

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF SARAH HUGHES—LADIES FIGURE SKATING OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST, 2002

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate my constituent and America's newest sweetheart, Sarah Hughes, on her spectacular gold medal performance at the 2002 Winter Olympics.

On February 21, 2002, Sarah, a 16-year-old high school junior from Great Neck, New York, accomplished the unimaginable. After years of training and dedication, Sarah skated a flawless performance that included seven triple jumps with two triple-triple combinations. Sarah said that she wasn't skating for a gold medal that night, she just wanted to do her best. And that she did. While many discounted her chances, Sarah's long program left the world awestruck and moved her from fourth place to capture the gold medal ahead of the top skating competitors in the world.

It's not every day that Great Neck produces a gold medalist. Sarah is our hometown hero. Local supermarkets, stores, delis and police stations all proudly display signs of congratulations to Sarah. If you stop the people on the street, everyone has a smile and only praise to share about Sarah Hughes. In addition to being a gold medalist, Sarah is a top student at Great Neck North High School, who despite spending hours training to be an Olympic gold medalist, also attends a full schedule of class and maintains a straight-A average.

Last Thursday night, I had the pleasure to watch Sarah's performance on the big screen with her supporters at Great Neck House, the area's community center. The atmosphere was thick with excitement and the moment Sarah was awarded the gold was a moment I will never forget. To continue the celebration, on March 3rd at 11 a.m., Great Neck will welcome Sarah home with a parade through the center of town.

From her back, yard skating rink to the Olympic stadium, Sarah Hughes has captured the hearts of the American people. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor Sarah for her magnificent performance at the 2002 Winter Olympics. I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in congratulating Sarah as an Olympic gold medalist.

TRIBUTE TO DAN TANG

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine, Mr. Dan Tang, who was recently featured in the Rocky

Mountain News for his success as an entrepreneur in the restaurant business. Mr. Tang's story reminds us that perhaps no one enjoys the fruits of the opportunity that America has to offer as much as those who have never had the luxury of taking it for granted.

Over twenty years ago, having heard countless stories of how much our great country has to offer, Mr. Tang bravely escaped communist China with the hope of one day becoming an American citizen. He spent nearly a year in extremely harsh conditions at a refugee camp in Canton awaiting permission to come here. Thankfully, Mr. Tang had relatives in Los Angeles who were able to give him a floor to sleep on, and a roof over his head when he finally received permission to enter the United States.

As an immigrant who spoke no English, he had a life-sustaining dream to overcome the obstacles he faced and move to Colorado. In Colorado he was able to get a job as a dishwasher in an American-owned Chinese restaurant. He worked tirelessly, learned English, and moved up the ladder of the restaurant business, eventually becoming a chef. Recognizing Mr. Tang's talent, a Colorado restaurant owner took him under his wing and taught him the financial side of the business. This knowledge and experience enabled Mr. Tang to purchase his first restaurant, "Heaven Dragon." The restaurant is one of the most popular and successful restaurants in my district and has enabled Mr. Tang to buy a second restaurant nearby, "Pearl Wok". He is a leader in the Chinese-American community of Colorado, a successful businessman, a friend to the Governor of Colorado, and an example of how the so-called "American dream" is still a reality.

Mr. Speaker, at a time in our country's history when many are skeptical of the enormous contribution that immigrants and their families make in contributing to the success of America and strengthening our communities, I am encouraged by the example of Dan Tang.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Dan Tang's story to this House and to my colleagues for the inspiration it evokes, and for a reminder of what it is to be an American.

[From the Rocky Mountain News, Feb. 20, 2002]

FEEDING THE AMERICAN DREAM

(By Marty Meitus)

Fourteen people. One rusty old boat. A harrowing glide down the river to Macau, then a Portuguese colony more than 100 miles from the farm near Canton, with two toddlers to keep quiet.

If the boat went toward the shore, Dan Tang says, they would cover the children with a blanket to make it look as if they were transporting something. If the boat had sprung a leak and sunk, or if the children had cried out at the wrong moment, Tang and company would have risked prison and a steep fine.

"It was pretty scary," he says in his heavily accented English.

Tang, owner of the Heaven Dragon restaurant, a hidden treasure tucked away in a strip mall in Thornton, has been asked to tell the tale of his escape from communist

China over and over since he arrived in this country 20 years ago. The affable 40-year-old is given to easy laughter, taking pleasure and pride in his pretty restaurant.

In honor of the Chinese, New Year, which began Feb. 12 and lasts 15 days, we talked to Tang about his journey toward the American dream.

Tang's father was a rice and yam farmer in Canton; his mother was a housewife. He and his five brothers slept in the same bed in their two-bedroom wood-and-dirt house. Needed in the fields, he attended school only to fifth grade. The family never rose above the poverty level, restricted by a government that confiscated most of their earnings and limited their activities.

In 1980, hearing that fortunes could be made here, Tang decided to leave China for the United States. "They (his parents) let me try it to escape to freedom," he says. "The government limited what you could do. You had to escape, because there were no travel visas; you had to get permission to go from city to city."

In Macau, he stayed in a refugee camp for 11 months, under rough conditions, while he waited for his visa to come through. His goal was to reach his aunt, his father's sister, who lived in Los Angeles.

Eventually, he was granted permission to leave. He lost sight of the other 13 people on the boat, although he knows that a couple of them immigrated to Canada. "We were lucky," he says. "I know people who tried to get out four or five times."

In Los Angeles, he slept in his aunt's dining room, hoping to break into the restaurant business, one of the few fields open to an immigrant who spoke no English. Struggling to survive, he finally moved to Colorado, where he had friends, and went to work for Americans who owned a Chinese restaurant in Aurora.

His experience with cooking was limited. "The first time I saw a grocery store in the U.S., I'm in paradise," he says.

He worked his way up from dishwasher to prep cook to deep-fry cook to chef, moving around the metro area to 10 restaurants in all. Then an American businessman took him under his wing and taught him the restaurant business, enabling Tang to buy Heaven Dragon in 1985.

Tang has brought all his family except two brothers to America, and they should be allowed to come in the next couple of years. The family includes his wife, Ying Li, the woman chosen to be his bride by his parents in an arranged marriage. When he brought her over as an adult for their wedding, he hadn't seen her since she was 9. "When she got off the plane," he says, "I didn't recognize her, except a little bit."

Choosing his own wife would have been out of the question. "We still have old culture, so I wouldn't even think of not doing it," he says. But all's well that ends well. He and Yung Li have been married for 11 years and have three children: Victor, 10, Tracey 8, and Audrey, 7.

Tang has been successful enough to open a second restaurant, the Pearl Wok, at West 120th Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. Although he'd like to have more free time to devote to learning English and he regrets never being able to return to school, the restaurant life has been its own education. "If you work hard," he says, "you get rewarded."

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