

hand deliver the required documents for his son's application to West Point admissions officials, Patrick was waitlisted and instead attended Iona College.

Patrick K. Dowdell proved to be both resilient and determined, and sought admission to West Point the following year while he excelled at Iona and was elected as Freshman Class Representative in the student government. Supported by teachers, neighbors and friends offering praise and letters of support, Patrick again asked for my nomination, with his father leading the charge.

When the dust of September 11, 2001 settled, Patrick Dowdell and his family learned that Lt. Kevin Dowdell was last seen entering the burning towers to help his fellow citizens and had been lost. Patrick Dowdell, as determined as ever to serve his country and make his dad proud, volunteered in the clean up efforts and continued to pursue his dream of attending West Point.

Patrick K. Dowdell was designated as my principle nominee in 2001 and was a member of the 2006 West Point graduating class. In President Bush's commencement speech last month to the first class to enter the academy after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Patrick had the honor of being the only cadet singled out for praise by the President. In the words of the President, "We live in freedom because young Americans like Patrick and all the cadets here today have stepped forward to serve."

Patrick is now looking forward to serving his country and continuing to honor his father's memory. He also serves as a source of encouragement to his younger brother James Dowdell, who has followed in their father's footsteps by joining the New York City Fire Department, serving in Ladder 174 and providing support to his proud mother, Rose Ellen Dowdell.

Therefore, on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I congratulate Patrick K. Dowdell upon the completion of his studies at West Point and upon his commission as a second lieutenant.

A TRIBUTE TO MARTHA  
RODRIGUEZ-TORRES

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 15, 2006*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Martha Rodriguez-Torres, a distinguished member of the Brooklyn, NY, community. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding leader and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing her impressive accomplishments.

Martha Rodriguez-Torres was born and raised in Brownsville, Brooklyn and is one of five children born to the late Carmen Rodriguez. In spite of being raised in a one-parent household, her mother made certain that education and community involvement were a priority in her home. Martha has her bachelor of science from Boston College, a master of science and a professional diploma from Long Island University and was a member of the Harvard University Principal's Institute.

After working in several school districts throughout the city, Martha became the prin-

cipal of PS 156, the Waverly School of the Arts where she accepted the challenge of leading a low performing school with only 17 percent of the children reading at or above grade level. Today, the school is one that stands as a model for others. The school has become a nurturing environment for both students and teachers and the reading scores at the school have more than tripled.

Martha is respected by both her superiors and peers and has served as a mentor principal and was a member of the Chancellor's Distinguished Faculty, where she trained new principals. Martha worked with Hunter College in the design and implementation of a new program for the training of future administrators.

It is through Martha's dedication, tenacity and courage that she has been able to make a positive impact on her school community and it is because of these very qualities that she now serves as a local instructional superintendent in Region 5 as well as the community superintendent for Community School District 19.

Martha is to be applauded for refusing to let her humble beginnings be an impediment for success, not forgetting from where she came and for continuing to serve those with challenging circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the accomplishments of Martha Rodriguez-Torres as she offers her talents and philanthropic services for the betterment of our local and national communities.

Mr. Speaker, Martha Rodriguez-Torres's selfless service has continuously demonstrated a level of altruistic dedication that makes her most worthy of our recognition today.

TRIBUTE TO THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF FILIPINO MIGRATION  
TO THE UNITED STATES

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 15, 2006*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the more than three million Filipino-Americans and Filipino immigrants across the United States on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Filipino Migration to the United States. This is a significant milestone in the storied tradition of Filipinos in our Nation ever since the first fifteen farm workers, called sakadas, were recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association, arriving in Hawaii on December 20, 1906. They were to become the precursors to millions of other contract workers, who soon came to build America in the succeeding years.

It was in 1919 that Filipino leader Pablo Manlapit organized the first labor union to demand higher wages and better working conditions for the farm workers of Hawaii. He was to be joined by other Asian farm workers, especially those coming from Japan. Though in 1920, some 12,000 farm workers from the sugar plantations were cruelly evicted and thrown out of work; their rugged determination and gritty character typified their conviction that America must live by its creed of equal opportunity and simple justice for all.

The downtrodden and the disenfranchised—these defined the miserable conditions to which those first immigrants were mercilessly subjected. What better way to memorialize those hardy spirits than to invoke their courage under fire during this Centennial of their epic journey to self-hood and recognition. They came to forge a better life and contribute to the building of America in Hawaii's sugar cane and pineapple fields, in the canneries of Alaska, and throughout the verdant farm lands of California and other west coast States.

In his stirring novel, *America is in the Heart*, Carlos Bulosan, the Filipino writer par excellence, described the first Filipino immigrants' abject exclusion from American society when he wrote: "I know deep in my heart that I am an exile in America . . . I feel like a criminal running away from a crime I did not commit. And this crime is that I am a Filipino in America." Despite this inglorious past, their pioneering efforts and resilient spirit were drawn by their genuine belief in America's spirit of idealism as the land of opportunity and promise.

I am confident that under the aegis of this Centennial, America will join Filipino-Americans in recognizing the untold sacrifices of the early Filipino migrants whose faith in God and whose work ethic sustained them in their ordeal. In converging this celebration with the indomitable spirit of those pioneers, we hope to be enlightened and enriched by the messages they wrote through their silent struggles to be recognized and appreciated. It is on this historic occasion that I congratulate the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), the Philippine-American Federation of South Florida (PhilAmFed) and other bonafide groups for their steadfast efforts in sensitizing us to the contributions that Filipino immigrants gave and continue to give to buttressing America's stature as the envy of world today.

Filipino-Americans in my District, and millions of others across this great Nation, may take heart in Mr. Bulosan's prophetic words: "America is not a land of one race or one class of men. We are all Americans that have toiled and suffered and known oppression and defeat . . . America is not merely a land or an institution. America is in the hearts of men that died for freedom; it is also in the eyes of men that are building a new world. America is a warning to those who would try to falsify the ideals of free men. All of us, from the first Adams to the last Filipino, native born or alien, educated or illiterate—We are America!"

Indeed, this Centennial is a proud reminder of the nobility and quiet dignity of Filipino Americans whose predecessors migrated to America 100 years ago, paving the way for countless others.

A TRIBUTE TO MIGUEL A  
FELICIANO

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 15, 2006*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Miguel A. Feliciano, a distinguished member of the business and civic communities. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding leader and I hope by colleagues will join me in recognizing his impressive accomplishments.