

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE TOMIE GREEN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of Black History Month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of distinguished African-Americans in Mississippi's Second Congressional District.

Today I rise to pay tribute to Judge Tomie Green. Judge Green received her primary education from the Jackson public school system. Upon completing, she entered Tougaloo College where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree. She then earned a Master of Science degree from Jackson State. Judge Green then received her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Mississippi College School of Law. In April of 1999 Judge Green then continued post-graduate training at the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and the National Judicial College, University of Nevada Reno.

Judge Green served in the Mississippi House of Representatives from 1992–1998. She served as Vice Chair of Ethics and a sub-chair of the Judiciary Committee. While serving in this position Judge Green aided in passing several monumental laws. Judge Green also participated in the creation of the laws that established the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Mississippi Court of Appeals, and the Mississippi Torts Claim Board.

Judge Green practiced law for fifteen years before taking the bench. On January 4, 1999, Judge Green took the oath of office to become the first woman elected to the Hinds County Circuit Court. She also continues to be an adjunct law professor as Mississippi College School of Law.

TRIBUTE TO VERA RISON

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing an outstanding humanitarian, Vera Rison. Vera is being honored Thursday night at a Community Tribute and Retirement Dinner in my home town of Flint Michigan.

Vera Rison is one of my dearest friends. I treasure her wisdom, her common sense, and her ability to go to the heart of a dilemma and seek a solution. The many years she spent working at Genesee Memorial Hospital gave Vera insight into the problems faced by average families. She has never stopped working to ease the burdens faced by so many. Through the positions she held as chair of the Service Employees International Union Local 79, director of human resources at Amy Jo Manor Housing Complex, the Genesee County Community Mental Health Board, the Substance Abuse Services Board and the Jobs Central Workforce Development Board, Vera has always maintained her vision and commitment to a better future for everyone.

Through her work as a Genesee County Commissioner and a State Representative, Vera was able to see some of her ideas be-

come concrete, working plans. She sponsored a bill to reduce the number of abandoned houses. She also was the driving force behind the renovation of the Amy Jo Manor Housing Complex. In addition, Vera worked tirelessly for individuals in trouble. She frequently advocated on behalf of persons sentenced to prison. She arranged for basic services to be provided for the handicapped and devoted many hours to ensuring the uninsured received health care.

The Genesee District Library paid Vera an awesome compliment when they named the Beecher branch of their library the "Vera B. Rison Library." It is a tremendous tribute that the library, where all persons of every age can come and improve their minds and lives through knowledge, is named for the woman who spent a lifetime witnessing the potential in all persons and pushed them to achieve their personal best.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring a dear friend, Vera Rison. She is an inspiration to me and I wish her the best as she starts the next phase of her life.

REMEMBERING MS. ESTHER JONES LEE

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this day, during Black History Month, to pay tribute to a trail blazing civic leader, Ms. Esther Jones Lee. I take pride in honoring Ms. Jones Lee for her lifetime of dedication to organizing and empowering the African American community, particularly African American women, in their struggle to secure the purportedly unalienable rights promised to the people of this nation at its founding.

Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1885, the daughter of Ms. Mary Wanzer Jones and the Reverend J.W. Jones, Ms. Jones Lee inherited her family's unyielding commitment to serving God and her community. The monumental integrity and deep compassion that came to characterize Ms. Jones Lee's legacy were deeply rooted in the lessons she learned growing up in her father's ministries. After graduating from high school in Chillicothe, Missouri, Ms. Jones Lee was trained in pedagogy and taught high school in Macon, Missouri. In 1904, Reverend Jones and his family relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he was charged by the American Baptist Association with establishing the McGee Avenue Baptist Church, still a vibrant spiritual community to this day. Married in 1908 to Mr. George E. Lee, Ms. Jones Lee had three children, of whom only one, Ms. Esther Lee Higgs, survived infancy.

In the Bay Area, Ms. Jones Lee provided skillful and passionate leadership to a plethora of organizations and clubs, especially the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), which she served for three terms as president of the state chapter. In 1918, Ms. Jones Lee was appointed by the President of the NACW, Ms. Mary Burnett Talbert, to lead California's efforts in the Anti-Lynching Campaign, working closely with State Senator William Knowland to introduce the successful legislation that out-

lawed this heinous practice. Ms. Jones Lee also served as: Vice President of Child Welfare for the Civic Center of San Francisco, the predecessor of the Big Sister Movement; President of the Women's Work Baptist Association of the State of California; a founding member of the Fannie Wall Children's Home, the area's first home to care for African American orphans; a founder of the Linden Branch YWCA, the area's first YWCA open to all girls, regardless of race; and head of the Women's Division of Northern California for the 1928 Herbert Hoover Campaign.

During her lifetime, the promises of equality, and justice for all made by our nation's framers were not extended to Ms. Esther Jones Lee. Born into a world in which she could neither vote nor hold public office, she found power by raising her voice and taking action where her conscience deemed it necessary. Inspiring and empowering those whose lives she touched, she rose to positions of leadership from which she challenged the status quo, contributed to policy reform, and advocated for equality. While partaking in the club activities expected of women of their social stature, Ms. Jones Lee and her fellow organizers became fierce, courageous, and compassionate political forces, needing no one's permission but their own. I take great pride in joining Ms. Esther Jones Lee's family and the people of California's 9th Congressional District in honoring her memory and celebrating her legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to include in the RECORD the following articles regarding Ms. Esther Jones Lee.

[From the Oakland Tribune, May 30, 1926]

ACTIVITIES AMONG NEGROES

(by Delilah L. Beasley)

WELCOMING SPEECHES

Mrs. Esther Jones Lee, as president of the northern section of California, will have the honor of welcoming the distinguished group of women to Oakland and Mrs. Corrine Bush Hicks, of Pasadena, state president of the California Federation of Colored Women's clubs, will welcome them to California on the night given over to state. Notwithstanding, the great task there are citizens in the east who have visited Oakland, notably Miss Hallie Q. Brown, who have faith in the citizens rally to the assistance of these brave women and helping them in this great effort which will mean much as an educational development of the race.

The following are appointments given to California women by the national president, Mrs. Mary McCloud [McCleod] Bethune: Regional chairmen for northern section—Temperance, Miss Masterson of Stockton; kindergarten—Mrs. L.-J.-Williams, Vallejo, headquarters for the national in Washington, D. C., Mrs. H. B. Tilghman; physical education, Esther Jones Lee, Oakland; state chairmen—Peace and foreign relations, Mrs. Irene Bell Ruggles, San Francisco; citizenship, Mrs. Frank Henry, Oakland; temperance, Mrs. Lillian Smith, Oakland; hygiene, Mrs. L.J. Williams Vallejo; arts and crafts, Mrs. Melba Stafford, Oakland; social work and recreation, Esther Jones Lee, Oakland. She is also local chairman of arrangements for the national.

[From the California Voice, Friday, December 30, 1960]

FEDERATED WOMEN CLUB NOTES—(CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION)

Maker of History—This is a brief, historical sketch of a personality of pronounced individuality who helped put over remarkable