

the development of long-range economic recovery programs. It also requires the hospitals to devise a coordinated economic recovery program with the assistance of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Speaker, in a time when the future of Medicare is under strict scrutiny, we must today continue to provide the basic essential care under the Medicare program that are intended some 35 years ago. I urge all Members of Congress to review this critical legislation in the remainder of the 106th Congress and work to enact it into law.

HONORING MELVIN PAGE

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, in some ways Melvin Page and his colleagues in honor and arms may be the bravest Americans. They fought a long and difficult war against a brutal and ferocious enemy. But—unlike the brave Americans who fought all our other wars—Melvin Page and his fellow Vietnam veterans had to fight a war that not all Americans supported. Even if Melvin Page and his comrades were “the bravest of the brave”—and they were—the civilian leadership that got us into Vietnam badly failed the men and women it sent there. Those leaders never gave our brave soldiers the unconditional backing and the clear goals needed to win. But, despite all those impediments, Melvin Page and the others who fought in that conflict can always hold their heads proudly and high because of the extreme sacrifices they made in defense of freedom.

That’s why I was especially honored to take part in Melvin Page Day in Harriman, TN, in the Third District on Saturday, September 9, 2000. When you look at the story of Melvin Page’s brave service, it’s hard to imagine anyone who could more deserve the honors he received from his fellow citizens. Melvin served in the United States Army from 1967 to 1969 when the Vietnam War was at its height. He showed his true courage and suffered enormously during a battle in which he and 43 other men were ambushed by over 1,000 North Vietnamese Army soldiers. In an attempt to save as many of his comrades as possible, Sgt. Page called in napalm air strikes on his own position. He was hit three times by rifle shots, struck by a grenade and was grievously burned. He was one of the very few people in his command to survive the attack. Rescuers arrived just in time to save his life; and in fact, Melvin Page was so badly injured that the recovery team thought that he had died and placed him in a body bag. It was only when his hand moved that the rescuers realized that he was alive.

He had to undergo numerous operations and extensive rehabilitation to recover from the severe burns and other injuries he suffered. After Melvin Page left the Army, he became a letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service back home in Harriman, where he has worked faithfully for 30 years.

Melvin Page’s heroism and sacrifice has been recognized by the numerous medals and awards he has received, including the Bronze Star with V Device, three Purple Hearts, Two

Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct, National Defense Service, U.S. Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachute Jump Badge, Ranger Tab and Expert Marksman badge for pistol, rifle, and machine gun.

But, as impressive as this list is, it cannot begin to convey the heroism and sacrifice that marked Melvin Page’s Army service. Mr. Page, as you complete 33 years of loyal and dedicated services to the United States in war and peace, please accept the congratulations, best wishes and heartfelt thanks of a grateful nation.

OCHSNER FOUNDATION HOSPITAL

HON. DAVID VITTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 25, the Ochsner Foundation Hospital will open a spectacular new addition. This \$46 million facility will provide 140 square feet of space over three floors. The first floor will include a world-class emergency and trauma center; the second floor will be home to 10 new operating rooms with the most advanced equipment; and the third floor will include 32 new intensive care unit patient rooms. By placing these improved facilities in new construction, operations of the existing facility are not threatened.

These improvements will improve the quality of care of patients at Ochsner. They also will provide a better learning environment for the more than 200 medical residents that study each year at Ochsner.

The Ochsner Foundation Hospital, at its present location since 1954, is accredited with commendation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, an achievement which places the hospital above 87% of all hospitals in the U.S. The hospital admits over 18,000 patients each year for a total of more than 97,000 patient days. The average length of stay at Ochsner is 4.9 days. In addition, each year 30,000 individuals are treated on an emergency outpatient basis.

Known for surgical expertise with nearly 12,000 surgery cases handled each year, the hospital is also known for its pediatric, cancer, cardiology, and orthopedic programs. The Ochsner Multi-Organ Transplantation Center performs transplantation surgeries for most major solid organ systems and ranks as the fifth largest heart transplantation program in the country.

Ochsner has provided generations of patients from the New Orleans area and from throughout the world with quality medical care. This new addition will permit them to continue providing the highest quality of medical care for future generations.

TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND BERTRAM G. BENNETT, JR.

HON. JOSE E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual who

has devoted his life to serving others, Reverend Bertram G. Bennett, Jr. He will be honored by the Wardens, Vestry and People of Saint David’s Episcopal Church on Sunday, September 17, 2000 for 20 years of ministry at Saint David’s.

Reverend Bertram G. Bennett, Jr., was born in New York City on September 23, 1951 and has been Priest-in-Charge of St. David’s Episcopal Church in the Bronx since 1980. He received a B.A. in Behavioral Science from Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina and a Master of Divinity from the General Theological Seminary in New York City and was ordained Deacon in 1977 and Priest in 1978.

Fr. Bennett strongly upholds the Diocese of New York’s mission statement of “effective church presence in poor communities.” Born and raised in Harlem and carrying out his ministry in the South Bronx, Fr. Bennett is very much aware of the problems that afflict such communities.

Serving on a number of committees and boards, Fr. Bennett is well-known and respected in the Diocese, the parish and the community. He has served on the Diocesan Council and on several Diocesan committees. He is currently the Chair of the South Bronx Interparish Council, and in that capacity stresses the importance of the parishes meeting on a regular basis and sharing information and resources. Fr. Bennett is also on the Board of Episcopal Social Services, an organization that assists people of all ages throughout the Diocese.

Under Fr. Bennett’s encouragement, St. David’s has been a member of South Bronx Churches (SBC) since its beginning in 1987. SBC is an ecumenical broad-based organization of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), involved with problems the communities in the South Bronx face regarding housing, illegal drugs, education, health, and employment. As Chair of the Housing Task Force of the South Bronx Churches, Fr. Bennett has been instrumental in the development of affordable homes in the South Bronx. He is also Chair of the Board of the Senior Housing Development. The accomplishments result from the hard work and motivation of Fr. Bennett whose steadfast perseverance is an inspiration to his parishioners.

Important to Fr. Bennett’s ministry is his involvement with youth work in the church and community. He has served as Chair of the Board of Bronx Youth Ministry and has recently been appointed to serve on the School Chancellor’s Interfaith Advisory Council. St. David’s After School Program and Summer Day Camp are vital community programs that offer supervised and structured activities for the youngsters. In recent years, Fr. Bennett has encouraged the men of the Parish to meet on a regular basis with the young men of the community for prayer and fellowship during the week.

Before coming to St. David’s, Fr. Bennett served in churches in the Bronx and Manhattan. As a parish priest, he places a high priority on making pastoral calls, visiting the sick and shut-ins, and counseling. Many times he has been able to assist members of the church and community through court appearances and intervention with the Department of Social Services, and giving support to parents dealing with school authorities.

Among the church and community organizations that have honored Fr. Bennett for his