

quest for elected office. He was among the first to encourage Kenneth A. Gibson, Newark's first African American Mayor, to actively seek political office. And, of course, I am another of his proteges. Since taking the oath of office this year in January, Assemblyman Payne has energized the New Jersey Legislative Black and Latino Caucus.

I would like to bring my colleagues attention to two pieces of legislation Assemblyman Payne has introduced—a bill establishing a 21-member Amistad Commission to develop education and public awareness programs about the history of slavery in America and the post-slavery triumphs of African Americans.

He has also introduced a bill that would require all the New Jersey's school districts to have a program that links troubled children with volunteers who promise to spend at least one hour a week with them for at least one year. Prior to his election, Assemblyman Payne has actively recruited hundreds of mentors to work with some of our troubled youth. These mentors occupations ranged from doctors and lawyers to retirees and laborers—people who knew the importance of being a caring adult in the lives of sometimes confused and troubled youngsters. Assemblyman Payne was himself a mentor to a young man who was destined to get into trouble. Today, Rahjan Williams, the mentee, is looking forward to attending college to become an accountant.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues will join me as I extend congratulations and best wishes to my only brother of whom I am extremely proud. And I wish to thank those who are honoring him, especially his son-in-law Wilfredo Benitez, an up and coming young attorney with the host law firm

“KUDZU” CONCLUDES
SUCCESSFUL WASHINGTON RUN

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 1998

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the artistic merit and creative talents of North Carolinians Doug Marlette, Jack Herrick, and Bland Simpson, creators of “Kudzu: A Southern Musical.” This musical production has been playing at the Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC for almost sixteen weeks, has received glowing reviews from the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and other publications, and has lifted the spirits of thousands who have been privileged, as I was last week, to see the show.

The musical is based on the syndicated comic strip “Kudzu,” illustrated by Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Doug Marlette. The Red Clay Ramblers, a talented and versatile musical group from Chapel Hill, are featured along with an excellent cast. The production explores life in a small Southern town called Bypass and focuses on the life, loves, and mishaps of a character named Kudzu (which is also the name of the incredible vine that has engulfed half the town but hides wondrous treasures beneath).

Having grown up in a small Southern town myself, I could easily identify with their portrayal of the South and instantly recognize many of the characters! However, you do not

have to be Southern, or even follow the antics of Kudzu, Rev. Will B. Dunn, and the other Bypass regulars in the comics, to enjoy this family show. Doug Marlette, Jack Herrick and Bland Simpson wrote a clever and entertaining script and incorporated great bluegrass and Dixieland music to make this production enjoyable for all audiences. It's as funny as can be, but it also tugs at the heartstrings and reminds us of the things that matter most in life.

I commend this North Carolina trio, the cast of “Kudzu,” and director Lisa Portes for their tremendous work in making this production such a success. They tell a great story and I am proud that they call North Carolina home.

HONORING TERRI THOMSON

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 1998

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Terri Thomson, on her swearing in as the Queens member of the New York City Board of Education. She is a dynamic and energetic individual, who will work tirelessly on behalf of the thousands of students in the New York City Public School System. Terri began working as a staff assistant in my Queens office when I served in the New York State Senate. I quickly became impressed with her work ethic, and her political savvy. Shortly after being elected to Congress in 1983, I promoted her to be my district administrator where she served with the utmost integrity and compassion until 1990. In this capacity, she made a difference in the lives of thousands of my constituents. Aside from being an invaluable political ally, she became the dearest of friends both to me and to my family.

After leaving my office, she was hired by Citibank as the Director of Community Relations and was eventually promoted to be the Vice President of City and State Governmental Relations. At Citibank she helped school principals with professional training and worked to integrate new technology into the public school system. Moreover, she was able to introduce students to the Internet and demonstrated its application to commercial banking.

Throughout her career, Terri has been deeply involved in the community. She also serves as the Vice Chair of the Brooklyn Sports Foundation, which seeks to create an indoor sports facility for the New York City Public School System. Terri has also been involved with the Queens Chamber of Commerce and the Queens Public Library where she sought to improve both economic and educational opportunities for the entire community.

Terri's commitment to the community, her understanding of the issues, and her public and private sector experience make her uniquely qualified for a position on the New York City Board of Education. I am fully confident that she will be thoroughly equipped to grapple with the enormous complexities of the New York City Public School System. Thus, I ask all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring this extraordinary individual whose dedication to the community will continue to make a significant

difference in the lives of thousands of New Yorkers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 1998

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday and Friday, June 18 and 19, due to my son's graduation, I missed roll call votes 245 and 251. Had I been present I would have voted as follows:

On roll call vote number 245, on establishing the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns With the People's Republic of China, yea.

On roll call vote number 246, on ordering the previous question on the resolution establishing the rule for further consideration of H.R. 2183, yea.

On roll call vote number 247, on agreeing to the resolution establishing the rule for further consideration of H.R. 2183, yea.

On roll call vote number 248, on agreeing to the resolution establishing an open rule for consideration of H.R. 4059, the military construction appropriations bill, yea.

On roll call vote number 249, on agreeing to the Thomas amendment to the Shays substitute to H.R. 2183, the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, yea.

On roll call vote number 250, on agreeing to the Maloney amendment to the Shays substitute to H.R. 2183, the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, yea.

On roll call vote number 251, on agreeing to the Gillmor amendment to the Shays substitute to H.R. 2183, the Bipartisan Campaign Integrity Act, yea.

U.S. IMMIGRATION COURT

HON. BILL MCCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 22, 1998

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to establish a new United States Immigration Court. The title of the bill is the “United States Immigration Court Act of 1998.” This bill would remove the immigration adjudication functions from the Justice Department and invest them in a new Article I court. The court would be composed of a trial division and an appellate division whose decisions would be appealable to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

The system for adjudicating immigration matters has matured tremendously over the last 15 years. Special inquiry judges have become true immigration judges. The Board of Immigration Appeals has been greatly expanded, and the whole Executive Office for Immigration Review has been separated from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Yet much of this system, including the Board of Immigration Appeals, does not exist in statute. And while separated from the INS, aliens still take their cases before judges who are employed by the same department as the trial attorneys who are prosecuting them.

It is time to take the next logical step and create a comprehensive adjudicatory system