

HONORING THE LIFE OF SARDUL
SINGH SIHOTA

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Mr. COX, to honor the life of Sardul Singh Sihota, who passed away on March 5, 2019 at the age of 77. Throughout his life, Sardul was known for his contribution to the agriculture industry, his involvement with the Central Valley Sikh American community, and his role in establishing the first Sikh Temple in Selma, California.

Sardul was born on May 15, 1941 in Bara Pind, District Jalandhar, India to Assa Singh and Amar Kaur Singh. Sardul immigrated to Yuba City, California in 1961 to start a new chapter in his life and create a prosperous foundation for his family. Having been raised on a farm in India, Sardul moved to Selma, California, where he began to grow raisin grapes and continue his family's tradition of farming. Two years later, Sardul bought his first piece of property in Selma, which his family continues to live on today.

As one of the first Sikh Indians to live in Selma in the mid-1960s, Sardul had a desire to help other families immigrate to the Central Valley for a better life. He assisted many families by sharing his knowledge about the immigration process and acclimating to the life in the U.S. As a result, Selma became the new home to thousands of Sikh American families.

As the Sikh community continued to grow and flourish, Sardul noticed the lack of temples close by where families could worship, celebrate, and mourn. He worked with his friends to build Selma's first Sikh Temple in 1987.

Sardul is survived by his parents, his wife Jitendra, two daughters, Gurdeep Hebert and Harroop, and three sons, Paul, Simon, and Navjot, along with a host of extended family and friends.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that we ask our colleagues to join us in honoring the life of Sardul Singh Sihota and the great legacy that he leaves behind. Sardul will be remembered by his community for his generosity, hard work, and commitment to his friends and family. With all the relationships that he has forged along his journey, his memory will be forever remembered.

IN HONOR OF THE 2018–2019 STATE
CLASS A PUBLIC-SCHOOL CHAM-
PIONS: THE MARION COUNTY
LADY EAGLES BASKETBALL
TEAM

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2018–2019 Georgia State Class A Public-School Basketball Champions, the Marion County Lady Eagles of Buena Vista, Georgia. The team commemorated this significant milestone on Thursday, March 21, 2019, with a celebration of honor at Marion County High School in Buena Vista, Georgia.

On Wednesday, March 6, 2019, fans at the Macon Coliseum observed as the Lady Eagles won the state championship game against the Calhoun County Cougars by a score of 50–38. The Lady Eagles outrebounded their opponents (with a rebound total of 40–to–27) and made 21 of 30 free throws. This victory marked the end of an incredible year of hard work. The team has been ranked No. 1 for the entirety of the 2018–2019 season with an unbelievable 29–1 win-loss record. This championship game also marks a remarkable comeback for the Lady Eagles, who lost last year's game to the Greenville girls' basketball team by a score of 73–52.

The Lady Eagles' victory in this year's final exemplifies years of tireless determination which culminated into an inspiring season of teamwork and athletic excellence, counting a total of 1,910 points across 30 games. I am thrilled to honor this team as they celebrate the first girls' basketball state championship in the school's history. The senior class has been among the most successful ever, graduating with a winning record of 92–24.

I cannot put into words the tremendous pride that the citizens of Buena Vista, and indeed in the entire Second Congressional District, have in being able to call this outstanding team of athletes their own. They have accomplished an amazing feat, one that could not have been possible without the direction and inspiration of their coach, Fran McPherson, and her staff, as well as their families, classmates, and members of the community who believed in them and their ability to bring home a state championship title.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the more than 730,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District in congratulating and honoring these hardworking young women who have persevered, sacrificed, and achieved the pinnacle of success in basketball—the Georgia Class A State Championship title.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
MERDOLPH WALKER

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of World War II veteran, teacher, professional football player and rancher, Mr. Merdolph Walker.

Merdolph was born on a cold winter's night on January 16, 1923, in Soda, Texas. He was born in a small wooden house as sleet and snow fell outside. The midwife attending to his mother had to walk a mile home that night holding kindling for a light. The oldest of seven children, Merdolph attended Soda Grammar School, walking two miles to and from school each day.

While attending college at Sam Houston State University, Merdolph was drafted into the Army, serving from 1942 to 1946 as a combat engineer. Stationed in Guam during World War II, he received orders in his first week to search for land mines. Merdolph spent his next six weeks on open waters unloading cargo boats. There were no beds on-board, so he slept wherever he could find an

empty space. In one combat mission, gunfire was exchanged. Later, for seven months, Merdolph and other combat engineers would spend twelve hours a day building the runway used by the aircraft which dropped the atomic bomb and ended World War II. By that time, Merdolph was in Okinawa, Japan, where upon hearing shots fired and shouting, he and a buddy ran outside to learn the war had finally ended.

After returning to the states, Merdolph re-enrolled at Sam Houston College. He received his master's degree in administration, majored in physical education and minored in industrial arts. In 1948, he began a short career playing professional football in Pittsburg before deciding he could make more money teaching and coaching. Merdolph taught and coached for thirty-four years before retiring.

