

TRIBUTE TO UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL PRESIDENT/CEO IRENE CUMMING

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2007*

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the outgoing president/chief executive officer of the University of Kansas Hospital, Irene Cumming, who is leaving KU's hospital after 11 years to become chief executive officer of the Oak Brook, Illinois, based University HealthSystem Consortium, a group of 97 academic medical centers and their affiliated hospitals.

During her tenure as president/CEO of the University of Kansas Hospital, Irene Cumming compiled what the Kansas Legislature recently described as a "stunning list of successes and achievements." As Lawrence Journal-World editor Dolph Simons, Jr., recently noted, "Cumming became CEO of the hospital in 1996 after serving as its chief financial officer since 1994. The hospital was in bad shape in terms of the number and excellence of its doctors, staff and patients. Staff morale was very low, and its perceived excellence in the minds of greater Kansas City residents was suffering. Today, it is the best hospital in Kansas City. Its patient load is growing each year, it enjoys a solid financial base and it provides great support for the KU medical school both in the quality of training it provides to residents and in the dollars it provides to the school. Cumming helped to build a true winner and model for other hospitals, particularly those with close historical ties to a medical school."

The improvements and accomplishments credited to the University of Kansas Hospital under Irene Cumming's leadership are numerous, including:

Since 1998, patient volume has grown by 50 percent to nearly 20,000 patients, shattering all existing patient volume records in the 100 year history of the hospital;

Financial health has improved steadily every year, with revenue climbing 185 percent to more than half a billion dollars since the Hospital Authority was established;

Financial strength has allowed significant capital investment in resources and facilities, totaling nearly \$450 million in the 8 years following the establishment of the Hospital Authority;

This financial strength has also permitted a 340 percent increase in support provided for the hospital for the university since 1998, with \$31 million this year alone;

After purchasing the outpatient cancer program from a for-profit corporation to which the university had transferred it in the 1990s, the hospital has invested \$75 million in cancer services, including the construction of the largest outpatient cancer center in the region, opening this summer on the hospital's Westwood campus;

In 2000, the heart program at the hospital was revitalized, culminating in the 2006 opening of the \$77 million Center for Advanced Heart Care;

The hospital became, and continues to be, the region's only nationally-accredited level 1 Trauma Center;

The hospital's Bennett Burn Center is the only adult/pediatric burn center in Kansas City

accredited by the American College of Surgeons and the American Burn Association;

The quality and safety of patient care has improved dramatically and gained national recognition; in 2006, the hospital ranked 11th among the Nation's 81 academic medical centers in overall safety and quality rankings;

The hospital ranks in the top 17 percent of institutions in the University HealthSystem Consortium database in mortality;

The hospital earned Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center of the American Nurses Association, the first designation for a Kansas-based hospital [only 3.5 percent of the Nation's health care organizations are Magnet hospitals];

The hospital received the first Annual Performance Achievement Award from the American Heart Association for stroke care in a six-state region;

The hospital's cancer program received the 2004 Commission on Cancer Outstanding Achievement Award, achieved by only eight percent of cancer programs in the country;

The hospital is a nationally recognized leader in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's 100,000 lives campaign;

The hospital pioneered the creation of partnerships between physicians and hospital staff to raise quality, with a model so successful it has been adopted by many institutions across the country;

Patient satisfaction ratings have climbed more than 900 percent since 1998 in the Kansas City area;

Employee turnover has dropped from 33 percent in 1998 to 11.69 percent, the lowest among Kansas City hospitals;

Sixty-one percent of the hospital's nurses have BSN degrees, compared to a 33 percent national average, and the hospital has the second lowest nursing turnover rate among large hospitals in Kansas City;

The hospital's staffed beds have nearly doubled, from 275 to 508; and

The hospital has achieved all of this while still providing care for those who can't afford it; fiscal year 2007 projections are to absorb nearly \$100 million in uncompensated care charges.

Prior to joining KU Hospital, Irene Cumming was associate director of medical affairs for St. Luke's Health System and chief executive officer of St. Luke's Medical Development Corporation in Kansas City, Missouri. From 1989–1993, she was executive vice president and chief financial officer of Allegheny Health, Education and Research Foundation of Philadelphia. Additionally, she previously was a partner in the national health care division of Price Waterhouse, where she was one of the first women to be admitted to the partnership.

Clearly, Irene Cumming is a woman of vision, distinction and achievement. The University of Kansas Hospital was very fortunate to have her as its president/CEO for the past 11 years and her departure leaves an exceptional pair of shoes to fill. Madam Speaker, on behalf of all residents of the Kansas City region and all consumers of KU Hospital, I thank Irene Cumming for her many accomplishments while associated with the University of Kansas Hospital and wish her every success in future endeavors, as well.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF LUKE MCCOY FROM "PENSACOLA SPEAKS"

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2007*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today to recognize a living legend in northwest Florida. After nearly 15 years, Mr. Luke McCoy is stepping down as the host of the long-running "Pensacola Speaks" talk radio show in my district.

Luke's viewpoints were as well-known as his distinctive voice as he took to the airwaves in the afternoon. However, he let all callers and guests offer their own opinions and insights and never hesitated to broach a tough political issue. The topics covered both national and local levels, and the callers always numerous and well-informed no matter the issue. Luke was well-known as the "Common Man's Intellectual" as he brought these issues into a forum where all felt comfortable discussing them and offering their views.

