

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF TEACHER AND
MUSICIAN WILLIAM DEWITT

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO
SABLAN**

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, allow me to add to the record of the U.S. House of Representatives the story Mr. William DeWitt, a teacher, who has brought the art of music in the Northern Mariana Islands to an unprecedented level of excellence and who has given to thousands of our young people the joy of finding within themselves their own musical talents.

Mr. William DeWitt first came to the Northern Mariana Islands in 1993, beginning his career in middle and junior high school, teaching a variety of subjects, including band, piano, and choir. He then accepted an offer to teach at Marianas High School and was successful there at reviving its band program. Enthusiasm for instrumental music education began to crescendo, and in 2002 Mr. DeWitt was invited to join the faculty of the newly inaugurated Saipan Southern High School, which was designed to be a magnet school for students with an interest in the arts and technology. He has now spent thirteen years at Saipan Southern, helping countless students fulfill their dream to make music and share it with the world. In doing so, Mr. DeWitt and the students he has guided have created a legacy, the Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Band, that is certainly one of the greatest sources of pride for the Northern Marianas Public School System and, indeed, for our entire community.

When Mr. DeWitt came to Saipan 22 years ago, he could not have known what he would accomplish. Our island community has always teemed with multi-generational musical talent and held a deep love for singing. But band music and its array of instruments—the trumpet, flute, trombone, and clarinet—were less well known. Mr. DeWitt changed that.

Mr. DeWitt also oversaw the incorporation of a growing diversity of students into our schools using music as a unifying influence and adding the international flavor of this new student body to its musical sensibility. Up to 250 students now participate in some aspect of the Manta Ray Band program at Saipan Southern. They come from many ethnicities and cultures—Chamorro, Carolinian, Palauan, Marshallese, Filipino, Korean, Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian—and William DeWitt has helped them learn to join together as one, making music.

Perhaps, this very diversity is key to the success and world-wide recognition the Manta Ray Band has achieved under the baton of Mr. DeWitt. Five times in the last seven years the Manta Ray Band has earned the Tumon Bay Music Festival Sweepstakes Award, the most wins by any organization in the festival's history. The Manta Rays have been invited to and performed at two Olympic Games: Beijing

in 2008 and London in 2012. The Band has showcased its talents at the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, Westminster Abbey, and Disneyland. And just last month, at the Los Angeles Musical Festival the Manta Ray Band earned the Gold Award as the highest scoring ensemble in festival competition.

This Gold Award is something of a fairy-tale ending to Mr. DeWitt's career. His band executed its performance with a new precision and intensity. His students displayed an infectious enthusiasm and rhythmic jaunt that gave their concert an element of variety and versatility no other ensemble could match. But backstage after the event amidst the triumph, while cameras clicked, tears flowed and hugs abounded, as the Manta Rays dealt with the recognition that this pinnacle also marked the end of an era—for Mr. William DeWitt had taken his final bow with the band.

William DeWitt and his family will now be able to spend time with his parents in California, where he will also pursue a post-graduate degree. We wish him well. And we will always be grateful to him for the way that he drew from a very small population of students their maximum talent, so inculcating them in the fundamental elements of musicianship that they were able to soar on international stages.

As significant as what he gave to each individual student, we will remember what Mr. William DeWitt gave to the larger communities of which we are part: the pride and honor his musicians brought to Saipan Southern High School, to the Public School System, and to the Northern Mariana Islands as a whole. This musical venture he has led became a partnership for all of us. Individuals and businesses gladly supported the Manta Ray Band with contributions totaling more than a million dollars over the course of the past decade. And, as a community, we should honor William DeWitt's legacy by continuing to give our young musicians the opportunity to develop, master, and showcase their talents.

Lastly, we acknowledge, as does Mr. DeWitt, his wife Lois and his children Emily, Abigail, and James, who throughout have been his source of inspiration and support. We thank them for allowing their husband and father to commit so much of his time and energy to the students of Saipan Southern and the Northern Mariana Islands.

And we thank you, Mr. William DeWitt. May the richness of island life always flow in your blood, just as your accomplishments will always be engraved into our island history.

THE MAN WHO WAS LARGER THAN
LIFE

HON. J. FRENCH HILL

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of his life, Richard "Dick" Bass was a force to be reckoned with. He always strove to be the

first and best at whatever he did—whether as a student, oilman, rancher, ski resort developer, or mountaineer.

As a young man of sixteen, he enrolled in Yale University, graduating with a B.S. in Geology at the age of twenty. The gregarious spirit and boundless curiosity that prompted him to climb one of Europe's highest peaks, the Matterhorn, at nineteen, would continue to be both servant and driver throughout his life.

Shortly after moving back to Texas to join the family oil business, Dick began taking regular trips to Colorado to ski. His love for skiing and his fellow outdoor enthusiasts motivated him to seek out involvement in the industry. Shortly after starting these trips, he and his brother purchased stock in a small underdeveloped area in Eagle County, Colorado, that became the globally famous Town of Vail. The success and increased public interest in Vail led to his co-ownership and development of the Snowbird ski resort in Utah. He and his Snowbird partner, Ted Johnson, traveled across Europe searching for inspiration and innovation to bring their vision to life.

His pioneering spirit was not limited to investments and skiing and hearken back to his younger self's interest in mountain climbing. He was determined to become the first man to conquer the Seven Summits, the highest mountains in each of the continents, and achieved this monumental undertaking on April 30, 1985. Throughout his life, his mindset was always that of ceaseless perseverance, as exemplified by his three attempts and final summit of Mt. Everest.

Dick Bass may have passed on to his newest adventure at the age of eighty-five, but his entire life serves as a testament to the power of determination and enterprise. Dick was larger than life, actively living every second to the fullest and taking on any challenge thrown at him. He left a truly indelible mark on the world, his wife, Alice, his children Dan Bass, Bonnie Smith, Barbara Moroney, Jim Bass, and his thirteen grandchildren.

I was proud to count Dick Bass as a family friend and a source of inspiration to me in my love of the mountains and my business career. As John Muir said, "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings"; Dick, your legacy lives on.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE
REVEREND WILLIE L. HILL

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding Man of God who has been a longstanding source of inspiration, spiritual guidance, and moral leadership to the people of Southwest Georgia, the Reverend Willie L. Hill. Reverend Hill is retiring after 28 years of pastoring the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia. The congregation will be honoring Rev.

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