Madam Speaker, let us pause to honor this patriot who has faithfully, and humbly served our country, state and community.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL T.
TIERNEY ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Michael T. Tierney on concluding a lengthy and illustrious career with the City of Chicago and with Plumbers Local 130 UA.

Mr. Tierney was born in 1955 to his parents, John (Jack), a former Union and City of Chicago Hoisting Engineer/Crane Operator, and Beverly Tierney. Mr. Tierney also has four siblings, Jack (Cheri), Marilyn (Bill) Haugh, Patti (Chuck) Adesso, and Brian.

Mr. Tierney began his career in 1975 as a laborer in the City of Chicago's Water Department; in 1986, he was promoted to Foreman, and just four years later, Mr. Tierney was again promoted, this time to District Foreman for the Department.

In 1995, Mr. Tierney became the Assistant Superintendent of Water Distribution, where he assisted the Superintendent in overseeing construction for the entire district. In this role, he had the opportunity to serve for six months as interim Superintendent for the Department. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Tierney officially took over as the District Superintendent of Water Distribution and Sewers for the City of Chicago.

In 2012 with more than thirty-five years of experience in his field, Mr. Tierney became the Director of Political and Municipal Affairs for Plumbers Local 130 UA, the same organization from which he earned his education in plumbing twenty-eight years prior. In this position, Mr. Tierney represented all Local 130 employees at the City, County and State levels. He also negotiated all Local 130 contracts for the City of Chicago and Cook County.

Mr. Tierney would be the first to tell you that his family is his first priority; they are the loves of his life. He has been married to his wife, Kathy McManus, since 2003. Mr. Tierney has two children; his daughter, Colleen Scarola, married to her husband, Matt, and Michael, married to his wife, Stephanie. He has four grandchildren, Benjamin, Olivia, Reagan, and Micaela, as well as one on the way in just a few weeks. I am pleased that his retirement

will offer him the opportunity to spend more quality time with those closest to him.

As Mr. Tierney retires from Plumbers Local 130 UA on March 31, 2019 after 30 years of service, I ask you to join me in recognizing his distinguished career.

HAPPY SESQUICENTENNIAL—CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE WEST POINT ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise to include in the RECORD an article by Keith J. Hamel honoring the 150th Anniversary of the West Point Association of Graduates.

"On May 22, 2019, the West Point Association of Graduates will turn 150 years old. Think about it—one hundred and fifty years! When "the Association," as it used to be known, held its first organizational meeting in the office of Dr. Horace Webster, Class of 1818, President of the College of the City of New York, the light bulb had yet to be invented; the telephone had not been patented; the U.S. flag had only 37 stars; and the machine gun, dynamite, and the torpedo were less than a decade old.

The year was 1869, an important year in the history of West Point graduates. On March 4 of that year, Ulysses S. Grant, Class of 1843, became the 18th President of the United States. Grant, of course, received national acclaim for commanding the Union Army to victory during the U.S. Civil War, accepting the surrender of Confederate forces from another West Point graduate, Robert E. Lee, Class of 1829. That recent conflict, roughly four years over by the time a handful of graduates met in Webster's office one Saturday afternoon for that first meeting, is often cited as the reason the "Association" was formed; that is, to heal the divide between West Point graduates who fought on opposing sides of the U.S. Civil War. While it may be romanticized, such a theory is plausible. After all, bridging chasms seemed to be the spirit of the age in 1869. On May 2 of that year the "golden spike" of the First Transcontinental Railroad was driven into the ground at Promontory Summit of Utah Territory, linking America's East Coast with its West Coast. Later that year, on November 17, the Suez Canal officially opened, finally completing a centuries-old idea to create a waterway between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

Yet when Robert Anderson, Class of 1825, wrote to Sylvanus Thayer, Class of 1808, on January 28, 1869 to propose the formation of "an association of the graduates of the Military Academy," he never mentioned the Civil War as a *raison d'être* for this endeavor (and Anderson was the officer in charge of Fort Sumter when it was fired upon by P. G. T. Beauregard, Class of 1838, to start that war!) Instead, Anderson plainly told Thayer he wanted to form an association "to see what should be done to perfect and perpetuate this truly national Institution." [West Point] and, in his February 12, 1869 reply to Anderson, Thayer agreed.

Three months later, 15 graduates gathered in Webster's office for the purposes of officially forming an "Association of the Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy." Neither the Civil War nor the "perpetuation" of West Point was explicitly mentioned in the

minutes from that meeting. Instead, the graduates present, including Anderson, passed seven resolutions, the last pertaining to the "fundamental principle that the characteristic of this Association shall be." According to the "Preliminary Meeting" minutes, Reverend Dr. Francis Vinton, Class of 1830, Assistant Minister of Trinity Church in New York City, introduced a resolution that the Association be "formed purely for the promotion of social and fraternal intercourse." Vinton's resolution became Article II of the new Association's Constitution: "The objects of this Association shall be to cherish the memories of our Alma Mater, and to promote the social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates."

