

in his assessment of his vocal abilities. Most would say his voice was "Unforgettable."

Nat "King" Cole indeed was a man with talents that could not be contained by any particular genre. He slowly moved away from jazz and towards popular music. In 1955, the King Cole Trio disbanded, but Nat "King" Cole continued to find success with songs like *Too Young*, *Answer Me My Love*, *Mona Lisa* and, of course, *Unforgettable*. Mr. Cole sold more than 50 million records. He contributed so much to the success of Capitol Records that its headquarters became known as the "House That Nat Built." His popularity would make him the first African American to have his own radio show and he would later also host his own TV shows.

However, Nat "King" Cole did not always have an easy road. He was not immune to the intolerance of the mid 20th Century. Indeed, as we look at his impressive songbook, we cannot forget the struggles he had to overcome as an African American performer during that period in our Nation's history. In October 1956, Nat "King" Cole was given his own television show by NBC. This show received good ratings but failed to receive sponsorship and it was taken off the air after only one year. Most believed that the primary lack of interest by advertisers was due to Nat "King" Cole's race.

But being taken off the air was not the only injustice Nat "King" Cole faced for being a successful black artist at the time. Nat faced physical intimidation and violence. In 1956, Nat returned to his native Alabama where his integrated group performed in front of a segregated audience in Birmingham. As a reaction, four members of the White Citizens Council attacked him on stage. But so determined was Nat "King" Cole, that even though he was hurt, he returned to the stage and finished his show.

In Los Angeles, where we will honor him with a post office that carries his name, Nat was not immune to prejudice. When Nat and his family wanted to move into the exclusive Hancock Park section of Los Angeles, residents of the all-white community formed an association to keep him and his family out. But despite the threats, Nat "King" Cole purchased and moved into his English Tudor mansion in Hancock Park.

Nat "King" Cole exemplifies the American dream. He endured the racism of the time and overcame the poverty to which he was born and worked to be one of the most beloved American entertainers of our time. Thirty-seven years after his untimely death from lung cancer on February 15, 1965, his legacy lives on. Modern popular music entertainers like Celine Dion continue to record songs made famous by Nat "King" Cole.

With determination, courage, and resilience, Nat "King" Cole overcame tremendous obstacles to leave a lasting

impression on music lovers of all ages and races. The Oakwood post office at 265 South Western Avenue in Los Angeles is Nat's post office. He lived within a few miles from the station and he is the pride of the community. I believe that this bill provides a fitting tribute to a man whose legacy is simply unforgettable.

To the many residents and friends and neighbors who made this possible today, and who will, when we have a chance to see President Bush sign this legislation into law, be present to commemorate this post office after Nat "King" Cole, I say, "Thank you so much for recognizing an American hero," and, "Thank you so much for helping us in the people's House recognize the accomplishments of great Americans."

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Mr. Speaker, with great honor and deference, we recognize a man who will live far beyond our lifetime.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) for his introduction and certainly for the statement the gentleman has just shared with us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. And I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) for introducing this legislation.

I was just up in New York at the funeral for Lionel Hampton; and all of the way through, the talented performers would recall when they were all together, and Nat King Cole was part of that group. He was a man whose artistic talent was matched only by his efforts to break down the barriers that divided America from itself.

Nat King Cole had a gift of enormous musical talent. He did not like his singing voice; he thought it was not good enough so he thought he should play, but they talked him into singing while he was playing. He was known most for his singular voice, bringing alive such tunes as "Mona Lisa," "Rambling Rose," "The Christmas Song," and "Unforgettable." His daughter, Natalie Cole, would say that for many a year she mourned her father's death and did not have the courage to record with him until much later after his death; and the song "Unforgettable" truly will live forever. He was truly unforgettable.

But many experts considered his work as a pianist as his most significant contribution to American music. He was recognized among jazz musicians as one of the most formidable and technically proficient pianists of his day. His trio format influenced jazz pianist greats Ahmad Jamal and Art Tatum. In the 1940s, he played piano on recordings with jazz seminal jazz

greats Lester Young and Charlie Parker.

In 1956, Cole debuted his own television show, which quickly became a major hit. Despite its success, many major advertisers refused to have commercials aired on it for fear that they would alienate the white population and, in particular, their Southern customers.

Nat King Cole first recorded with Decca Records, and later with Capitol Records. Sales of his albums brought Capitol unprecedented commercial success, and some have even labeled Capitol Records' famous circular building in Hollywood as "The House that Nat Built."

But Nat King Cole's contribution to American art was matched by his contribution to American society. Cole was a quiet, but consistent, force for integration. During an age when many black artists were resigned to the reality of racial segregation, Cole refused to play in segregated clubs. In 1949 when Cole moved with his family to the exclusive Hancock Park neighborhood in Los Angeles, an area represented now by the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) and myself, Cole faced hostility from his new neighbors. Yet Cole stood his ground, and successfully integrated the neighborhood, which remains one of Los Angeles' most prestigious addresses. So I am proud to join the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA) and the rest of my colleagues to rename a post office in the Hancock neighborhood after Nat King Cole. He is lovingly remembered as a great musical talent, but also as a great American.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would close by saying that the life of Nat King Cole is another example of all that it has taken to make America the great Nation that it is. I join with my colleagues in urging swift passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAN MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4797.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.