

spirit through good deeds and charitable acts across our nation.

HONORING FORMER NY REP.
MAURICE HINCHEY

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 2017

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my fellow New Yorkers in honoring and celebrating the life of our colleague, Congressman Maurice Hinchey. Congressman Hinchey embodied what it means to be a true public servant and patriot with a vocation to serve his country and the people of New York.

From his 18 years serving in the New York State Assembly to his 10 years in Congress, Congressman Hinchey remained a steadfast champion for working people, American families, and the environment.

During the Congressman's time in the New York State Assembly, where he served as Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee, he sponsored the nation's first ever acid rain prevention bill. His passion for the environment followed him from New York State to Capitol Hill, where he famously sent President Reagan a tree and a gallon of acid rain water to draw attention to environmental pollution.

The Congressman represented some of New York's most beautiful land, from the Hudson Valley to the Finger Lakes, and we can attribute much of the preservation of New York's natural beauty to Congressman Hinchey's tireless dedication to conservation.

While on the House Appropriations Committee, the Congressman served as a staunch advocate for progressive policies and innovation to help American families and veterans.

My thoughts are with the Congressman's wife, Ilene, the Hinchey family, and all those who loved him as we honor his legacy of activism, advocacy, and passion for public service.

RECOGNIZING GARY GERMUNDSON
FOR THE MONTANA CONGRES-
SIONAL VETERAN COMMENDA-
TION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 2017

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Gary Germundson of Scobey for the Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Germundson joined the United States Army in 1957 and served in Vietnam. In 1965, he ended his military career but continued to serve as a community leader in Montana.

Mr. Germundson spent 45 years as a public educator. He became an alderman of the Scobey City Council and served as president of the Scobey Lions Club. Mr. Germundson remains active in his local American Legion and is treasurer of the Daniels County Color Guard.

In addition to raising their four children, Gary and Bonnie Germundson were foster parents to fifteen children.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Mr. Gary Germundson for his dedication and service.

HONORING MAURICE HINCHEY

HON. PAUL TONKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 30, 2017

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our former colleague and my friend Maurice Hinchey, who passed away last week.

All told, Maurice served 18 years in the New York State Assembly and 20 years in the House.

The story goes that after some youthful indiscretions, a judge gave him the option of joining the Navy or else . . .

Following his Navy service, he returned home to Saugerties, New York and worked at a cement factory, and then as a toll collector on the New York State Thruway while earning his degree at SUNY New Paltz.

He eventually ran and won a seat in the New York State Assembly in 1974, becoming the first Democrat to represent Ulster County since 1912.

I had the privilege of serving with Maurice in both the State Assembly and Congress.

As a freshman in the Assembly in the 1980s, I was assigned to serve on the Environmental Conservation Committee, which Maurice chaired.

During that time, I saw firsthand as he worked to expose illegal waste dumping by organized crime, which led to many convictions.

I saw him investigate toxic contamination of Love Canal in Niagara Falls, which would become the nation's first Superfund site.

He passed hundreds of bills, including the nation's first acid rain law to protect New Yorkers from harmful pollution, especially in the Adirondacks, and the Hudson River Valley Greenway Act.

Governor Mario Cuomo called him the "environmental conscience of New York State."

Maurice was elected to Congress in 1992, where he represented a serpentine district, from Poughkeepsie to Ithaca—including parts of the Hudson Valley, Catskill Mountains, and Southern Tier.

It was a tough district with disparate interests, but you could not have found a more fitting representative than Maurice.

No one was as equally as comfortable at a pool hall in Binghamton, a lecture hall in Cornell University, or one of Levon Helm's Midnight Rambles in Woodstock.

Throughout his career, Maurice blended his progressive and populist beliefs in tireless support of America's working families.

Maurice was a fighter—especially for the underdog, the voiceless, and the environment.

He was a rare breed of politician—not a weathervane—he stuck to his convictions. He knew that the best choice was not always the easiest or most popular one.

As a freshman in Congress, despite requests from the President, he opposed NAFTA, knowing it would result in the loss of American manufacturing jobs and suppress wages.

He opposed the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for fear that it would encourage media ownership consolidation.

He opposed the repeal of Glass-Steagall because it would allow banks to become too big to fail and encourage riskier investment behavior.

He opposed the unconstitutional, discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act. Maurice knew it was just as wrong then as it is today. And he wasn't afraid to say so.

He was a fierce and vocal opponent of the Iraq War.

He had the courage and vision that many lacked to be on the right side of those issues when it mattered, when the votes were cast.

He was on the losing side of those votes, but history has vindicated his positions.

His passion and courage should serve as a model for anyone who enters public service.

Maurice will be remembered most for being a champion of our environment. And I say our environment, because he believed without politics, without the efforts of so many engaged members of the public, there would not be conservation, or national parks, or wilderness. Only through acts of government and relentless advocacy have those national treasures been preserved to be cherished by all Americans.

He led the effort to establish the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and fought for the cleanup of PCBs that contaminated the river . . .

He secured funding to rehabilitate an old railroad bridge that became the Walkway Over the Hudson, which has attracted millions of visitors since its opening.

He supported renewable energy, and sought to prohibit oil and gas development in protected wilderness areas. That effort led him to work on requiring the disclosure of hydraulic fracturing chemicals and secure an EPA study on the impacts of fracking on drinking water.

Every two years the Almanac of American Politics writes an entry for every Member of Congress.

They tend to be fair and well-researched, but I take issue with one description of Maurice, where year after year he was described as a "leader of lost causes."

For 20 years in the House and 18 in the State Assembly, Maurice sought to give a voice to the voiceless and defend the weak against the powerful.

These are tiring, uphill battles; often frustrating and always difficult, but he never thought they were lost; never hopeless. He believed in them, and so do I.

We do not live in a perfect world, and we never will. There will always be those among us who are disadvantaged and in need. They will always need a champion, a Maurice Hinchey.

Our nation needs leaders who will dedicate their lives to carrying the banner of these so-called "lost causes" and the courage to fight, even when it is hard.

Maurice spent his life fighting for working and middle-class Americans and protecting the Hudson Valley and America's environment and natural beauty.

He was one of the most principled and courageous public servants I have ever known.

I want to express my deepest condolences to his wife, Ilene Marder Hinchey, and his children, Maurice, Joseph, and Michelle.