

The middle son of Russian immigrants, 19-year old Monte Blum enlisted in the Army and volunteered for the hazardous duty of disarming underwater mines as a deep sea diver in the 106th Engineering Corps. Clearing the way for ally shipping lanes off the coast of France in 1944, Cpl. Blum's attempt to disarm an enemy mine was disastrous when the explosive detonated.

With little chance for survival, Cpl. Blum was transported to a military hospital in Wales. His oldest brother Herman Blum, who received medals for heroism in the Battle of the Bulge, traveled from his post in Germany to take his younger brother back to America to live out his last days.

Herman was determined not to let his brother Monte die overseas. After months of prayer, a miracle occurred—Monte Blum survived. He was subsequently awarded both the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

Monte Blum will be turning 75 on February 26. He has been married to Helene Englander for 49 years and raised a son, Murray and a daughter, Robin. His children say that affection for their father gave them strength as Mr. Blum was in and out of the hospital during their youth. After dozens upon dozens of operations, medical technology finally was able to stem the constant discomfort they saw him endure while they were growing up. Helene was a constant rock and loving companion in tough years that would have sent most weaker wives packing.

In spite of his disability, Monte Blum was a hard working and successful business man all his life. No one but his immediate family ever knew that he had health problems. He held his head high, and provided a happy home or a well-loved family. He not only sent his two children to college but was instrumental for the education of 2 neighborhood kids. When there wasn't a synagogue in Baltimore where he bought his family a home, he pitched in and built one.

He taught his children about sacrifice and his undying love of our country. He emphasized the values of family, Judaism and kindness. His wife and children watched him laugh when he should have cried and never, never ever to this day, did he once complain.

His family has endured many tragedies. His older brother Lt. Senior Grade, Murray Blum, at 22, was killed in action as he dove overboard from a Merchant Marine vessel to rescue a drowning Swedish sailor, the only man to have perished on the ship, the SS Leonardis Polk. Murray Blum is buried in Cambridge, England at the beautifully tended U.S. Military Cemetery. His brother Simon who worked stateside in the service because of a disability, died of a heart attack, after the war.

Retired Major Herman Blum, who received a Bronze Star, died September 23, 2000 at age 82 and received a full military send-off befitting a retired Army Major and now rests with his parents and brothers.

At this point in his life, Monte Blum is a frail health, but still walks with dignity and the step of a man half his age. He is surrounded by those who adore him. Monte Blum and his youngest brother Calvin, who was in the 67th Flight Corps, remain the best of friends.

He is a living monument and the embodiment, the heart and soul of the greatest generation. With Veterans Day approaching, we would do well to recount the service and sacrifice of veterans like Monte Blum.

ON BEHALF OF PEIRCE COLLEGE

### HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 26, 2000*

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Peirce College, a matchless institution of higher education located in my district of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Peirce College has taken great strides to bridge the digital divide and become an institution dedicated to providing graduates for the information age. In fact, Peirce recently took two significant steps towards this goal. First, with the opening of its state-of-the-art alumni Hall and second, through the recent approval of its online degree programs.

Despite its purely urban location, Peirce College is reaching out to provide competitive workforce and technology programs to individuals living in the more rural parts of Pennsylvania. Peirce College is well positioned to do this. In Fiscal Year 1999–2000 Peirce's off-site programs enrolled 408 students from rural and suburban areas across Pennsylvania. Through distance learning technologies, Peirce College intends to connect all of its students and programs including those in the rural areas of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania has one of the largest rural population of any state in the country. To this extent, the Peirce distance learning programs can offer a significant opportunity for students, many of whom are adult learner, to gain training an education programs that are technology oriented and needed in today's job market.

I support Peirce College in its effort to secure a federal partnership to expand its on line and distance learning programs. To that end, I have worked with Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR, ranking member for the House Appropriations subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Relocated Agencies. In this year's Fiscal Year 2001 House passed Agriculture Appropriation bill, report language was included to direct the Department of Agriculture to give consideration to the distance learning at Peirce College under the distance learning and telemedicine grant program.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program, as authorized by the Food Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 and amended by the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, aims to provide access to telecommunications services to improve rural educational opportunities. This program provided facilities and equipment to link rural education with more urban centers in order to increase educational opportunities for rural students. As such, I believe this program is well aligned with the goals and actions of Peirce College.

I strongly support Peirce college's proposal for a distant learning grant and look forward to working with the Department of Agriculture and the Committee to insure that Peirce College proposal receives full and fair consideration.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS COAL MINERS MEMORIAL

### HON. DAVID D. PHELPS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 26, 2000*

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Southern Illinois Coal Miners and the Memorial that has been dedicated in their honor. The memorial consists of a wall with the names of coal miners who currently work or have worked in the southern Illinois mines.

I would like to share with you this poem by Raymond D. Null of Herrin, IL. This work gives us an idea of the different kinds of struggles coal miners face.

#### "ILLINOIS BLACK GOLD"

In the early years, our MINERS lived in the "patch," in their little company houses, along the train tracks  
With their lunch bucket in hand, off to work they would go, most walking to work, through the summers and snows  
Many fathers and sons, have worked side by side, in areas not tall, and sometimes not wide  
They carved out their living, in walls of pure coal, as they worked hard and labored, to mine this "Black Gold"  
A ride down the deep shaft, a long walk through the mine, to this deep darkened land, where the sun never shines  
Where it's deep as a dungeon, and nearly as cold, and the MINERS were proud, to mine this "Black Gold"  
Deep in the ground, everyday these men toiled, as they spotted and blasted, through the layers of soil  
They were our MINERS, and they brought us our coal, with their shovels and picks they mined this "Black Gold"  
These pioneers of labor, with the coal black face, are the legends of mining, that time won't erase  
They worked dangerously hard, in their race against time, in this deep dark hole, that they call the mine  
In the early years, lives were taken at times, and the news spread quickly, to other towns and their mines  
There would be sounds of sorrow, and sounds of pain, like the quill from the whistle, of a slow passing train  
There are memorials that salute, those who answered their call, and prayers are said daily, for those who gave all  
And for all of the MINERS, who mined this "Black Gold," Let us give thanks, and may God bless their soul.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I commend the coal miners of Southern Illinois. Due to their hard work and dedication in the mining industry, it is clear that they are an asset to Southern Illinois and all of the United States of America.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 26, 2000*

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, because I was unavoidably detained, I was absent for rollcall vote No. 554. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."