. Bob Bevington—affectionately called Brother Bob by all—from the time I was a small boy. He was the advisor to the Christian Student Organization when I was in High School, and I had tremendous admiration and respect for him.

Most especially, I admired his unwavering faith during the passing of both of his sons. The pain of losing two children is unimaginable, but Brother Bob relied on his creator during those dark days and showed us all that God can help us even through terrible and tragic times.

Brother Bob's impact on my District is incalculable. He started the Knoxville Baptist Tabernacle Church in 1951, and his calling to