

books and sewing quilts that would be attractive to children. Through "Project Books and Blankies", she donates blankets, along with a basket of books, to children's educational programs in her area. Robyn also reads aloud to children once a week, in an effort to show them the importance of books.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we recognize and support the kind of selfless contribution this young citizen has made. People of all ages need to think more about how we can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Miss Strumpf are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought this young role model to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created in 1995 by The Prudential Insurance Company of America in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principles. It aims to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued and to inspire other young people to follow their example. In only five years, the program has become the nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, with nearly 75,000 youngsters participating since its inception.

Miss Strumpf should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. I heartily applaud Miss Strumpf for her initiative in seeking to make her community a better place to live and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL "DOC"  
DUNPHY

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 9, 2000*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a brave American veteran, Michael A. Dunphy, Jr., of Greenville, NY, who was awarded the Bronze Star this past February 4th at a West Point ceremony.

Moreover, I am honored to attend a ceremony on June 17th, 2000, at the Greenville Town Hall in Greenville, NY, in which the people of New York will be able to express their appreciation for the contributions of "Doc" Dunphy.

On February 4th, 1969, Michael "Doc" Dunphy was a 20 year-old Private First Class serving as a combat medic with 3rd Platoon of C Company in the rice paddies of Vietnam. That day his platoon was ambushed and when he heard the calls for medical attention from his comrades, he rushed through a wall of machine gun fire and mortar attacks to reach the

wounded. This courageous display of valor in the face of oncoming fire is a testament to the patriotism and esteemed character of Michael Dunphy. His actions on the field of battle saved the life of a man who is now a Tennessee State Trooper.

Michael Dunphy is the recipient of several military awards for his service to the United States including the Combat Medic Badge, Army Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart. Mr. Dunphy is now employed at the Middletown Psychiatric Center and he and his wife, Cheryl, are the proud parents of four children.

I would also like to commend Colonel Thomas Bedient on his persistence in making sure "Doc" Dunphy received the Bronze Star, which was delayed due to a bureaucratic mistake. At the ceremony on February 4th, "Doc" Dunphy said: "America didn't do very well saying thanks to our soldiers." Mr. Dunphy is correct in that sentiment, and by bestowing this award to him we are thanking an individual who went above and beyond the call of duty from his country.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join in congratulating Michael "Doc" Dunphy, Jr., on receiving the Bronze Star and thank him for his valor and heroism in serving our Nation.

THE STORY OF COREY JOHNSON

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 9, 2000*

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, every so often we learn of individuals confronted with enormously difficult choices who take the courageous, though difficult, path. The story of Corey Johnson, a constituent of mine from Middleton, Massachusetts, and a student at Masconomet High School, fits that description.

Corey is co-captain of the school football team, a good athlete in several sports, and popular among classmates. Although he suspected his homosexuality since grade school, it was this year that he shared the information with family, friends, teammates and strangers—by nature of the publicity attendant to the circumstances surrounding a gay athlete's decision to "come out."

Sunday, April 30, 2000, the New York Times front page carried the story of Corey's courage, and the community's reaction—thankfully mostly tolerant and supportive. Because the story is—as the article notes—a hopeful model, I submit the article for the RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 30, 2000]

ICON RECAST: SUPPORT FOR A GAY ATHLETE

(By Robert Lipsyte)

When Corey Johnson told teammates on the Masconomet High School football team last spring that he was gay, the two other starting linebackers responded characteristically. Big, Steady Dave Merrill, quietly absorbed the almost physical shock, then began worrying if the revelation would divide the team. Merrill said he decide to take it on as a challenge, a test of the captaincy the two shared and a test of his own character. Jim Whelan, the artist, said he looked into Johnson's eyes and saw a need for instant support. He broke the silence by saying, "More than being teammates we're your

friends and we know you're the same person."

Their reactions were critical in the risky, uncharted, carefully planned campaign to bring out of his increasingly claustrophobic closet an American icon, the hard-hitting football hero. The campaign involved Johnson's parents, teachers, and coaches, as well as a gay educational agency, all encouraged by the administration of a school with a long history of diversity training. One measure of their success will be seen Sunday when Johnson, who turned 18 on Friday and will graduate in June, speaks in Washington at the Millennium March for Equality.

For gay activists trying to shatter stereotypes, Johnson is a rare find, a bright, warm quick study who also wrestled and played lacrosse and baseball as he earned three varsity letters on a winning football team. For athletes, whose socialization often includes the use of homophobia by manipulative coaches, he is a liberating symbol. And for school systems struggling with such complex issues as diversity, tolerance and jock culture, his story is a hopeful model.

"Someday I want to get beyond being that gay football captain," Johnson said, "but for now I need to get out there and show these machismo athletes who run high schools that you don't have to do drama or be a drum major to be gay. It could be someone who looks just like them."

At 5 feet 8 inches and 180 pounds, Johnson had to make up for drama-club size with the speed and brutality of his blocking and tackling. "He hit like a ton of bricks," said Whelan, who became his friend in seventh grade because, he recalls, "he had a strong mind, he liked to think and he was unwilling to accept injustice."

Others in school, including the girls he refused to date ("It's not fair to use people as pawns," he said) were attracted by his friendliness and sly wit. Asked for publication in the yearbook how football captains spent the night before a game, he said, "I go to sleep early with my Tinky Winky." And he indeed has one of those purple Teletubby dolls "outed" by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, crammed in a corner of a stereotypically messy room filled with trophies, athletic posters and balled-up T-shirts.

"This is a great kid with a mind of his own," said Coach Jim Pugh, who faced down a booster club president who wanted Johnson's captaincy revoked. "My issues with him were not gay-related. They were about who knows better how you step out on certain defensive plays."

Johnson said he had suspected his homosexuality since sixth grade but suppressed thinking about it. In the high school's "elite jock mix" of heterosexual innuendo and bravado, he came to realize "this just isn't me." His crushes were on other boys.

"In health class a teacher told us that in every large group of friends, one turns out gay," he said. "When I was lonely and depressed and isolated, I kept thinking, 'Why does that have to be me?' I wanted to live a quiet normal life."

In the fall of 1997, in the first game of his varsity career, as a sophomore starting at both right guard and middle linebacker, his blocking was so effective and he made so many sacks that the line coach awarded him the game ball. Yet, he was so afraid that everyone would hate him when his secret was revealed that he was often unable to sleep at night or get out of bed in the morning.

He would reach out on the Internet in a teen chat room on a site called Planetout.com finding other gay youngsters, even other gay football players. For years, he has exchanged e-mail messages with a gay right guard in Chicago.

Johnson's decision to come out began taking shape during his family's 1998 Super Bowl