

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 3, 2017

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on roll call vote 77, I was not present because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "NAY."

RECOGNIZING MS. NAOMI
BASHKANSKY FOR HER PER-
FORMANCE AT THE 2016 WORLD
SCHOOL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 3, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ms. Naomi Bashkansky of Bellevue, Washington for her victory at the 2016 World School Chess Championship. Like many other students of Olde Middle School, Naomi works every day to balance extracurricular activities, family commitments, and school life. With the help of coaches, teachers, and family, she strives to mold her own unique identity as a student, a friend, a daughter, and a citizen. Although many aspects of Naomi's life may be familiar to us all, there was nothing ordinary about her performance at the chess championship.

Naomi's accomplishment and strength of character are deserving of the highest level of praise. Naomi not only out-performed 400 young chess players representing 30 different countries, but she graciously represented the people of the 9th Congressional District and the United States of America.

During the competition, Naomi's path to victory was not always clear; she suffered some early losses and could have easily admitted defeat, but she did not do such thing. As she competed in the championship round, she bore not only the weight of her own expectations, but also the burden of representing the nation. At such a young age, Naomi's courage and determination is certainly extraordinary. I know I will continue to hear about her achievements for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate Ms. Naomi Bashkansky on a hard-earned victory and wish her the best of luck in the future.

COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY
MONTH

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 3, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this February we recognize and celebrate the 40th commemoration of Black History Month.

This month we celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the history of our great nation, and pay tribute to trailblazers, pio-

neers, heroes, and leaders like the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama; Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; U.S. Senator Blanche Kelso Bruce; U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan; U.S. Congressman Mickey Leland; Astronauts Dr. Guion Stewart Bluford, Jr. and Mae C. Jemison; activists, intellectuals, authors, and artists like Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, James Baldwin, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Gwendolyn Brooks just to name a few of the countless number of well-known and unsung heroes whose contributions have helped our nation become a more perfect union.

The history of the United States has been marked by the great contributions of African American activists, leaders, writers, and artists.

As a member of Congress, I know that I stand on the shoulders of giants whose struggles and triumphs made it possible for me to stand here today and continue the fight for equality, justice, and progress for all, regardless of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

The greatest of these giants to me are Mrs. Ivalita "Ivy" Jackson, a vocational nurse, and Mr. Ezra A. Jackson, one of the first African Americans to succeed in the comic book publishing business.

They were my beloved parents and they taught me the value of education, hard work, discipline, perseverance, and caring for others.

And I am continually inspired by Dr. Elwyn Lee, my husband and the first tenured African American law professor at the University of Houston.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly wish to acknowledge the contributions of African American veterans in defending from foreign aggressors and who by their courageous examples helped transform our nation from a segregated society to a nation committed to the never ending challenge of perfecting our union.

A few years ago about this time, I was honored to join my colleagues, Congressman JOHN LEWIS and Congressman CHARLES RANGEL, a Korean War veteran, in paying tribute to surviving members of the Tuskegee Airmen and the 555th Parachute Infantry, the famed "Triple Nickels" at a moving ceremony sponsored by the U.S. Army commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The success of the Tuskegee Airmen in escorting bombers during World War II—achieving one of the lowest loss records of all the escort fighter groups, and being in constant demand for their services by the allied bomber units—is a record unmatched by any other fighter group.

So impressive and astounding were the feats of the Tuskegee Airmen that in 1948, it helped persuade President Harry Truman to issue his famous Executive Order No. 9981, which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces and led to the end of racial segregation in the U.S. military forces.

It is a source of enormous and enduring pride that my father-in-law, Phillip Ferguson Lee, was one of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Clearly, what began as an experiment to determine whether "colored" soldiers were capable of operating expensive and complex combat aircraft ended as an unqualified success

based on the experience of the Tuskegee Airmen, whose record included 261 aircraft destroyed, 148 aircraft damaged, 15,553 combat sorties and 1,578 missions over Italy and North Africa.

They also destroyed or damaged over 950 units of ground transportation and escorted more than 200 bombing missions. They proved that "the antidote to racism is excellence in performance," as retired Lt. Col. Herbert Carter once remarked.

Mr. Speaker, Black History Month is also a time to remember many pioneering women like U.S. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm; activists Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks; astronaut Mae C. Jemison; mathematicians like Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson; authors Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Gwendolyn Brooks; all of whom have each in their own way, whether through courageous activism, cultural or intellectual contributions, or artistic creativity, forged social and political change, and forever changed our great Nation for the better.

It is also fitting, Mr. Speaker, that in addition to those national leaders whose contributions have made our nation better, we honor also those who have and are making a difference in their local communities.

In my home city of Houston, there are numerous great men and women. They are great because they have heeded the counsel of Dr. King who said:

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

By that measure, I wish to pay tribute to some of the great men and women of Houston:

1. Rev. F.N. Williams, Sr.
2. Rev. Dr. S.J. Gilbert, Sr.
3. Rev. Crawford W. Kimble
4. Rev. Eldridge Stanley Branch
5. Rev. William A. Lawson
6. Rev. Johnnie Jeffery "J.J." Robeson
7. Mr. John Brand
8. Ms. Ruby Moseley
9. Ms. Dorothy Hubbard
10. Ms. Doris Hubbard
11. Ms. Willie Bell Boone
12. Ms. Holly HogoBrooks
13. Mr. Deloyd Parker
14. Ms. Lenora "Doll" Carter

As we celebrate Black History Month, let us pay tribute to those who have come before us, and pay forward to future generations by addressing what is the number one issue for African American families, and all American families today: preserving the American promise of economic opportunity for all.

Our immediate focus must be job creation, and enacting legislation that will foster and lay the foundation for today's and tomorrow's generation of groundbreaking activists, leaders, scientists, writers and artists to continue contributing to the greatness of America.

We must continue to preserve the American Dream for all.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here in celebration of the heroic and historic acts of African Americans and their indispensable contributions to this great Nation.

It is through our work in creating possibilities for today and future generations that we best honor the accomplishments and legacy of our predecessors.