It was not just the topics brought up on Luke McCoy's show that made it great, but also the way Luke presented them—sometimes with humor, sometimes with a touch of irreverence, and when appropriate with well-deserved dignity. However, his respect for differing viewpoints was always constant, and northwest Florida will miss having his familiar presence on the airwaves in the afternoons. Fortunately, listeners will still get to hear Luke on the local morning show, and I know his unique personality will be a breath of fresh air.

Luke McCoy is more than a radio personality, though, Madam Speaker. More than anything, he is a patriot, having served his country in combat and being wounded in action in Vietnam. He served with both the Army's 82nd Airborne Division as well as the Marine Corps as he recognized the greatness of this Nation and answered a call to duty. Those that listen to Luke and meet him know this patriotism is still strong today. He recognizes the different opinions and people that have come together to make America what it is today, but his support goes to what he sees as keeping this the greatest Nation in the world.

Madam Speaker, I know many share my sadness with Luke's departure from "Pensacola Speaks." His name is a fixture in the community, and I know many will seek his advice for years to come. His passion to contribute to this country is endless, and I know as he rides his Harley through northwest Florida and elsewhere that he will always maintain his support and love for the United States of America.

TRIBUTE TO TRACY DELLA VECCHIA

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2007*

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, as our men and women in uniform are deployed all over the world, they leave behind parents, siblings, spouses, children, and friends. It has

come to my attention that Tracy Della Vecchia has formed a network in order for families of those deployed in the United States Marine Corps to stay connected and informed.

When Operation Iraqi Freedom began, Tracy's son, Derrick Johnson, was in marine basic training. Like so many others, he was deployed to Iraq after training. Not long into Derrick's tour Tracy met several other mothers with concerns similar to her own, and it was after this meeting that she decided to create [www.marineparents.com](http://www.marineparents.com). The website was designed for others to reach out through chat rooms in order to post questions and get answers from other families that have been in the same situations and circumstances. Since creating this forum in 2003, Tracy has spent countless hours organizing, sorting, and sending care packages to marines who are serving in Iraq.

Tracy Della Vecchia formed this organization with the intention of making a difference, and the care packages she has mailed have done just that. Recently, she sent hundreds of AA batteries for personal CD players; however, the batteries were put to use in night vision goggles when the unit's supply was exhausted. Personal hygiene and first aid items have also been included in care packages; however, they were used in combat situations to ease the pain of the wounded.

Madam Speaker, I know the Members of the House will join me in thanking Tracy Della Vecchia for all that she does for the United States Marine Corps and the men and women who are currently serving overseas.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF SPECIAL AGENT ERNEST A. SIMON

**HON. JAMES P. MORAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 22, 2007*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments that Special Agent Ernest A. Simon has made to the safety and security of our Nation. Mr. Simon currently serves as the Executive Assistant Director for Criminal Investigations or the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), and is a member of the Senior Executive Service. Special Agent Simon is retiring from federal service after an illustrious 31 year career in federal law enforcement.

Special Agent Simon began his career with the Naval Investigative Service (NIS) in October 1975 following his graduation from San Diego State University. From December 1978 to December 1980, Mr. Simon was assigned to the NCIS Office in Guam, after which served as Staff Assistant to the Regional Director for Operations of the NIS Regional Office New York. In 1982, Mr. Simon was appointed Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) of the NIS Newport, Rhode Island Office, and in 1984 he returned to New York City as ASAC of the NIS Office in New York.

In 1986, Mr. Simon transferred back to the West Coast as Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the NIS Office in Miramar, California, and named SAC of the newly-formed San Diego Regional Fraud Unit, a highly specialized office that focuses on major procurement fraud investigations. In 1990, Mr. Simon transferred to NISHQ, as a Division Head of the Fraud

Department, as part of the reorganization of NIS to NCIS; Mr. Simon was named Deputy Assistant Director for Fraud in the Criminal Investigations Directorate in 1993. In 1996, Mr. Simon was appointed Assistant Director for Government Liaison & Public Affairs and subsequently named Assistant Director for Criminal Investigations.

In July 2001, Mr. Simon was appointed to the Senior Executive Service as the Executive Assistant Director (EAD) for Pacific Operations, headquartered in San Diego, CA. In this capacity, he served as the primary focal point for major Navy and Marine Corps Commands on all force protection, investigations and operations affecting the Pacific region and supervised seven NCIS Field Offices. In April 2006, Mr. Simon was again transferred back to NCIS Headquarters to serve in his current position as EAD for Criminal Investigations.

By promoting results-oriented strategies, as well as focusing on those crime problems that are known to have a debilitating effect on operational readiness or, have the potential to precipitate a serious international political incident, Executive Assistant Director Simon has made the criminal investigations program as a model program for how federal law enforcement should operate in today's high impact and highly charged threat environment.

Mr. Simon's career has been marked by sustained progression, significant challenges and numerous successes. He has earned the reputation over the years of being a stellar investigator who steadfastly adheres to the highest ethical standards of the law enforcement profession, and most importantly, an accomplished and dedicated leader. He will long be remembered as a leader who was deliberate and always maintained a sense of compassion and understanding for the people of NCIS.