

ST. LUKE BAPTIST CHURCH
CELEBRATES 120 YEARS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 120th anniversary of the establishment of Saint Luke Baptist Church. I am pleased to enter into the RECORD the church's inspiring history.

Saint Luke Baptist Church was organized at Fort Totten, District of Columbia on March 23, 1879. It evolved from a series of religious meetings, held over a two year period in the home of Brother Solomon Kemp. Other original members were Brothers George Brooks, James Clark, Walker Clark, Frank Grinage, Sydney Walker, Anthony Walker, and Sister Lucy Jenkins. Reverend Shelton Miller was the spiritual leader of the group and became the first pastor. The group continued to worship in the home of Brother Kemp until the increase in membership made those quarters inadequate. The first church was erected at Shepherd Road and Magnolia Avenue, NW. As the membership continued to grow, it became necessary to move again. The new church was located at Shepherd Road and Georgia Avenue and thrived there for thirty-six years when the site was purchased to create what is now known as Missouri Avenue. In 1928 a new edifice was erected at Fourteenth and Peabody Streets NW. It is worthy of note that the three churches were built within a one mile radius and were constructed by Reverend Shelton Miller, church members, and friends. Saint Luke was a beacon of light in the Brightwood area and obtained its Charter of Incorporation on January 15, 1898.

Saint Luke Baptist Church thrived under the inspired leadership of Reverend Shelton Miller (1879–1931), Reverend Arthur Chichester (1931–48), and Reverend John Lucas (1948–72). Saint Luke's anointed and dynamic pastoral ministries now flourish under the Reverend Aubrey C. Lewis (1974–present).

Church outreach programs are diverse and include all age groups. The Bible study program has evolved into the Saint Luke Bible Institute, the Senior Adult Ministry (SAM) provides entertaining cultural and spiritual activities for retired and senior members, church retreats provide opportunities for study and reflection, and the day care center is a source of employment for church members and community residents as well as a source of revenue for the church. The Youth and Young Adult Ministry (Y.Y.A.M.) provides Christian programs for the church's youngest age groups. In 1998, the outreach program expanded to a new level with the initiation of a Cable Television Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the many sacrifices, freely made, required to write each chapter of Saint Luke's rich history and to celebrate a spiritual and civic anchor in the Brightwood community.

SENIOR CITIZEN PROPERTY TAX
REDUCTION VOUCHERS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation along with several of my colleagues in the Massachusetts Delegation to alter the federal tax treatment of real property tax reduction vouchers received by senior citizens for volunteer work.

Several towns in Massachusetts have tried to ease the problem senior citizens who live on fixed incomes face due to rising property taxes. These towns have allowed senior citizens to perform volunteer work for the town in exchange for a voucher that reduces their property taxes by up to \$500. Seniors have volunteered in libraries, recreational centers, parks and senior centers in exchange for these vouchers.

The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a bill last year to exempt these vouchers from income for purposes of the State income tax. While the State Senate did not take up the bill last year, I am informed that this issue will be brought up again in the State Legislature this year.

The legislation I am introducing would exclude from gross income vouchers issued by a government unit and received by senior citizens in exchange for volunteer work. The voucher could only offset real property taxes imposed by the government unit that issued the voucher, and no real property tax deduction would be allowed to the extent of the amount excluded from gross income by the voucher. The legislation also exempts these vouchers from employment taxes, and senior citizens who are at least 65 are eligible.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation enhances an important and creative program being implemented in many towns in Massachusetts. I very much hope we can address this issue this year, and encourage other towns in Massachusetts and across the country to ease the financial plight of many of our senior citizens.

COMMEMORATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RETIRED SUPREME COURT JUSTICE BLACKMUN

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened by the passing of Retired Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun. Justice Blackmun lived a productive life of 90 years and was a well-respected legal mind. An Illinoisan by birth, Blackmun was raised in St. Paul's East Side—my lifelong home which I am today honored to represent. Before his 24 years of service on the nation's highest court, Blackmun practiced law in the Twin Cities for nearly 20 years.

As Blackmun himself always said, he will be remembered most for his controversial author-

ship of the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. Despite the philosophical, moral and theological retribution that he experienced for his decision, Justice Blackmun believed, "The right of privacy * * * is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." Blackmun had the strength of his convictions and the courage and integrity to pursue and implement such judgment.

Justice Blackmun was a man of constant adaption and change, adjusting to the times gracefully. During his early days on the court, he was considered among its most conservative and he was referred to as "The Minnesota Twin" of fellow East Sider and kindergarten classmate, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, for their identical voting patterns. By the end of his first decade on the court, however, Blackmun's independent streak became apparent and he was ironically considered among the court's most liberal. Justice Blackmun wrote for the court when it ruled that Congress has the power to enforce local compliance with federal laws requiring overtime pay for more than 40-hour work weeks and became the lone dissenter advocating for the rights of Haitians to have hearings before being forced to return to their homeland. As a Member of Congress, most of our efforts and utterances are seldom put to work, but it was a real honor to have Justice Blackmun employ my comments in an objecting dissent brief to the severance tax policy.

In the twilight of his life, at the age of 88, the retired Justice even tried his hand at acting, playing a cameo role as a supreme court justice in Steven Spielberg's "Amistad." It was a natural role for this great American jurist.

Justice Blackmun's spirit will live on through his contributions to society. He leaves a wonderful legacy. Blackmun is survived by his wife, Dorothy, and three daughters. My sympathy and best wishes to them.

RIFFENBURGH ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay humble tribute to the students, teachers, and parents of Riffenburgh Elementary School in Colorado for their efforts to help a family in need during the holidays. Sadly, a local family's home was destroyed by fire. I commend the faculty of the school as well as all the students, parents, and individuals who contributed to their special efforts. Their selfless dedication has provided warmth, comfort, and happiness to the Lund family in light of this recent tragedy, and to other families less fortunate than most. That the school produced so much for these needy families is testament to the true meaning of the spirit of Christmas and Hanukkah. Let us remember, as these good people have, that the holiday season is one of giving, one of joy, and one of hope. Let the children's example during the holidays be a beacon to us all throughout the year.