

peaceful means. Mrs. Brandt's efforts to teach a new generation about ways to settle disagreements without fighting are very much needed today.

To advance the cause of peace, Mrs. Brandt, in 1992 initiated a schoolwide peace campaign at W.J. Bryan Elementary. In subsequent years the school sponsored the Annual W.J. Bryan Peace Summit which has become a model for other area schools. Earlier this year, more than 2,000 students and parents participated in a multicultural peace march organized by Mrs. Brandt and the students of W.J. Bryan.

Mrs. Brandt has also coordinated the schoolwide training of all teachers in "Creative Conflict Solving for Kids" and established a Peer Mediation Program.

In 1994 Mrs. Brandt was recognized as Peace Administrator of the Year by the Peace Education Foundation. Under her leadership, W.J. Bryan was named the 1995 Exemplary Peace School by Dade County Public Schools Multicultural Task Force.

Mr. Speaker, I join with all of our community in honoring Nora W. Brandt, educator and peacemaker.

DEDICATION OF THE GENE R. ALEXANDER LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Gene R. Alexander of Benton, IL. For over 30 years he was a devoted teacher and principal, and on April 25 he will be honored for his service when the library at Benton Elementary School is renamed the "Gene R. Alexander Learning Resource Center." I would like to thank "Mr. A," he is fondly referred to, for his relentless promotion of education and his efforts on behalf of the children of Franklin County.

As an educator and administrator I understand the commitment and hard work it takes to make a profound impact on the lives of your students. This task is even harder today, for it seems all school employees are asked to make a case for the benefits of education; students crave entertainment and engagement as much as they desire fundamental knowledge. Mr. A. understood that if he gave enough of himself to the children, they would respond. Even in retirement, he still can be found reading to students, cleaning and painting area schools, spreading the word to say no to drugs, even contributing his own money to purchase school resources. Mr. A has been the difference for many kids between enjoying school and appreciating the value of education instead of just getting by. And, as so often is the case with community leaders, Mr. A's civic participation has not been confined to his chosen profession. He has taught Sunday School at the First Christian Church for 37 years and been an active member and past president of the Benton Kiwanis. His life is a testimonial to selflessness, and we the recipients of his kindness have been truly blessed.

Mr. Speaker, all too often we fail to recognize the contributions that the teachers of our children make to their lives. On this very floor,

we hear about how our education system is letting down our students and how overall standards have decreased. Thankfully, Gene R. Alexander has made sure this is not the case in Benton and the surrounding area. I would again like to thank Mr. A for his tireless efforts on behalf of the children of the 19th District. It is an honor to represent him in the U.S. Congress.

TRIBUTE TO LEO NELSON

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding civic leader of Illinois' 14th Congressional District, Leo Nelson, on his forthcoming receipt of the Elgin Cosmopolitan Club's Annual Distinguished Service Award.

Leo Nelson has served the community of Elgin with great distinction over the years, serving as a member of city government for over a decade and participating in a number of community activities. The list of accomplishments during his long career are many, and there are several States across this Nation that are better for his service there. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, he graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor's degree in political science in 1957. He then served his country for several years in the U.S. Army, retiring and returning to college at Boston University where he received his Master's degree in 1964. He began his professional career as administrative assistant to the city manager of Rock Island, IL in 1964, and followed that position with city management positions in Wyoming, Michigan and Sidney, OH before settling in Elgin, IL, in late 1972.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nelson has been a highly valued member of the Elgin community for nearly 25 years, and his list of civic activities is quite lengthy. He is a former director and current chairman of the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce Board, the president-elect of the United Way of Elgin Board, member of the Elgin Community College Foundation Board and current chairman of the Robotics and High Technology Academy of School District U-46 in Elgin. His past activities have included time as chairman of the Jayne Shover Easter Seal Center, as chairman of the Greater Elgin Area YMCA Corporate Board, and as a member of the Neighborhood Housing Services Board, the Well Child Conference and the Elgin affiliate of the Literacy Volunteers of America.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in honoring this dedicated man, for his commitment to the Elgin community and to improving this Nation. I wish him well as they years's recipient of the Elgin Cosmopolitan Club's Annual Distinguished Service Award, an honor that is richly deserved.

RECOGNITION OF CIVIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF ERVIN HIGGS

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, for the past 60 years in Monroe County, one man has been at the forefront of fighting for the needs of the Florida Keys. Ervin Higgs has taken a leading role in finding solutions to our communities' problems. In recognition of all of his civic achievements, I would like to take this time to outline all that he has done for south Florida.

The Ervin Higgs story began on April 30, 1936 in Key West, Florida. On that day, Ervin Higgs was born into a family of "conchs" who trace their heritage to Spanish Wells in the Bahamas.

In an attempt to contribute his energy to the community, Ervin sought out public service as a profession. He was first appointed by Governor Askew in 1976 as the tax assessor for Monroe County, FL and has served in that position ever since.

When the local government was mandated to adopt a comprehensive plan in compliance with certain state mandates, Ervin was acutely aware of the higher taxes paid under the school funding formula. Even at the early stages, he foresaw that the funding formula could, and probably in the near future, reach a point where local taxpayers would be required to pay more into the state school fund than would be allowed to be expended by the local school board. In order to ensure that all properties were properly reflected on the tax roll when the country adopted the initial comprehensive plan, he realized that the mapping of the environmental features of properties was inadequate. He hired his own consultant and eventually produced maps that were adopted by the county.

Through the years Ervin has been in office, he has defended the equity of the tax roll and even fought in the courts to ensure that everyone paid their fair share. He has cost-effectively modernized the Property Appraiser's Office, passing cost-savings back to the taxpayers.

As he grew older, Ervin developed into one of those endangered species that is currently being threatened in south Florida as a result of an attempt of almost every level of government to influence and control the future of the Florida Keys. As a "conch", he has always been acutely aware of the need to preserve the existing natural beauty of the Florida Keys while at the same time attempting to keep the local economic base viable. For all of his work, I would like to take this time to honor his achievements.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for the final vote on Tuesday, April 16. I would have voted "yes" on roll-call vote 120.