

it was Dee Rowe '47 who seemed to capture the essence of Tom Blackburn: "I will always be grateful to Tom for distinguished service to Worcester Academy. He is an outstanding educator and a man of great honor and integrity."

As part of the celebration, a banner was hoisted commemorating Blackburn's coaching record at the Academy. It is a lofty record indeed. In addition to being the basketball coach with the most wins in the Academy's history (he has been at the helm for 395 of the 895 wins Worcester Academy has posted since 1917), coach Blackburn's team have also made impressive showings in the New England Class A Tournament Championships. Twenty-four of his twenty-six squads qualified for post-season play with eleven reaching the finals and seven earning championships. That's one championship team for every three-and-a-half years of coaching.

Tom Blackburn has also nurtured some great players over his quarter-century career. Former Boston Celtic player and current Indiana Pacers Assistant Coach Rick Carlisle '79, ex-LA Clipper Jeff Cross '80 and University of Maryland Center Obinna Ekezie '95 [as of fall '99, now of the NBA's Vancouver Grizzlies] come immediately to mind.

Morgan "Mo" Cassara '93, Tom's successor as basketball coach, commented, "My post-graduate year at WA was the greatest experience of my life athletically. Tom's discipline and style of coaching inspired me to become a coach too."

In 1995 Tom Blackburn was inducted into the Academy's Hall of Fame, evidence of his long-term impact and positive influence on its students and on the Academy as a whole.

Headmaster Dexter Morse reflected that, "Tom has been more than just a head coach and athletic director. He has been a wonderful representative of our school both in the Worcester community and in the greater independent school arena. He will always be known for his strong character, his dedication to teaching and his love for his family and his school. He is without question an inspiration to us all."

TRIBUTE TO RETIRED NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR RICHARD P. AUGULIS

**HON. KAREN MCCARTHY**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 16, 1999*

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Richard P. Augulis on the occasion of his retirement as Director of the National Weather Service Central Region headquartered in my Congressional District.

A 35-year employee of the National Weather Service, part of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Mr. Augulis has always held public safety as the first priority in his career, whether as a forecaster or as an office and regional manager. He recently retired after 12 years as Director of the 14-state Central Region and is currently enjoying his retirement in Las Vegas, where he relocated to be near his family.

Mr. Augulis joined the National Weather Service in August 1961 as a Weather Bureau Student Trainee at WBAS Midway Airport in

Chicago while attending St. Louis University. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Meteorology in 1963 and added a Masters Degree in 1967. His distinguished career included a variety of forecasting and management positions with the National Weather Service in Salt Lake City, Utah; to Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska; Garden City, New York; and finally, to Kansas City.

As meteorologist in charge of the new Fairbanks Weather Forecast Office beginning in 1974, Mr. Augulis presided over a staff that operated service programs during the exciting and challenging times of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline construction.

Mr. Augulis' leadership was invaluable to employees during the mid 1970s transition from teletype machines to computers as the Automation of Field Operations (AFOS) communications network was implemented by the National Weather Service.

Mr. Augulis' last decade with the National Weather Service included the largest modernization and reorganization ever undertaken by the agency. He helped guide his Region through the introduction and implementation of state-of-the-art Doppler radar, computer-enhanced weather modeling and forecasting, and restructuring from more than 300 offices of varying sizes and capabilities to an efficient network of 123 Twenty-First Century Weather Forecast Offices across the United States.

Mr. Augulis served proudly as an employee and a manager of the National Weather Service. He is a distinguished executive branch employee whose accomplishments reflect credit on himself, the National Weather Service, and the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, on this occasion, please join with me, his family, friends, and colleagues as we honor Richard P. Augulis on his retirement from the National Weather Service and on his outstanding contributions to our region.

A TRIBUTE TO AN AMERICAN VETERAN—MR. JESSE CONTRERAS

**HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 16, 1999*

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, last week on the last Veterans Day of this century, President Clinton recalled the honor, duty and sacrifice of those soldiers, sailors and airmen who did not make it back home to America. He articulated a point that is worth quoting, for it poignantly captures a notion that is often not realized.

President Clinton's impassioned address stated that:

[T]he young men and women who have died in defense of our country gave up not only the life they were living, but also the life they would have lived—their chance to be parents; their chance to grow old with their grandchildren. Too often when we speak of sacrifice, we speak in generalities about the larger sweep of history, and the sum total of our nation's experience. But it is very important to remember that every single veteran's life we honor today was just that—a life—just like yours and mine. A life with family and friends, and love and hopes and dreams, and ups and downs; a life that should have been able to play its full course.

Taking the President's words to heart and remembering our fallen heroes, I would like to

describe the life of a very special man who bravely fought for this nation, was wounded in combat, survived the ardors of war, and came home to live a long life as a husband, a father, and a grandfather.

Private, First Class (PFC) Jesse Contreras, a California native, was drafted into the United States Army as an infantryman during the Second World War. As a Mexican-American during the 1940s, he may not have been completely accepted by his country and may have been seen by some as a second-class citizen. Jesse Contreras held no grudges, however, and when his country called upon him to defend the very freedoms and rights that may not have been fully extended to him or his family, Jesse did not hesitate. After basic training, PFC Contreras was bound for Europe as part of the 104th Timberwolf Infantry Division, 413th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Battalion, Company "I", under the brilliant command of Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen, himself an Hispanic-American.

The Timberwolves entered the war in the Autumn of 1944 and had quickly become legendary for the ferocious fighting that took place and because the men quickly proved themselves as agile combatants against the deeply entrenched and veteran units of the German Wehrmacht in France. The Division was engaged in sustained combat for approximately 195 days across Northern France towards the German frontier. The Allies were methodically driving the German forces from France. It would be only a matter of time before the Allies would be fighting on German soil on the way to Berlin. As the vice closed in on Germany, Hitler and the German General Staff planned for one last offensive against the Allies.

The strong German offensive, launched the morning of December 16, 1944 became known as the "Ardennes Offensive" or "Battle of the Bulge" and the 104th was directed to prepare an all-out defense of its sector. This delayed the planned crossing of the Roer river until 3:30 a.m., February 23, 1945 when the major offensive action to reach Cologne was begun. The Rhine was reached on March 7, 1945 whereupon Time Magazine reported, "The Germans fought for the Roer River, between Aachen and Cologne, as if it were the Meuse, the Marne, and the Somme of the last war all rolled into one." It was in this final German offensive that PFC Contreras's story comes to light.

The 104th Division had been engaged in fierce combat from the Roer River to the Rhine in an attempt to repulse the German onslaught. During one particularly fierce fire fight, PFC Contreras was wounded from a German grenade. The wound was not too serious to prevent PFC Contreras from continuing to fight but he quickly found that Company "I" had become overrun by the Germans. Captured, he and his fellow Timberwolves found themselves face to face with the treacherous Nazi soldiers.

The head German officer ordered that all the Americans line up. The Nazi officer, who spoke English but with a thick German accent, went down the line of his American prisoners one by one to demand information from them. With submachine guns pointed at the men of Company "I", the German officer who held a lead pipe in hand began barking orders and interrogating his captors.

PFC Contreras as a Mexican-American spoke both English and Spanish but since