

leader and loving mother. It has been a pleasure to watch her develop into such a fine leader for the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mrs. Bufalino on this notable occasion. Her spirit and generosity repeatedly propels her into positions of leadership wherever she goes. An outstanding and highly talented woman, she is a model business and civic leader who epitomizes all the qualities required for a recipient of the Athena Award. Our community in northeastern Pennsylvania is far better off because of Mrs. Bufalino's selfless service.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN VETERANS STAND DOWN 2005 EVENT

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 7, 2005

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of the dedicated volunteers of the Southeastern Michigan Veterans Stand Down organization in helping homeless veterans.

Stand Down assists homeless veterans, by working with area service providers, in securing housing, suitable employment and training, helping them return to the mainstream of life's day-to-day activities.

On October 19–20, Southeastern Michigan Stand Down will host a community event geared towards giving homeless veterans the opportunity to begin the process of regaining their self-esteem and their hope. Organized Stand Down events across the country have helped thousands of homeless veterans since 1988.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me today to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude, and to recognize the outstanding and selfless volunteers who organize the Stand Down events each year because they are guided by the Stand Down motto: "For Honor, Duty and Country . . . We Leave No Veteran Behind."

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF MAYOR LOUIS J. BACCI

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 7, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Mayor Louis J. Bacci—devoted family man, accomplished community leader, entrepreneur, United States veteran and admired friend and mentor. For 45 years, Mayor Bacci's vision, integrity and love for his constituents reflected throughout the Village of Cuyahoga Heights and miles beyond.

Mayor Bacci was born and raised in Cuyahoga Heights and lived in the same house his entire life. His parents instilled in him a clear sense of service to others and an unwavering devotion to family, friends and community—qualities that defined his public service and framed his life. He consistently went above and beyond the 'call of duty,' and was always willing to assist an individual or family in need.

Mayor Bacci was first elected to represent the Village as a member of Council, a position he held for 16 years. He then went on to serve as mayor for 29 years. Titles, awards and accolades held no significance for Mayor Bacci—his family, friends and Village family always did. Mayor Bacci's easy-going nature, kindness, limitless generosity, sense of humor, vision and insight drew others to him and his advice was consistently sought after by everyone—from the neighbor down the street, to big city mayors.

Unlike many candidates, Mayor Bacci never spent money on campaign literature. Rather, he discussed his intent along the sidewalks and on front porches throughout the Village, offering his homegrown tomatoes and lively conversation. Mayor Bacci was the heart and soul of Cuyahoga Heights, and he afforded every person the same respect and attention, regardless of their social or political status.

Mayor Bacci's tireless efforts in all areas of local government served to elevate the well-being of every resident and business owner within Cuyahoga Heights. His dedication to the youth of the Village was reflected throughout his service as council member and mayor. Mayor Bacci's work and focus on education is reflected in the students and faculty of Cuyahoga Heights School District and is recognized throughout Ohio. His creation of college scholarship programs within the district has given numerous students an opportunity to achieve their academic goals. Cuyahoga Heights School District is ranked as one of the best in Ohio.

Mayor Bacci's work on behalf of local and regional development, environmental preservation and job retention has positively affected the entire region. A founding member of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS), Mayor Bacci was able to coalesce the commitment and support of suburban mayors and county leaders to unite our region for the common good.

The long-term success of NEORS underscores Mayor Bacci's strength in leadership. NEORS provides efficient and low cost sanitary and water services to millions of residents throughout Cuyahoga County. Moreover, the focus of NEORS has also extended to the restoration of our local environment by earmarking billions of dollars to fund successful cleanup projects that have succeeded in restoring and preserving our local river and wetland ecosystems.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, gratitude and remembrance of Mayor Louis J. Bacci—an exceptional man and caring leader whose life profoundly affected the lives of millions. Mayor Bacci's passing marks a deep loss for countless individuals who called him friend—including me. His brilliant legacy of community progress tempered with preservation will be remembered always by the people of Cuyahoga Heights and by people in neighboring communities throughout Cuyahoga County and beyond. Moreover, it was the power of his kindness, grace, tenacity and heart that uplifted our entire community.

I extend my deepest condolences to Mayor Bacci's beloved wife, Lillian; his beloved children, Charlotte, Laura, Juliann, John, Jack, and the loving memory of John Louis and Louis John; his 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren; and to his extended family and many friends.

Mayor Bacci's life and good works will serve as an ageless example of leadership, service

to others and heart—and his legacy will forever resound throughout the Village of Cuyahoga Heights, and throughout our entire community.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF JUDGE FERNANDO GAITAN, JR.

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 7, 2005

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today in recognition of the achievements of Judge Fernando Gaitan, Jr., an important resident of the 5th Congressional District of Missouri, and current United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri. Judge Gaitan was recently inducted into the Missouri Walk of Fame, during a reception as part of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference, an event held to honor the achievements of African-Americans who have made significant contributions to Missouri.

Judge Gaitan graduated from Pittsburg State University in 1970, and earned his law degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City—where he was member of the Law Review. Judge Gaitan served first as a state trial judge for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit in Kansas City, Missouri. He then went on to serve as an appellate judge on the Missouri Court of Appeals-Western District. He was elevated to the federal bench in 1991 by then-President George H. W. Bush. By the appointment of then Chief Justice William Rehnquist, he also served in the Federal-State Jurisdiction Committee of the Judicial Conference from 1997–2003.

With a great desire to share this incalculable knowledge and experience with others in the community, Judge Gaitan serves as adjunct professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. In addition, he is a member of many non-for-profit boards as well as local, state and national bar associations.

Throughout his career, Judge Gaitan has been noted for his steadfast judicial prudence. His rulings have been noted for their fairness and adherence to the letter and intent of the law. His scholarly approach to judicial decisions coupled with his fundamental commitment to equality and equity are well regarded across the federal judiciary.

For those reasons and more, it was indeed an honor and privilege to recognize Judge Gaitan at the Missouri Walk of Fame reception, hosted by myself and fellow colleague, Missouri Representative William Lacy Clay of St. Louis.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me in expressing our appreciation to Judge Gaitan and his endless commitment to serving the residents of the State of Missouri. He is a true role model not just to the African-American community in Missouri, but to the entire African American community at large. May his success serve as a stepping stone for many other African-Americans eager to be just as successful in their endeavors.