

remarkable woman who has dedicated the better part of her life to an admirable career in public service. For over a half century, Florence Chandler has worked tirelessly for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During that time she continuously reinforced the notion that government and politics can be a noble endeavor. On the occasion of her retirement, I want to express my own personal congratulations and thanks on a job well done.

Like many patriotic American women during World War II, best characterized by the defiant Rosie the Riveter, Florence Chandler's slogan has always been "We Can Do It!" From the Town Hall to the White House, Florence brought her trademark energy and enthusiasm to every challenge. She was a strong, resilient, and sometimes singular voice for the people of Southbridge. For nearly a decade, I watched her place the town's best interests before her own. She would lobby local, state and national officials for what she believed in. And she always earned respect and admiration along the way.

A new police station, daycare center and water treatment facility are part of the legacy she will leave behind. A stabilized tax rate and major school renovations have also been achieved during her tenure. But her finest hour was bringing the Department of Defense training facility to Southbridge. It is her signature accomplishment. Quite simply, without the charismatic leadership of Florence Chandler that exciting project and those new jobs would not be in this community.

A town manager, an attorney, a friend, a sibling and a grandmother, Florence has been a success in life on many different levels. She is the rare individual who succeeded at bringing the town of Southbridge to the attention of the President of the United States. For those who say it can't be done, I would recommend spending a day with Saugus native Florence Chandler. Like Rosie the Riveter, she has shown that anything is possible.

IN HONOR OF SISTER HARRIET HAMILTON, RECIPIENT OF THE UNITED WAY'S CONGRESSWOMAN MARY T. NORTON MEMORIAL AWARD

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sister Harriet Hamilton for winning the United Way's Congresswoman Mary T. Norton Memorial Award.

Initiated by the United Way of Hudson County in 1990, this award recognizes individuals who exhibit a deep commitment to community service as exemplified by Congresswoman Mary T. Norton during her 13 terms in the House of Representatives (1925–1950). A leader who championed thinking outside of the box, Congresswoman Norton advocated government action in areas, such as day care, fair employment practices, health care for veterans, and the inclusion of women in high levels of government service.

Sister Harriet, a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and one of this year's award recipients, began her career serving Hudson County under the auspices of Catholic Com-

munity Services, providing counseling and support services to pregnant teens and their families. For the last 12 years, Sister Harriet has dedicated full-time service to the needs of multi-handicapped blind children at St. Joseph's School for the Blind.

In addition, Sister Harriet is the executive director of the York Street Project in Jersey City, New Jersey. A nonprofit social service organization, the York Street Project provides transitional housing, education, child care, and counseling to the homeless and economically-disadvantaged women and children of Hudson County. From the Project's planning years in the early 1980's Sister Harriet's commitment, leadership, and faith have helped bring about positive change in the lives of hundreds of area residents.

Sister Harriet was also proactive in the establishment of Kenmare High School, an alternative school offering a second chance for young women forced to drop out of high school, and founded The Nurturing Place, an Early Childhood Development Center for homeless and at-risk children.

Born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, Sister Harriet is a well deserving recipient of the United Way's Congresswoman Mary T. Norton Memorial Award. For the past 36 years, she has dedicated her life to compassionate service for others. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Sister Harriet for all of her outstanding service to the community and for carrying on the work of Congresswoman Mary T. Norton.

FRIEDMAN BAG COMPANY CELEBRATES OVER 70 YEARS OF OPERATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Friedman Bag Company for over 70 years of continuous operation in my congressional district and to highlight its leadership as a responsible corporate citizen.

In 1927, four Russian immigrant brothers started a small bag manufacturing company in the heart of Los Angeles. Sam, Saul, Harry and Morris Friedman fled Imperial Russia with their family in search of freedom, settling temporarily in Mexico until they were granted permission to enter the United States. Over the years, Friedman Bag Company grew almost as quickly as the city around it.

In many ways, the founding and growth of Friedman Bag Company personifies our nation's immigrant experience. The company was born from an immigrant family's dream to provide their children with a better life. The Friedmans succeeded, eventually becoming one of the largest suppliers of textile and polyethylene bags in the West. Their bags were primarily used for agriculture products such as Idaho potatoes, walnuts and other crops such as carrots and lettuce from the Central Valley of California.

But like many manufacturing companies in the United States, fierce competition from lower cost producers, in countries like China, eventually threatened the survival of Friedman Bag Company. To endure, the company needed to change and adapt to the new economy,

and the successful effort was led by two sons of the founding members.

Friedman Bag Company desperately needed to invest money in new equipment. Company workers were still sewing burlap and mesh bags by hand. Morale and sales were suffering. Having never taken on debt financing in its history, the company embarked on a somewhat radical and risky venture to make sure it could remain competitive. Working with a financial institution that recognized its special history as a family business, and overcoming internal and external challenges, Friedman Bag Company secured the resources to continue its operations in the 33rd Congressional District.

Friedman Bag Company also worked with the Mayor and City Council to consolidate operations, ultimately bringing more jobs to Los Angeles.

Today, Friedman Bag Company employs more than 250 people, with operations in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. The company's morale has soared as its future prospects have brightened. Friedman Bag Company is now firmly positioned so a third generation of the Friedman family can continue the dream started by their family's ancestors.

I am proud of Friedman Bag Company's long tenure in southeast Los Angeles. Their efforts to modernize and adapt to an ever-changing economy in order to stay competitive are to be commended. Many men and women in my congressional district have worked at Friedman Bag Company, supporting their families and contributing to our community. I congratulate Friedman Bag Company for over 70 years of success which has epitomized the contributions to America made by our immigrant community, and I wish them many more years of successful operation to come.

COMMEMORATING ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, we commemorate modern Armenia's eighth independence day—counted since the collapse of the U.S.S.R. This independence is a long overdue recognition by the world community of a proud and ancient people. Since independence, Armenia continued to face numerous challenges—from the economic and political blockade orchestrated by Azerbaijan and Turkey, to the war with Azerbaijan, to the lingering socioeconomic legacy of the horrendous earthquake of 1988. Nevertheless, Armenia has overcome these existential threats, establishing itself as a functioning democracy, and can now feel sufficiently secure to look forward to charting and determining its own progress into the next millennium.

As a young modern nation for an ancient people, Armenia should rely on its rich heritage for inspiration and guidance. Since the dawn of history, Armenians have held to their land despite repeated occupations, oppression and slaughter. They have retained their distinct heritage, language, culture and Church. All this time, Armenians have not only yearned for independence or self-determination but have repeatedly paid a heavy price in numerous attempts to realize these aspirations.