

For the past 47 years, Reverend Ralph E. Brower has been a tireless advocate on behalf of his community and congregation, ensuring that no one in the community is left behind. A true leader, Rev. Brower has served for the past 27 years as president of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, and the past 25 years as chaplain for Hudson County. He has served in several city administrations, and is currently the president of the United Black interdenominational Clergy (VBIC) of New Jersey, the state's largest African-American clergy organization.

His selfless actions have not gone unnoticed, and he has been honored by New Jersey's Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of New Jersey, and the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.

The fourth of six children, Rev. Brower was born and raised in North Carolina, but decided to make New Jersey his home. He is a graduate of the Laurinburg Institute and Kettle College of North Carolina, attended Florida State Christian College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Jersey City State College, and his Doctorate of Sacred Theology from the Baltimore Bible College.

Rev. Brown is married to Alberta Hazel Brower, and they are the proud parents of three children: two sons, Ralph, Jr. and Ronald, and one daughter, Denise.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Reverend Ralph E. Brower for close to 50 years of service as a leader and senior pastor to the Jersey City community. Let us all join together and take this opportunity to honor an exceptional man, setting an outstanding example for our community. Thank you Rev. Brower for all that you do.

CONGRATULATING J.S. WEST FAMILY AS 2002 AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 22, 2002*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the J.S. West family for receiving the 2002 Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductee Award at the Stanislaus County Ag Foundation's Agricultural Hall of Fame Ceremony in Modesto, California on December 5, 2002. This notable group of Stanislaus County Legends of Agriculture honors individuals and families who have worked to make agriculture the county's number one industry.

The Agricultural Hall of Fame members sacrifice and labor to produce crops from poultry and livestock to fruits and vegetables. These members and their families have made a mark on the Central Valley's local agricultural industry and community, as well as influenced the state, nation, and the world.

In 1909, J.S. West and Company began with the purchase of the Merced Milling building and a lease of land from the Southern Pacific Railroad in Modesto, California. James West worked with farmers on yearly contracts and sold sacked grain to brokers and customers. As the business grew, the family diversified into coal, wood, and fertilizers. After a fire destroyed the feed mill in the 1950's, a

modern feed mill was built to supply feed to the poultry and cattle industry. This resulted in a full line of retail stores that are now carrying their supplies. The J.S. West family expanded upon their enterprise by making ice, selling fuel oil, operating an automobile service station and tire shop, and they recently closed a furniture store which they had operated since 1950.

The family also developed an egg contracting business in the 1950's, and today its members are still heavily involved in the poultry and egg industry at both state and national levels. The West family packs eggs for over sixty labels and frozen liquid eggs in their Hilmar processing plant. From feed to eggs and ice to propane, the West family continues to make a difference in the agricultural industry worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the J.S. West family for earning the 2002 Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductee Award. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing the J.S. West family many years of continued success.

HONORING THE YALE-NEW HAVEN TEACHERS INSTITUTE ON THEIR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 22, 2002*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the New Haven and Yale University communities in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute—a unique and highly successful partnership between the New Haven Public School System and Yale University.

I have often spoke about the importance of education and the vital role it plays in our communities—especially for our urban youth. Today, it is more important than ever for our nation's teachers to have access to the skills and resources they need to prepare our children for the future. That is the mission of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute. For a quarter of a century, the Institute has been providing area educators with the opportunity to strengthen themselves professionally through annual seminars in the humanities and sciences. In addition, the Institute works with program participants to bring the curriculum and lessons of the seminars to the classroom. The teachers who have participated in this program have demonstrated a unique commitment to our young people. These are educators who are truly dedicated to ensuring that our children—our future—have the talented and creative teachers they need and deserve.

Just four years ago, the Institute forged ahead with a new goal. With just over one million dollars in grant funding, the Institute set out to replicate its program in four other cities across the country. This venture has been a success and has proven that the partnerships that are fostered between local public schools and universities can and will enrich the lives of our young people. New Haven has certainly benefited from this tremendous organization which has not only touched the lives of so many teachers, but countless numbers of our children. The Institute has earned a distin-

guished reputation and has been recognized at every level of government as a model for all communities.

For all that they have given to the families and children of New Haven and for all of their good work across the country, I am proud to stand today to extend my sincere congratulations to the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute as they celebrate their 25th Anniversary.

THANKING MY CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

**HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 22, 2002*

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, the end of a congressional career brings about many emotions. Over the last twenty years I have happily spent representing the fine people of the 17th Congressional District of Pennsylvania I have had the pleasure of working with thousands of constituents, local, state and federal officials, and many former and current distinguished members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. To all of them I say, thanks for working with me towards a better America.

And, of course, every Member of Congress works with many, many competent staff, from the staff in their own personal offices to the Committee and Subcommittee staff and the leadership and floor staff. It has often been said that without staff where would this institution be? And I concur with that statement, for without the many fine staff with whom I have had good fortune to work, I and other Members of Congress of the United States would be far worse off. While I cannot mention all the fine staff who have worked with me over the years, let me at least mention the current personal and subcommittee staffers who have endeavored to achieve our common goals and to whom I give my hearty thanks and wish them well in their future careers.

In my Harrisburg district office, Arlene Eckels, my long-time personal secretary who has worked for me since the early days in the Pennsylvania State Senate and to whom I wish a happy and much deserved retirement; Tom Templeton, my hardworking district director, who so ably kept my entire district staff working smoothly; Suzanne Stoll, and old friend and superb caseworker; Paul Giannaris, whose ability to handle INS problems has made him invaluable; and Tim Vollrath, a recently returned former employee whose military and veterans help has been superb. In our Lebanon Office, Reg Nyman has been the voice of Lebanon for these many years, and his excellent knowledge and service will be missed. And in our Elizabethtown office, Susan Melendez has kept out Lancaster County constituents well served by her kind and efficient manner. Over the last twenty years my district office staff has handled hundreds of thousands of phone calls and constituent casework requests. A superb record by a superb staff.

My Washington office staff have proven themselves time and time again, regularly going beyond the call of duty. (The tally of my hundreds of legislative measures, nearly 30 Public Laws, thousands of office meetings and countless committee and other initiatives over