

professional associations and boards. Through MARC, the Mid America Regional Council, he was instrumental in the economic development of the Little Blue Valley and the creation of the I-70/Little Blue Parkway interchange to ease traffic flow and provide access for valley expansion. His leadership was an integral part of the development of eastern Jackson County, particularly his focus on neighborhood revitalization, road improvements and numerous renovations to area parks.

I am honored by the opportunity to collaborate with Larry Blick and Mayor Ron Stewart to secure Federal funding for local projects such as the Lewis and Clark Roadway, the Memorial Building, grants to support local first responders in protecting our community, FEMA assistance for the devastating 2002 ice storm, and for the expansion of the Blue River Community College to train our law enforcement officials and first responders. A lasting achievement for which he will long be remembered is his efforts to secure the prestigious title of "All American City" for Independence in 2001. Larry Blick's work with the community played a crucial role in highlighting Independence's enterprises, schools, parks and history to earn the support of the All-America City Program.

Around his office, Larry carries a coffee mug that states, "Will golf for food." I join with myriad others in wishing him time during his retirement to hit the greens and spend quality time with his loving family.

Another great leader from Independence, President Harry S Truman, made this observation in 1951: "Unless a man is fundamentally sound ethically, you can't teach him what to do as a public servant." As City Manager, Larry has exhibited exemplary vision, sound values and unwavering commitment to fundamental issues important to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in saluting the remarkable service of retiring City Manager Larry Blick. His leadership will be missed, but his accomplishments will live on as a reminder of the difference he made by his outstanding service to the city of Independence, Missouri.

UNsung HERO AWARD

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, when the idea of Black History Month, formerly Black History Week, was conceived by historian, Carter G. Woodson, he envisioned a celebration of black history achievement as well as an educational medium. Mr. Woodson organized the first celebration in 1926 to be held the second week in February in honor of Frederick Douglas's and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays. Because of its popularity among the black and white press, schools and women's clubs, the week long commemoration was expanded into a month-long salute to African Americans. Black History Month now provides an annual forum for African Americans to share their culture with the world.

For the past 5 years, I have hosted an Un-sung Hero Program during Black History Month as a means of acknowledging the many accomplishments of my constituents who often go unnoticed for their service to the community.

The following residents of Texas's 9th Congressional District have proven they embrace Mr. Woodson's vision of a brighter tomorrow by their efforts to serve humanity. I am proud and honored to present my 2004 Un-sung Heroes for inclusion in the U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Mrs. Carla Allen, Mr. Rudolph P. Antoine, Ms. Shirley Bailey-Jones, Detective Alton James Baise, Mr. Reginald C. Boykin, Sr., Ms. Whitney Breaux, Bishop B. R. Brown, Mr. Keith Chachere, Mrs. Linda G. Clark, Mr. Freddie L. Coleman, Pastor Michael Cooper, Mrs. Tanya Mechelle Corbin, Ms. Josie Curtis, Mr. Shawn Dorian Dages, Ms. Kimberly Dartist, Mr. Timothy W. Duriso, Mr. Murphy J. Fisher, Mr. Matthew J. Francis, Sr., Mr. Freddie Franks, Ms. Loma George, Mr. Melvin G. Getwood, Sr., God's Kitchen Angels, Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, Mr. Eddie Guillory, Mr. Shelton Guillory, Sr., Ms. Delores Jean Gunner, Mrs. Mary Hayes, Mr. Benjamin J. Jones, Sr., Mr. Willie "K" Knighton, Mr. Jerry Levias, Mr. Michael W. Lewis, Reverend Mark McKinley, Ms. Dorothy J. Milburn, Ms. Ann Monette, Mr. Everett Moton, Mr. Gregory B. Mouton, Mr. Christopher C. Mouton, Mr. Eric Narcisse, Ms. Tina Nguyen, Mr. John E. Payton, Mr. Edgar Sonny Perkins, Jr., Mr. Gene Perkins, Mr. Alex Warren Sanders, Jr., Mr. James Saveat, Ms. MaDeline Kaye Savoy, Reverend Charles H. Segura, Ms. Ora Segura, Ms. Janai Sells, Mr. Brandon Smith, Reverend Adam Smith, Constable Joe Stevenson, Mr. Joseph Threats, Mr. Howard Trahan III, Ms. Thuytram Tram, Mr. Jack Turner, Mrs. Kate Walker, Ms. Wanda G. Wallace, Reverend Alfred White, Mr. Eugene Wilson, Jr.

Members of the communities in the 9th District nominated these individuals for the Un-sung Heroes award that gives special recognition to those un-sung heroes, willing workers, and individuals who are so much a part of Texas's and our Nation's rich history. The award winners were chosen because they embody a giving and sharing spirit, and made a contribution to our Nation. I am proud to represent them here in Congress.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BARBARA JEFFERIES

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Barbara Jefferies and thank her for the remarkable civic contributions she has made to her Durango community and the State of Colorado. As a lifelong resident and rancher of La Plata County, Colorado, Barbara has actively participated in numerous community organizations. Recently, the Durango Chamber of Commerce recognized her efforts as they named her their Agriculturist of the Year. It is with great satisfaction that I congratulate Barbara for her well-deserved award, and thank her for her significant contributions to the Durango Community.

Barbara's life has always revolved around agriculture; she was born on her grandmother's farm, raised on her parents ranch, and now works on a ranch with her husband Ned. Her commitment to the agricultural community in Colorado includes her involvement

with the La Plata County Cow Belles, La Plata-Archuleta County Farm Bureau and Cattleman's Association, and the Colorado Cattlemen's Association. Her enthusiasm for taking part in these organizations comes from her firm belief that "agriculture takes a lot of people to be involved to keep it going," as told to the Durango Herald.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Barbara Jefferies is a woman of great commitment to the agricultural community in Durango and the State of Colorado. Barbara's willingness to provide her time and experience to her fellow farmers and ranchers is worthy of recognition before this body of Congress and this nation today. It is my privilege to extend to Barbara my sincere congratulations on her being named Agriculturist of the Year by the Durango Chamber of Commerce, and to wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

ON BEHALF OF VETERANS

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. McINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the 77,015 veterans in my district. These selfless warriors have dedicated their lives to fighting for this great country and our freedoms, and it is disheartening that many of them do not have access to adequate and affordable health care. Long ago, we made a promise to our veterans and military retirees that we would provide quality health care in return for their service. Unfortunately, over time, this promise has been broken, and too often today quality veterans' facilities are too far away to be truly accessible to rural veterans. How can we continue to sit back and ignore our veterans' requests for better access to health care? Don't we owe it to them to ensure that they are properly cared for? It is time that we take on a new attitude and put forth real actions that will help us to make achievements for veterans for years to come.

First, it's about attitude—the attitude to change the way we provide health care to our veterans today. In my district in rural southeastern North Carolina, there has been enormous growth within the veteran population. In addition to being the home of or near to important military installations, including Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base, Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, and three Coast Guard stations, the area is widely known for its pristine beaches and recreational activities. These amenities make the area a popular destination for retirement, and I am pleased that so many of our courageous service men and women either move to or remain in the area after their retirement. However, with this increase in the veterans' population comes the important issue of how best to serve our veterans' health care needs.

Although Southeastern North Carolina is represented by two commendable VA facilities, access to care remains limited. Veterans in the town of Supply must drive over two hours to be seen at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. And those who need more specialized care must drive an additional two hours to the Durham VA Medical Center. One trip alone could equal eight hours of driving! In addition, because both the Fayetteville VA