

Mr. Johnson rose from humble origins to become an icon in the African-American community. It was his vision and creation that launched *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines which became staples in black family homes. His publications depicted positive and factual images of our culture, accomplishments and social advances and plight. Through his resourcefulness, tenacity and love for his people, he created a vehicle for us to see images of ourselves and read articles that reflected our human condition.

I have vivid memories of growing up and seeing *Ebony* and *Jet* in the home of my parents and seeing pictures of my race and individual struggles to secure civil rights for all African-Americans. Ultimately, the efforts of Mr. Johnson resulted in the creation of a publication that achieved a circulation of 1.7 million readers with a monthly readership of 11 million persons.

Truly, John H. Johnson deserves all the accolades we heap upon him. In an effort to highlight the diverse beauty amongst our people, John Johnson produced the *Ebony* Fashion Fair, the world's largest traveling fashion show. The efforts of John Johnson resulted in him being able to employ over 2,600 people and sales in excess of \$388 million.

The contributions of John Johnson were acknowledged and commended by U.S. presidents. President Nixon brought John Johnson with him in 1957 on a tour of the continent of Africa where they visited nine countries. In 1959 he accompanied President Nixon to Russia and Poland, and in 1961 he was appointed by President Kennedy to serve as the Ambassador to the Independence Ceremonies of Ivory Coast. President Clinton awarded him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

I am pleased to acknowledge the contributions of John H. Johnson, a publishing pioneer, entrepreneur, visionary and African-American icon.

NORTHWEST AIRLINES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the American airline industry is struggling, absolutely struggling in the face of very high fuel prices, of pension costs, and fierce competition. Delta and Northwest Airlines have recently filed for bankruptcy protection under chapter 11. United Airlines also recently got a bankruptcy court to severely discount the value of its employee pensions. Clearly, the airline industry needs some help, and they need some leadership. But an article that I read yesterday forces me to question the leadership of certain executives in the airline industry.

Gary Wilson is the chairman of Northwest Airlines, a role where he is supposed to be providing leadership to his company. Northwest Airlines is currently subject to a work stoppage by mechanics and cleaners over wage concessions and job reductions. And now Northwest has approached their pilots and their flight attendants asking them to take significant wage cuts.

Earlier this year, Northwest Airlines stopped funding their defined pension benefit program, only funding their employees' 401(k) program, and I am sure that the 401(k) was also buying plenty of Northwest stock. And what was Chairman Gary Wilson doing during this time with his 4.3 million shares of company stock? He was selling that stock.

Mr. Speaker, today, in the *Detroit Free Press*, there is an article, and the title is "Northwest Airline Chief Sold Shares Just Before Bankruptcy." The article says: "Less than a month before Northwest Airlines Corporation filed for bankruptcy, its chairman sold nearly a third of his remaining shares."

Gary Wilson was not showing faith or confidence in the company that he is charged with leading. Instead, he was dumping his stock before his company went under. And I wonder if the employee 401(k) was selling, or even if it was allowed to sell at the same time. Mr. Wilson sold his shares at an average of \$5.45 per share, and just yesterday that stock was trading for 84 cents per share.

Northwest Airlines is a major carrier in the Detroit, Michigan, market; and it serves my district. We have been hearing all summer long that Northwest was in trouble and that it could be forced to file for bankruptcy protection. Well, what took so long? One has to wonder if the bankruptcy filing was delayed simply so executives like Mr. Wilson could sell their stock to make sure they got their money before the company went out. That is not leadership; that is cowardice or worse.

The employees and the customers of Northwest deserve better. And while Northwest has been asking employees to make concessions in their pensions, they have not been asking the same of their executives. In fact, this past July it was reported that the supplemental pension plan that covers the company's CEO was not subject to a pension freeze. That pension was slated to give the CEO nearly \$1 million a year if he retired at the age of 65.

That was reported again in the *Detroit Free Press* on July 16: "Northwest Airlines to Freeze Pensions for Salaried Staff." Not affected by the freeze is the supplemental pension plan that covers CEO Doug Steenland, among others. In its last annual report, Northwest indicated that Steenland was on track to receive an annual pension of \$947,417 a year if he retires at age 65." And "The airline has said that such generous pensions are needed to recruit and retain top executives."

Well, based on those examples, I do not think Northwest has done a very good job of attracting the best executives. Mr. Speaker, we need strong airlines in this country. We also need competition. We need safety and quality customer service in the airline industry. Of course, employees need to know if sacrifice is needed in the face of increasing costs and competitive pressures, but so do executives. They

should be setting the tone for the company, and they should lead by example. They should not cut and run in the face of trouble.

What is happening at Northwest Airlines at its very highest levels is disgraceful.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MEEHAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF JOHN H. JOHNSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), I rise tonight to salute an extraordinary and gifted American.

John H. Johnson had a vision and used that vision to destroy negative racial stereotypes and to expand opportunities for all African Americans and for all Americans. With a dream and a \$500 loan, secured by his mother's furniture, Mr. JOHNSON began publishing the "Negro Digest" in 1942. With very limited resources and his dream, he built an empire that included publishing and cosmetics.

Through his work and his vision, he has made a lasting contribution. "Jet" and "Ebony" provided a window to the African American community that benefited African Americans and all Americans. "Ebony" and "Jet" became part of the dialogue. It was a way of communicating. We read it in our homes, schools, and in the barber shops and beauty shops.

There is a saying in the African American community: "If it is in 'Jet,' it must be true." In the pages of "Jet" magazine, we read the current news that had an impact on the African American community. In the pages of "Ebony," people saw how other people lived; and we aspired to be like the people we saw on those pages. The pages of his magazine inspired and motivated generations of African Americans. It also helped to break down racial stereotypes by offering positive images and stories of African American men and women.

In 1957 and in 1959, he accompanied Vice President Richard M. Nixon on a special goodwill tour to nine African countries and to Russia and Poland. In 1961, he was appointed by President John F. Kennedy as Special U.S. Ambassador to the Independence Ceremonies of the Ivory Coast. And in 1963, he was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson as Special United States Ambassador to the Independence Ceremonies of Kenya. In 1996, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton.