

give up. He willed his way through flawless executions on the parallel bars and the high bars to retake first, claim the gold medal, and make history.

However, this was not the first time that Paul has made history. Paul also became the first American man to win the individual all-around world title last year at the 2003 World Championships in Anaheim, California. Hamm completed a clutch performance on the difficult high bar routine during the final rotation to secure the title. He was only the second American to win a medal in the all-around world competition. Paul also secured a gold medal for the floor exercise, helping to lead his team to a silver medal.

In 2003, Paul was named by the International Gymnastics Federation as the Gymnast of the Year. Without question, gymnastics has no better representative.

Paul was born in Wisconsin, but chose to train for the Olympics at The Ohio State University. Paul is now a distinguished resident of Columbus, and his community is proud of all that he has accomplished.

Again, I congratulate Paul for the dedication and hard work he has demonstrated over the years, and for the incredible achievements that he has made both personally and with his team while representing our great nation on the world stage in Athens.

RECOGNIZING THE OAKLAND LITERACY COUNCIL

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, today in America, nearly 1 in 5 adult Americans functions at the lowest literacy level. I rise today to recognize an outstanding organization in Southeast Michigan that is making tremendous strides in the fight against adult illiteracy. The Oakland Literacy Council delivers quality individualized basic reading and English language instruction to Oakland County, Michigan adults, many of whom are English as a second language students.

Since its inception in 1984, the Oakland Literacy Council has contributed more than 527,000 hours of instruction to 7,000 adults. The Literacy Councils' free service has been valued at over \$13.2 million. In 2003 alone, 400 volunteers donated 43,920 hours of their time to give 450 Oakland County residents the literacy skills necessary for a new job, a high school diploma, or just to read a bedtime story to their children.

Mr. Speaker, the Oakland Literacy Council showcases the very best of America's generosity. Besides the thousands of hours of donated time, the Literacy Council is entirely supported by public and private donations to offer free tutoring to all of its students. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the outstanding service the Oakland Literacy Council, and its gracious donors and volunteers, have provided to Southeastern Michigan.

HONORING THE REVEREND ABRAHAM MARSACH ON THE OCCA- SION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to join the many family, friends, and community members who have gathered to celebrate the life and legacy of one of our most outstanding leaders, and my dear friend, Reverend Abraham Marsach, as he celebrates his retirement. However, I am quite sure that his retirement does not mean the end of his advocacy and activism.

As we have seen across the Nation, the Hispanic community in New Haven, has grown and flourished over the last several decades. As it has grown, so has its demands for strong, vocal advocates willing to stand and fight for the needs of its members. Reverend Marsach has been just this kind of advocate—a passionate, active leader who has made a real difference in the lives of many. It is not often that you find such dedicated individuals who commit themselves so fully to the betterment of their community.

As both a community and spiritual leader, Reverend Marsach has touched the lives of thousands in New Haven. In his role as President of the Asociacion Ministerial Evangelica Hispana de New Haven, he helped to unite religious leaders across the community and worked with municipal leaders to effect change in the community. The founder of Junta for Progressive Action, he created a social service agency which has helped thousands in New Haven's Hispanic community access the programs and services they need to improve their quality of life. Mentor, leader, advocate, and friend—Reverend Marsach is a true community treasure.

Reverend Marsach has been a fixture in our community for many years and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for the multitude of contributions he has made that have enriched all of our lives. As a spiritual guide at the Star of Jacob Christian Church in New Haven, he has nourished the souls of many, often providing much needed comfort in the hardest of personal trials. I would be remiss if I did not personally thank him for the wonderful tribute that he made to Maria Perez, a member of my staff who passed away just over two years ago. He shared a unique friendship with Maria and his words were of great comfort to her family and my staff during a most difficult time.

Through his hard work and unparalleled dedication, Reverend Marsach has left an indelible mark on the New Haven community and a legacy that will inspire generations to come. For his innumerable contributions and selfless dedication, I am proud to stand today to extend my deepest thanks and sincerest appreciation. It gives me great pleasure to join his wife, Margarita, his three daughters, family, friends, and the New Haven community in congratulating Reverend Abraham Marsach as he celebrates his retirement. My very best wishes for many more years of health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE THOMPSON

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in tribute to a man with a distinguished career in public service. Throughout the course of his illustrious career, my great friend, Steve Thompson, served his beloved people of California with great passion, integrity, and distinction. On August 17th, California lost its most influential advocate for healthcare policy when Steve passed away after a brief and courageous battle against cancer. As his family and friends gather to pay tribute and remember Steve's countless achievements and contributions to the people of California, I ask all my colleagues to join me in saluting one of the Capitol's most well-respected figures, and my dear friend, Steve Thompson.

Steve started his forty-year Capitol career in 1964 as an Assistant Economist for the Department of Water Resources. In 1966, Steve moved to the Legislative Analyst's Office and, a year later, to the Assembly Health Committee. In 1971, Steve took a job as Principal Consultant to then Assemblyman Willie Brown's Ways and Means Committee. At Ways and Means, Thompson was part of what is now considered an all-star team of staffers that included John Mockler, now a leader on education, Phil Isenberg, who eventually became the Mayor of Sacramento and served in the Legislature for fourteen years, Ray Sullivan, who became a fiscal policy leader, and Bob Connelly, who became the Assembly's Chief Administrative Officer. Steve's numerous gifts were apparent to his cohorts from early on in his career. "In politics, you have to have passion, knowledge and perspective to succeed and Steve had all three," said John Mockler, a friend since 1965.

During this early part of his legislative career, Steve drafted California's first bill on autism and helped create the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, California's landmark reform on mental health services. Steve also played a big role in shaping legislation in the 1960s that created the system for caring for severely developmentally disabled people in smaller regional centers rather than in large state hospitals. Steve left the Legislature in 1974 and founded a public policy research firm. Seven years later, Steve returned to the Capitol as the Chief of Staff for the Speaker of the Assembly, Willie Brown. Willie Brown often referred to Steve as being "central" to his operation. In 1986, Steve took over as director of the Assembly Office of Research.

Throughout the Capitol, Steve was affectionately known as "the Health SMIC," short for "smartest man in California" on health care related issues. In 1992, Steve's mastery of health care related issues landed him the post of government affairs director and chief lobbyist for the California Medical Association. Steve used his influence to fight for the issue that he cared about the most: improving healthcare coverage for the medically uninsured. Just last year, Steve was the driving force behind legislation that requires employers to provide health care benefits to workers. Steve's passion to improve health care was so great that he was still testifying before legislative committees a week before his death.