

Once again, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in recognizing the contributions and achievements of Joan and Robert Rechnitz and congratulating Two River Theater on its 25th Anniversary. The theater enriches the quality of life of Monmouth County and brings new visitors and artistic diversity to the community.

IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL
KOSKOFF, ESQUIRE

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life and deeds of Michael Koskoff, Esquire, a champion for civil and criminal justice who passed away on April 24, 2019. Michael resided in the state of Connecticut, where his law practice achieved the highest level of success for his clients in courtrooms all across America, because his intelligence, creativity, and high ethical and moral standards.

Michael was a unique attorney. His family has been part of the trial bar over multiple generations, but also he was the scion of a family of stage performers. Some were actors, singers and musicians. His father, Theodore, was both his law partner and an accomplished cellist. "We're show people," Michael once explained. He won record settlements in Connecticut negligence and malpractice cases by coupling skills he had acquired in training to be a Shakespearean actor with a lifelong antagonism toward corporate greed. He also pioneered the use of vivid courtroom videos delivered in a documentary format.

For example, in 1979, Mr. Koskoff persuaded a jury in Danbury, CT, to award his client \$1.8 million in a wrongful-death case—Connecticut's first verdict of more than \$1 million in such a suit. In 1999, jurors awarded \$27 million for what he had demonstrated was a bungled heart operation at Yale-New Haven Hospital, which left a 29-year-old man permanently blind and brain-damaged. At the time, it was the biggest personal injury verdict in the state's history. In a medical malpractice case that became the subject of a book, *Damages: One Family's Legal Struggles in the World of Medicine* by Barry Werth, a couple represented by Mr. Koskoff settled for \$6.25 million in the early 1990s nine years after their baby, who had severe cerebral palsy and developmental disabilities, was born at Norwalk Hospital in Connecticut. (The child's twin brother had been stillborn there). In his book, Mr. Werth described Mr. Koskoff's courtroom techniques as "raw theater." "Koskoff liked to depend on his own 'visceral and instinctive reality' of what was happening in a courtroom—was a witness nervous? arrogant? appealing? unappealing?—to decide how best to keep the drama fresh," Mr. Werth wrote. "He also liked to keep the other side's experts off balance by not letting them know what to expect of him. If he met them, he might like them, and that would dull his attack."

Madam Speaker, in addition to his successful practice, Michael had a rich family life. He married Rosalind Jacobs in 1963 and had four children—two daughters, Sarah Koskoff, an actress and screen writer, Juliet Koskoff a law-

yer in New York, and two sons Jacob Koskoff a screenwriter who collaborated with his father on the feature film "Marshall," a rendering of a criminal trial Justice Thurgood Marshall handled as an attorney in 1941. His other son, Joshua, is a partner in Michael's firm who just last month prevailed in a groundbreaking case against the gun manufacturer Remington Arms—a case that was brought by the families of the victims of the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting.

Madam Speaker, Michael Koskoff brought to life the promise of American ideals of fairness and justice for "the little guy." With all of his success though, he never "put on airs" with people he met. He was generous with his time and support for his colleagues in the legal profession, the arts, and political causes devoted to a better community and nation. His presence will be sorely missed by those who had the privilege to know him, including myself. However, it is safe to say his memory will never be forgotten.

I would ask the House to please join me in extending deepest condolences to Michael's wife Rosalind and his family for their loss.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE HONORABLE GORDON HELSEL'S RETIREMENT FROM THE VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of The Honorable Gordon Helsel's retirement from the Virginia House of Delegates. His extensive history as a military serviceman and a public servant exemplify his selflessness and dedication to our great nation.

In 1967, Gordon Helsel was drafted into the United States Army and was deployed to Vietnam as an infantry soldier. Ten months into his tour of duty, Gordon was ambushed by North Vietnamese soldiers and sustained multiple injuries while returning fire on the enemy position. Gordon's injuries would require him to spend five months in recovery and rightfully earned him two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star. Gordon has been a steadfast advocate for veterans and a tireless supporter of our active duty military members and families. The Vietnam veterans' community has benefitted tremendously from Gordon's efforts and advocacy and has an unshakable bond with him and his family.

Since his military service, Gordon has pursued his dream of owning a business, purchasing the York Box and Barrel Manufacturing Company, Inc., which supplies containers for the region's seafood industry. He has helped many a seafood dealer and waterman throughout Tidewater Virginia. Anyone in the seafood processing or harvesting business has come across Gordon and his fantastic products. Consumers of seafood also greatly appreciate the preservation of quality that his products have provided to seafood lovers.

His service would continue at the local level where he served as city council member, Vice Mayor, Mayor, and Chief of Poquoson's Volunteer Fire Company. Gordon would eventually be elected to the House of Delegates in

2011, representing the 91st House District of Virginia. His efforts in serving his community on many levels has placed him as the quintessential servant leader in the eyes of folks through Virginia. His love of his country, Commonwealth and community shines through in everything that he says and does. His community loves Gordon and he loves them back.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognition of Delegate Helsel's retirement from the Virginia General Assembly. Words alone cannot express our gratitude for his lifelong service to not only his community but to his country as well. May God bless Gordon Helsel and his family as he enters his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KATIE PORTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be present for votes on Monday, May 20, 2019 due to a delayed flight. Had I been present, I would have voted "YES" on roll call votes 218 and 219.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Mr. HUIZENGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today regarding missed votes due to my daughter's graduation from High School. Had I been present for roll call vote number 218, on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended H.R. 1952, the Intercountry Adoption Information Act, I would have voted "yea." Had I been present for roll call vote number 219, on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and agree on H. Res. 106, Denouncing female genital mutilation/cutting as a violation of the human rights of women and girls and urging the international community and the Federal Government to increase efforts to eliminate the harmful practice, I would have voted "yea." Had I been present for roll call vote number 220, On Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 389, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1500) Consumers First Act, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1994) Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act, and providing for proceedings during the period from May 24, 2019, through May 31, 2019, and for other purposes, I would have voted "yea." Had I been present for roll call vote number 221, On Agreeing to the Resolution on H. Res. 389, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1500) Consumers First Act, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1994) Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act, and providing for proceedings during the period from May 24, 2019, through May 31, 2019, and for other purposes, I would have voted "nay."