

winners on their accomplishment and I thank them for their commitment to their community.

HONORING AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY MONTH

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I rise to honor African American History Month. African American History Month was created to celebrate and remember the great achievements, advancements, sacrifices and contributions that the African American community has done for the United States of America.

This month has been, and continues to be, a beautiful and powerful reminder as to why the United States of America continues to be a beacon of freedom and success in the world. If you work hard, and stand true to what is right, to what you believe in, and heed the messages of our forefathers, you can overcome all obstacles in the face of hardship. To this, African American History Month is a testament.

The message of this month should not be unappreciated and it should not be forgotten. This month remains relevant in today's changing political and social landscape. The fruit of the African American Civil Rights Movement can still be seen today. Just forty years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., African Americans are now forces to be reckoned with in almost every field, whether business or academia, politics or the non-profit community. Once considered an impossible dream, an African American is now our own Commander and Chief in the White House.

It should be said, Madam Speaker, that learning about African American history is learning about the true history of America as a nation.

As such, I would like to ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring and celebrating African American History Month this year.

HONORING BETTE BELLE SMITH

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to posthumously honor the life of Bette Belle Smith. Mrs. Smith passed away on Sunday, November 29, 2009, at the age of 88.

Bette Belle Anderson was born at her family's home in Modesto, California on January 17, 1921, to Jim and Maysel Anderson. She was born severely pigeon-toed and the doctors recommended that she take ballet lessons to force her feet to turn outward. At the time, the closest dance teachers were in San Francisco. Her parents enrolled her in dance lessons, and drove her to San Francisco two weekends per month. Her father installed a barre at their home so she could practice.

In junior high school, Bette Belle invited a girl with a broken leg to come over to her

home and practice ballet. This was the beginning of the Smith's dancing school. With nearly one hundred students, the school outgrew her home; rehearsals were moved to the Elks Hall and Odd Fellows Hall. Recitals were held at Modesto High School, with an occasional small orchestra, thanks to the help of her brother. Her love for the performing arts endured throughout her life.

Mrs. Smith attended Modesto High School, Modesto Junior College and the University of California, Los Angeles. She left UCLA and returned to Modesto to help her parents after they were in a car accident. At this time, World War II was in full force and Mrs. Smith was the first in line to assist. She rolled bandages for the Red Cross, gathered a group of her former dance students to perform for convalescing soldiers at Awahnee Naval Hospital and what was then Hammond General Hospital in Modesto. After the war ended, she married Jean Smith, her longtime boyfriend. He had served in Hawaii and in the Gilbert Islands during the war, and they corresponded with many letters while he was away.

In 1954, Mr. and Mrs. Smith had their first child, Talbot, and thirteen months later she gave birth to twins, Mary and Tim. Being a mom was Mrs. Smith's number one priority, and volunteering was the second. She served on the Enslens Elementary School Parent Teacher Association, the Rainbow Girls Mothers Club and the Girl Scout Advisory Committee. She helped establish a Modesto chapter of American Field Service, an organization devoted to international student education. Mrs. Smith served on the Modesto Junior College foundation board, and volunteered with Omega Nu, The Salvation Army, International Festival and Inter-Faith Ministries. She visited with women from the Redwood Family Center who were recovering from drug and alcohol addictions. For many years she delighted hundreds of children as Mrs. Claus at the McHenry Museum, the Modesto Symphony and Enslens School. Of course, her love of the arts led her to work with the McHenry Museum Guild, serve on the Modesto Symphony board of directors and serve on the Gallo Center's original board of trustees as well as a fund development committee member. For 70 years she was an active member with the Modesto Symphony and was a driving force behind bringing the Gallo Center to Modesto.

At the age of 59, Mrs. Smith went to work. In 1978, a group of investors asked for her assistance in chartering the Modesto Banking Company. She agreed and coordinated sales events to raise capital for the company. Mrs. Smith was named Vice President of Business Development and Community Relations for the Modesto Banking Company, now U.S. Bank. Although she was working full time, Mrs. Smith continued to volunteer and encouraged others to do the same.

Due to the incredible amount of time that she donated to the city of Modesto and her community, Mrs. Smith has received many accolades. In 2000, California Governor Gray Davis named Mrs. Smith "Outstanding Older Worker of the Year." She has also been named the Soroptimist Woman of the Year, United Cerebral Palsy "Volunteer of the Year", American Legion "Man of the Year" (now called "Citizen of the Year"), United Way "Volunteer of the Decade," and received the Modesto Junior College Distinguished Alumni Award. United Way has named an award in

her memory, the "Bette Belle Smith Campaigner of the Year" award and the United Way building has also been named in her honor. In Modesto, Mrs. Smith is simply known as "Mrs. Modesto."

Madam Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Bette Belle Smith and wishing the best for her family.

HONORING GREGORY B. ROBERTS
FOR FOUR DECADES OF SERVICE
TO THE U.S. MILITARY AND IN-
TELLIGENCE COMMUNITY
THROUGH HIS LEADERSHIP IN
THE DOD CONTRACTOR BASE

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary contributions of Gregory B. Roberts. On February 1, 2010, Mr. Roberts retired as President of L-3 Communication Systems-East after an amazing forty three-year career in the Aerospace and Defense industry. L-3 Communication Systems-East is located in my district and I have had the privilege to have known and worked with Mr. Roberts during the past 14 years.

Mr. Roberts is a graduate of the University of Virginia where he received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He also received a master's degree in electrical engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn.

Mr. Roberts has held leadership roles in some of our most distinguished defense companies, including L-3 Communications, General Electric Aerospace—Reentry Systems, Martin Marietta, and later Lockheed Martin.

Mr. Roberts' provided the leadership that led to the development of numerous innovative and high technology solutions for U.S. government customers including secure communications technologies, maritime communications solutions, space-based communications, channel processing equipment, and re-entry and fusing systems for Minuteman and Peacekeeper missiles.

Those who know Mr. Roberts, know that throughout his career he has mentored our top scientists and engineers, and in doing so, has provided the country with our next generation of leadership talent.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Roberts has a proud record of service to our country and I am proud to call him my friend. I congratulate Greg Roberts for all his accomplishments and wish him the best in his retirement.

IN HONOR OF JOHN ALFRED
"FRED" BENNETT

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Mr. MURTHA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of John Alfred "Fred" Bennett and to pay tribute to his life of leadership and service. Mr. Bennett was a beloved husband, father, friend, and community leader in my district. He was born in Franklin Borough, Cambria County to James A. and Shirley R. Bennett. He grew up with a love of