

Moorpark; twin brother Russell Vail and sister Margaret Vail Woolley, and their families of Pasadena.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Alexander "Al" Lennox Vail for his dedication to the well-being of the animals and the land. Vail will be remembered by his family members and those who knew him for his integrity, honesty, and hard work. I urge my colleagues to join me in extending my condolences to the Vail family.

RECOGNIZING THE NCAA DIVISION II NATIONAL CHAMPION METRO STATE ROADRUNNERS

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the NCAA Division II National Basketball Champion Metro State Roadrunners from Denver, Colorado. The Roadrunners capped off a remarkable season with a stunning victory over Kentucky Wesleyan, last year's NCAA Division II champions, by a score of 97-79 on March 25, 2000. Metro State finished the season with a 33-4 record and bring home to Denver the State of Colorado's first NCAA national basketball championship trophy ever.

Metro State placed four players on the NCAA Elite Eight All-Tournament Team, including Most Valuable Player DeMarcos Anzures, John Bynum, Lee Barlow and Kane Oakley. It marked the first time four players from one team made the all-tournament team. In addition, Anzures, a senior who previously played for Denver's Skyview High School, was named a first team All-American and Coach Mike Dunlap was named National Coach-of-the-Year by the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

The Roadrunners finished a tremendous three-year run that includes a 86-15 record, three Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference championships and two North Central Regional titles. Although Metro State began this year with two straight losses, the Roadrunners rebounded by winning 33 of their next 35 games and doing so in a rather dominating fashion. In fact, Metro State led the nation in scoring margin by outscoring opponents by an average of 19.1 points a game, including their 18-point victory in the NCAA title game.

Members of the 1999-2000 Metro State Roadrunners include: Anzures, Bynum, Barlow, Dunlap, Michael Alcock, Rashawn Fulcher, Shane Ah Matt, Todd Gower, Jason Johnson, Patrick Mutombo, Clayton Smith, Chris Ford and Jody Hollins.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting these fine young men and Coach Dunlap for their outstanding achievement and stellar performance throughout this entire season. Congratulations to everybody associated with Metro State for bringing home this impressive championship—a victory of which all of the people of Denver and the State of Colorado can be very proud.

A LIFE REMEMBERED, A COMMUNITY CHANGED

HON. STEVEN C. LaTOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, today I offer my deepest sympathies to the family of Walter A. Olson of Jefferson, Ohio.

On Saturday, March 25 at about 6:30 a.m., Walter A. Olson was gunned down just 20 feet from his own front door in a random act of violence that has shocked this small, tight-knit community to its core.

Mr. Olson, a husband, father of six, and grandfather of three, was innocently going about his morning routine on Saturday—a walk to a nearby cemetery where his mother and brother were buried. It was during this peaceful walk that Walter Olson crossed paths with a troubled, 22-year-old neighbor toting a 12-gauge, pump-action shotgun. The black trenchcoat the young man wore was bursting with ammunition and concealed a second gun. The gunman, apparently hellbent on killing anyone in his path, spotted Walter Olson and shot him dead. He then continued walking down Center Street, reloading his shotgun as if nothing had happened.

This tragic, senseless act could have led to much greater carnage had it not been for the Jefferson Police and Ashtabula County Sheriff's Department, which were quick to respond to neighbors' 9-1-1 calls. A gun battle ensued, and the gunman apparently refused to lay down his arms even after he'd been felled by officers' shots. A police dog, Cero—credited with saving the lives of other officers—dies in the line of duty after being shot by the gunman. Police struggle to find a motive for this unprovoked rage.

Mr. Speaker, all too often we hear stories of disturbed, armed people walking into schools, daycare centers, restaurants and other public settings and opening fire indiscriminately on innocent people who have the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. We watch the wrenching reports on the evening news with horror, and our hearts and prayers go out to the families. We hug our own children a little harder, and reassure ourselves that horrors like this will never befall our own community. All that changed on Saturday in the small town of Jefferson, Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, Jefferson, Ohio, is reeling in grief from the death of Walter Olson and the death of innocence of their community. The family and friends of Walter Olson have always known of his kindness, and strangers who never met him have been moved by the exemplary, humble life this religious, family man led.

Walter Olson was an Ashtabula County native, a former auxiliary police officer in Jefferson, and a member of the Jefferson Exchange Club and the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce. He'd worked for many years as a petroleum manager for Country Mark, Inc., and was working as a U.S. Census recruiter and field surveyor for Research Triangle Institute in Winston-Salem, NC, at the time of his death. He was a member of St. Joseph Calasanctius Church in Jefferson, where a memorial service was held this morning. He leaves behind his wife, Mary, the manager of the local Hardee's; his children Cindy, Isaac, Randy, Angel,

Robin, and Timothy; and his grandchildren Alyssa, Lillian and Warren. Walter Olson was just 51 years old.

Remarkably, Mary Olson holds no animosity toward the neighbor who shot and killed her husband, saying she "hates that there's a child out there who needed help; that he was so sad that he felt he had to do something like this." Her words speak volumes about the power of forgiveness and the goodness of the human heart.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 19th District of Ohio, I extend prayers and condolences to the Olson family and the community of Jefferson. I have requested that a United States flag be flown over the Capitol in Walter Olson's memory.

Walter Olson's time on Earth was not nearly long enough, but we can all take comfort knowing that he lived his life fully, that he loved and was dearly loved, and that he showered others with kindness. I urge the wonderful people of Jefferson to continue to reach out to each other in this time of grief and sorrow, and to realize that it will take time for this family and this community to heal. May God bless the family of Walter Olson, the community of Jefferson, Ohio, and the United States of America.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MRS. RITA M. LEONE

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a classmate and good friend of mine at Cardinal Mooney High School, Mrs. Rita M. Leone. Her untimely death after a battle with leukemia deeply saddens me.

Rita was born on May 22, 1943 in Youngstown, Ohio to Michael and Maryann Sebest Check. She graduated from Cardinal Mooney and had been office manager and bookkeeper for the Stillson Donahay Agency for 20 years.

Rita was an active member of the Holy Family Church in Youngstown. She participated in the Altar Guild and was an integral member of Renewal Team Number 8. In addition, she served the church as a Eucharistic minister. She was also active in the Ladies Slovak Union Jednota and the Joliettes bowling team.

I want to send my sincerest condolences to her husband of 38 years, Victor Leone of Youngstown, and their lovely daughter Lisa Leone of Lakewood, Ohio. Rita was a beautiful person and I feel blessed to have been able to call her my friend.

HONORING REVEREND KARL VARTAN AVAKIAN

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Karl Vartan Avakian on his 20th Anniversary of Ordination and his 35th year of pastoral ministry. Reverend Avakian serves as the Minister to the Union of