

also constrain the ability of students to consider military career and education opportunities.

REMEMBERING VIRGINIA'S FIRST
AFRICAN AMERICAN CHIEF JUSTICE
LEROY R. HASSELL, SR.

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished life and achievements of the Honorable Leroy R. Hassell, Sr., former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, who passed away this week at the very young age of 55. While he left us in the prime of his life, his compassion and commitment to justice will leave a lasting impression on the judicial system and the world beyond the bench.

A Norfolk native, he grew up in Broad Creek and attended Norview High School. He graduated from the University of Virginia and earned his law degree from Harvard Law School. He then returned to Richmond where he quickly rose through the ranks to become partner at McGuire Woods, one of Virginia's largest law firms.

After graduating from William and Mary Law School and passing the Virginia bar, I remember when Governor Gerald Baliles nominated him to the Virginia Supreme Court in 1989. At the age of 34, Justice Hassell became the second African American justice on the court after John Charles Thomas. In 2002, his colleagues elected him to serve as Chief Justice, making him Virginia's first African American Chief Justice. Remarkably, he was the first leader of the high court chosen by his peers rather than through seniority. At the time, he was also the youngest serving member of the court.

Chief Justice Hassell always had a great love of law. He was a man of faith and deep personal convictions. He cared deeply about the people of the Commonwealth and was passionate about helping others. He was a tireless advocate for the poor and the mentally ill and fought hard to make the courts more accessible and more equitable.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in remembering Justice Hassell, a lifelong public servant and powerful voice for all Virginians.

A BRIGHTER COMING DAY: REDISCOVERING
FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, this month in Philadelphia, in the midst of Black History Month and on the cusp of Women's History Month, we will be celebrating the centennial of the death of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper—a great and talented woman of our city and our Nation.

Frances E. W. Harper, born September 28, 1825, was a poet, novelist, lecturer, advocate and activist for the towering causes of 19th century America: the abolition of slavery and

the freedom of all people, especially her fellow African Americans. She was the contemporary and equal of such figures as William Still, Octavius V. Catto, Lucretia Mott, the Fortens, William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass (who published her work).

She was a woman of such bravery that she stayed with and comforted Mary Brown, wife of John Brown, in the weeks leading up to his execution. And more: She wrote to John Brown, in a letter addressed "Dear Friend" and smuggled into his jail cell: "In the name of the young girl sold from the warm clasp of a mother's arms to the clutches of a libertine or profligate, in the name of the slave mother, her heart rocked to and fro by the agony of her mournful separations, I thank you, that you have been brave enough to reach out your hands to the crushed and blighted of my race."

To her list of character traits, one rises above all others: Frances E. W. Harper was a fighter.

In the century since her passing, on February 22, 1911, at age 85, Frances E. W. Harper's achievements may have faded in memory for many, but her luster has never dimmed. The lessons and examples of her life have held special meaning for my family and me, and for Philadelphians who honor history while vowing never to repeat it.

Now, in this momentous time, comes "A Brighter Coming Day: Rediscovering Frances Ellen Watkins Harper." A partnership of nearly 20 organizations and foundations, brought together by Larry Robin and the Moonstone Arts Center, will spotlight her achievements with a dozen events across the City of Philadelphia between February 20 and 27.

For the benefit of my colleagues in the House and for all Americans who may be "Rediscovering"—or simply discovering—this amazing woman, here is a primer:

Frances Ellen Watkins was born of free black parents in Baltimore in 1825, orphaned at a young age but raised by an aunt and uncle in comfortable circumstances. Her talents and potential were evident from the start. By age 20 she had published her first collection of poetry, "Forest Leaves." In the 1840s and 1850s, as a young abolitionist, she traveled and lectured widely—and sent the proceeds back home to fund the Underground Railroad.

Soon after moving to Philadelphia, not yet 30 years of age, she refused to give up her seat on the city's shamefully segregated horse-drawn trolley system. It was an act of defiance and illegality that helped set in motion the ultimate desegregation of the trolleys. A brave and impressive act in any time, this was when slavery was still legal. In 1854, she was "Rosa Parks" a century before Rosa Parks.

Following the Civil War, as a widow raising four children, in a time when even the most dedicated advocates for civil rights for African Americans were cool to women's empowerment, Frances E. W. Harper in 1866 delivered a fierce speech before the National Women's Rights Convention. Then she headed south to spend four years lecturing in Freedmen's schools in the often hostile environment of Reconstruction. Three decades later, still advocating women's rights as well as those of African Americans, she was elected vice president of the National Association of Colored Women.

The writer's muse never left her. In 1892, at age 67, Frances E. W. Harper published the greatest of her three novels, "Iola Leroy."

Throughout her life, Frances E. W. Harper was a pillar of temperance and faith, first at Philadelphia's historic Mother Bethel in the African Methodist Episcopal tradition in which she was raised, and later at the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia.

The saga of Frances E. W. Harper is a Philadelphia story, and for me, a personal one. It has been the tradition in my family to name the first-born girl Frances Ellen in her honor. And so this great woman of the 19th century has been an inspiration to great women of today—among them my mother, Falaka Fattah, born Frances Ellen, and my daughter, Frances Ellen Fattah, a young lawyer specializing in education issues. My parents, Falaka and David Fattah, have been activists, community organizers and leaders, inspirational figures for generations of young people across Philadelphia. It is fitting that one of the 12 programs of "Rediscovering," to be held on the exact anniversary of February 22, is titled, "Falaka Fattah and the Political Legacy of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper."

On February 20, I will be privileged to participate in the first program in this weeklong series. I will read from the work of Frances E. W. Harper and join my family in the ribbon cutting for her portrait by Leroy Forney, commissioned by and unveiled at the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia.

This week of tributes will raise Frances E. W. Harper's profile and forever stamp her upon the soul of Philadelphians of good will. The final event will be a graveside memorial at Eden Cemetery, Collingdale, Pennsylvania, where so many of Philadelphia's illustrious African Americans of the 19th and 20th century are interred. One of Frances E. W. Harper's earliest and most acclaimed poems, published in 1858, was "Bury Me in a Free Land."

I ask no monument, proud and high,
To arrest the gaze of the passers-by;
All that my yearning spirit craves,
Is bury me not in a land of slaves.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper has, indeed, a monument for us to gaze upon: her life's work, her character, an example to finish the work at hand—and in eternal peace, a dream and yearning fulfilled.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S
DANCE MARATHON

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for the Northwestern University Dance Marathon, one of the largest entirely student-run philanthropies in the world.

Created in 1975 by students at Northwestern, the annual Dance Marathon is just one example of Northwestern University's strong commitment to bring the university body together with the nearby community to raise money for a good cause. Last year's Marathon rose over \$850,000 for charity and organizers expect an even bigger amount for this year's charitable recipient, the Children's Heart Foundation.