

A TRIBUTE TO HAMPTON BAYS  
VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER JOHN  
C. WOURGOLA

**HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 1997*

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this venerable Chamber to ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in paying tribute to John C. Wourgola, who has devoted 50 years of his life to protecting the lives and property of his family, friends, and neighbors as a volunteer firemen in Hampton Bays, Long Island.

This Saturday, October 4, 1997, John Wourgola will be honored by the commissioners, chiefs, officers, and firefighters of the Hampton Bays Fire Department for his half-century of exemplary service. Since 1946, whenever fire or other peril threatened a member of the Hampton Bays community, John was there to answer the call, whether it came in the dead of night, on blustery days or in the stifling heat of summer. Concerned only with assisting a neighbor or stranger in need, John learned to confront the grave danger he and the other firefighters faced with a caution respect, confident he could trust in this training, his skill, and the abilities of his fellow firefighters.

While the Hampton Bays Fire Department has been truly blessed with many dedicated volunteers, John Wourgola has demonstrated an exceptional level of commitment to his community. In his 50 years as a Hampton Bays firefighter, John has earned the trust and respect of his peers, who have chosen him for numerous leadership positions, including lieutenant and captain. John Wourgola remains an active and vital member of the Hampton Bays Fire Department, answering the call to duty with the same dedication and focus that he brought to volunteer service 50 years ago.

Demonstrating that true heroes are created over a lifetime of selfless acts and service to their God, family, and country, John Wourgola is the perfect model for every volunteer firefighter who will come after him. So I ask my colleagues in this esteemed House to join me in congratulating John for 50 years of service to the Hampton Bays Fire Department.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JIM  
PARDINI

**HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 1997*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jim Pardini for being selected 1997 Fresno County Harvest of Hope Humanitarian of the Year by the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Mr. Pardini exemplifies genuine dedication and service to the community of Fresno, CA.

Jim Pardini is a second generation restaurateur who has worked and managed his family business since 1968. After considerable success in the seventies, Pardini established a catering division in 1981. Pardini Catering soon became one of the largest off-premise catering firms in California. To diver-

sify his services, Pardini opened Pardini's Grill, Lounge and Banquet Room in 1994. This move positioned the Pardini franchise as the premier food service company in California's San Joaquin Valley, capable of accommodating everything from business lunches to weddings.

Currently, Jim Pardini is president and CEO of Pardini's Inc., parent company of all Pardini food service operations. He is also the owner of several Tony Roma restaurants throughout California.

Pardini's accomplishments are not limited to business ventures as he is sincerely committed to the well-being of Fresno, CA. Specifically, Jim Pardini is on the board of directors for Fresno's City and County Convention and Visitors Bureau. This organization advertises the benefits of the city to conferences and tourists. Similarly, Pardini is a board of director for the Saint Agnes Medical Center Foundation. This foundation secures funding for one of the Nation's top 100 hospitals. Finally, he is the former president of the California Restaurant Association, the former president of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce and is a supporter of Fresno's Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I congratulate Jim Pardini, the 1997 Fresno County Harvest of Hope Humanitarian Award recipient. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Jim Pardini every success on his future endeavors.

THE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID  
PROVIDER REVIEW ACT OF 1997:  
IT'S ABOUT TIME

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 1997*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the hot new job in health care: compliance. I refer my colleagues to a September 18 Wall Street Journal article which describes how hospitals and other providers are hiring and promoting professionals to ensure their compliance with laws and regulations. It's about time; \$23 billion per year in Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse reported by the HHS inspector general is proof positive that we need to take compliance more seriously.

Together with Mr. DELLUMS and Mr. MILLER of California, I have introduced legislation that would require certain health care providers to fund independent, Federal compliance and financial audits as a condition of participation in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. If providers are willing to foot the bill to fly-in compliance consultants from high profile firms like Coopers & Lybrand, they can surely afford Government audits. The last thing we need is for providers to only retain private sector professionals who can show them how to be sneakier. We've already given the health care industry the benefit of the doubt far too long.

The administration also recognizes that audits are needed to ensure financial and regulatory compliance. Health and Human Services [HHS] Secretary Donna Shalala recently announced that home health agencies will have to submit an independent audit of their records and practices every 3 years to receive Medicare funds. In addition, HHS will double

the number of home health agency audits it conducts from 900 to 1,800 per year.

While home health agencies may be the system's most blatant abusers, they are by no means the only ones worthy of our best efforts to fight fraud. My bill would require audits of hospitals, nursing facilities, hospices, clinical laboratories, and ambulance companies in addition to home health agencies. Yet HHS doesn't have the funding to audit all categories of providers that have abusive track records. Even if it did, taxpayers shouldn't have to foot the bill. The sum of \$23 billion says it's time to make Federal audits a cost of doing business with the Nation's largest health care payer, the Federal Government.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 18, 1997]

HOT NEW JOB IN HEALTH CARE: IN-HOUSE COP  
(By George Anders)

The hottest new job category in health care doesn't require a medical license or a nursing degree. It's compliance officer, a job borrowed from the defense industry and other businesses under fire from regulators.

Now hospitals and medical schools across the country are rushing to hire their own in-house cops, hoping they'll keep them from running afoul of the government's widening crackdown on health-care fraud—or help minimize penalties when infractions are found.

Consultants estimate that only 5% of the nation's 5,400 hospitals and medical schools have comprehensive compliance departments now. But they suggest the total could double in the next year.

Securities firms in the late 1980s shored up their compliance departments in hopes of averting insider-trading scandals. Defense contractors, thrift institutions and companies worried about pollution regulations have all taken similar steps in the face of greater government scrutiny.

The health-care compliance movement got a boost Monday when President Clinton announced wide-ranging initiatives to combat fraud in home health care. Many hospitals operate home-health units that have been financially lucrative.

Before the President's speech, hospitals had already been galvanized by the government's massive investigation of Columbia/HCF A Healthcare Corp. This year, in which federal agents with search warrants have swooped into dozens of Columbia-owned hospitals. People familiar with the investigation say the government is looking into a wide range of potential billing abuses. Columbia has said it isn't aware of any systemic wrongdoing.

"I've gotten a lot more respect since the Columbia situation hit the media," says Elizabeth Ryan, a compliance consultant who until recently was head of compliance at Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlington, Texas. "A year or two ago, when I called on people within the hospital, they said: 'What's this all about?' But once they've seen pictures of FBI agents carting away boxes of documents at Columbia, their attitude is: 'Fine. No problem. Come talk to us about whatever you want.'"

In Nashville, Tenn., Columbia itself wants to expand its roster of top executives to include a senior vice president, compliance. Until recently, a mid-level aide to the general counsel was in charge of Columbia's compliance program.

But as Columbia spokesman Jeff Prescott puts it: "Compliance issues are, and will continue to be, very important for our company." The best way to underscore that message to employees, he says, is to make compliance a much more prominent part of Columbia's management structure.