Does this end the debate regarding the purpose of the Association of Graduates' founding? Not quite. Article IV of the Association's original Constitution complicates matters. It states, "Political, or any other discussions foreign to the purposes of the Association, as set forth in this Constitution, or any proceedings of such a tendency, are declared inimical to the purposes of this organization, and are prohibited." Such an article calls attention to itself and seems to support the notion that the recent U.S. Civil War and its political aftermath might impede the formation of an Association of West Point Graduates. Furthermore, Article III, paragraph 2, states, "The oldest graduate belonging to the Association shall be President; and in his absence the senior graduate present shall preside at the meeting of the Association." This made Thayer the Association's "official" first president. Although Thayer never attended a meeting of the Association of Graduates (and, interestingly, his name does not appear on the roll of members until 1872), this passage marries Thayer's legacy with the creation of the Association, including his desire to form such an organization for the benefit of West Point. Going forward, both implicit political matters and the promotion of West Point routinely enter into the dialogue regarding the Association's early history and business.

Take the Association's first public act after a committee of 13 graduates, chaired by Webster, met on June 16, 1869 and drafted the constitution and bylaws for the new Association. Soon after, the committee mailed the proposed constitution and bylaws to all graduates; 128 joined (of more than 1,350 living graduates), including three former Confederate officers: Richard S. Ewell, Class of 1840; James Longstreet, Class of 1842; and Nathaniel R. Chambliss, Class of May 1861. In fact, Ewell sent a letter back with his dues stating, "I cannot think that any graduate of the Academy would, unless blinded by prejudices, decline to aid the work of reuniting . . . a bond broken asunder by civil discord and war." Conversely, Simon Bolivar Buckner, Class of 1844, the first Confederate general to surrender an Army to Union forces, perhaps stinging from so-called "Radical Republicans" attempts to strip ex-rebels of their right to vote and hold office in the First Reconstruction Act (1867), wrote back to the committee saying, "Fraternal fellowship can exist only in the light of an acknowledged equality, [which] is denounced by the legislation of the central government which extends its fostering care to our class of graduates of our Alma Mater and at the same time prescribes the other . . . an acknowledgement of the inequality which renders agreeable social intercourse impossible." Buckner's sentiment becomes an important theme taken up by committee member Charles Davies, Class of 1815, in his address to graduates at the Association's first reunion on June 17, 1870.

Forty-three graduates sat in the pews of the West Point Chapel (now known as the

Old Cadet Chapel) to hear Davies' address. Although no Southern graduates attended that first open meeting (more likely due to the prohibitive cost of travel than to ideological allegiances), Davies used poetic language in his speech to delicately and diplomatically address the issue raised by Buckner, that is the seeming rift between graduates who fought on opposite sides of the U.S. Civil War. "We come together as the scattered members of a household after a long separation—some full of years, some full of honors," said Davies, recalling the metaphor of a "divided house" used by President Abraham Lincoln in a famous 1858 speech. Why would Davies use such language? The answer is reunification. But, digging deeper, it is not just a reunification of graduates from the North and the South; it is a reunification between West Point graduates and the United States of America. Just one sentence prior, Davies said, "We come together under the old flag, dear to every American heart, to recall and contemplate that springtime of life . . ." In this and his future reunion addresses, Davies continually uses a "reunification with the country" theme to tacitly unite graduates from the North and from the South behind a single purpose.

"We meet to revive cherished memories . . . and to renew, together, vows of perpetual allegiance to our country," Davies said in the opening to his 1870 address. As noted by George Pappas in his book *To the Point: The United States Military Academy 1802-1902*, "The defection of southern cadets and graduates, termed treason by many antagonists, was used as a stepping-stone for criticizing West Point in general and its graduates in particular." The Civil War thrust West Point and its graduates, particularly those who defected to fight for the Confederate cause, into the national spotlight, and, as noted by Harry Williams in his article "The Attack Upon West Point During the Civil War," ". . . the [Academy] faced and weathered a series of dangerous attacks designed to destroy its existence."

Those who gathered in those early reunions must have been aware that West Point stood on precarious footing in the years immediately following the Civil War, as well as the distrust felt for Southern graduates. In his address at the Second Annual Reunion on June 17, 1871, Davies' concluding words seem to be as much for the graduates as for a public he felt may still be wary of the future political intentions of West Point alumni "But above all, fellow graduates," Davies said, "let us remember that the nation which sustains and has spread its mantle over this institution, expects from every graduate, at all times, and wheresoever he may be, the full measure of his duty." Then in his last (and longest) address to graduates, commemorating the centennial of the Battle of Bunker Hill (1875), Davies made his most overt gesture to reunification between graduates from the North and South via renewed allegiance to the nation. He began by reminding graduates of the resolution passed at the annual meeting a year earlier to invite graduates from "all sections of the country" to the 1875 reunion. Seven of the Association's 12 former Confederate officer members attended this reunion, the most ever up to that point. "[W]e have come here today, to bury within the circuit of these mountains all recollections which can separate us from each other, or from our common country," Davies said, ". . . and to say to all, for each, and to each for all, that from this auspicious day, all the graduates of this Institution will recognize each other as friends. Henceforth, and forever, we have one flag—one country—one destiny."

Interestingly, before championing the patriotism of West Point graduates, Davies