

they refused to let someone else trim their dreams. They fought for what they wanted, what they believed in, and spoke out against discrimination.”

The Mercury 13 women, as already stated, were Jerrie Cobb, Gene Nora Jessen, Wally Funk, Irene Leverton, Myrtle “K” Cagle, Jane Hart, Jerri Truhill, Rhea Hurrle Woltman, Sarah Ratley, Bernice “B” Steadman, Jean Hixson, Jan Dietrich, and Marion Dietrich.

I had the honor of meeting several of these very tough and spirited women at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh in a commencement ceremony, and I was privileged and honored to present to the Mercury 13 women an honorary degree, an honorary doctorate. Today, I have the extreme privilege to honor these phenomenal and extraordinary women on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and their pioneering spirit that has advanced the rights of women everywhere. As these Mercury 13 women have demonstrated, the sky is not the limit.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my friend from Oregon that I have no further speakers and am prepared to reserve my time until it is appropriate to close.

Mr. WU. There are no further speakers on this side, either, if the gentleman would care to close.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank my colleagues for their support for the great history of the Mercury 13. I should say since that Mercury 13 program, there have been 34 women that have flown aboard the space shuttle, including four who made the ultimate sacrifice in the *Challenger* and *Columbia* accidents.

In order to honor such dedication after the *Columbia* accident, America committed to a vision for space exploration that will return Americans to the Moon. Undoubtedly, several women will make that journey. I look forward to that moment when the first American woman steps on the Moon and shares her experience with the rest of the world.

This resolution by the gentleman from Oregon and others recognizes the first 13 women that helped propel an entire gender and an entire nation into space.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WU. I thank the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to recognize the good work of my colleague from Wisconsin, Dr. KAGEN, for bringing this legislation to the floor. It is timely and it is timely recognition of a space program that includes everyone from America and now, because of the international space station and international space efforts, includes many people from around the world.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer strong support for House Resolution 421, honoring the extraordinary accomplishments and

courageous journey of the Mercury 13 women. Though largely unrecognized in history, these 13 female pilots displayed determination, bravery and strength in their quest for space exploration.

Selected from a large group of women, the Mercury 13 pilots endured and passed the same grueling physical and psychological tests as the Mercury 7 male astronauts. These women however, were tested not only on their ability to withstand the toils of space exploration but also on their capacity to overcome extensive discrimination in both their careers and personal lives. When championing their cause, the women were repeatedly told by government officials that any effort to put a woman in space was a waste of time and money. Given this lack of U.S. support, Valentina Tereshkova, a Russian engineer, became the first woman in space on June 16, 1963. It would be many years later, in 1983, that Dr. Sally Ride would become the first American woman in space.

Although the women of Mercury 13 were barred from space travel, disappointment did not lessen their pioneering spirit and quest for equality. We must follow their lead. Given our country's shortcomings in 1963, it is our responsibility today to ensure that future generations of women are granted equal opportunities to follow their dreams.

These courageous women demonstrate that the sky is not the limit and that as a Nation we must ensure that all individuals, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity, are encouraged to venture into the fields of math, science, technology and engineering. I believe we must instill the spirit of the Mercury 13 into our children today, by supporting innovative programs such as the National Science Foundation that promote technology in the classroom. By creating an environment in this country that fosters innovation and growth, we will ensure our businesses and workforce can stay competitive in the global economy of the 21st century. From new education technology and better math and science teachers to train the next generation of innovators, to the promotion of new sources of energy and the expansion of markets for our products, this comprehensive agenda will create a strong foundation to build the economy of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to capitalize on this opportunity to extend an honor to the women of Mercury 13 and to ensure we never again allow gender inequality to restrict our citizens' ambition and potential.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 421.

This resolution recognizes the brave “Mercury 13” women who in the early 1960s undertook the human exploration of space.

The members of the “Mercury 13” include Myrtle Cagle, Geraldyn “Jerrie” Cobb, Jan Dietrich, Marion Dietrich, Mary Wallace “Wally” Funk, Jane Briggs Hart, Jean Hixson, Gene Nora Stumbough Jessen, Irene Leverton, Sarah Lee Gorelick Ratley, Bernice Trimble Steadman, Geraldine “Jerri” Sloan Truhill, and Rhea Hurrle Allison Woltman.

The “Mercury 13” women successfully passed the same physical and psychological tests as those of their male counterparts, the “Mercury 7.”

Just before leaving for the next phase of training at the Naval Aviation Center in Pensacola, Florida, they were told not to come.

In 1961, their efforts marked a milestone in American history and these women paved the way for those who would follow in their footsteps.

The Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas has been the leading NASA center for more than 40 years and continues to encourage women to participate in the area of space exploration.

H. Res. 421 is an important way to help young women understand the importance of space and science.

As of today, there have been 34 women in space, and although this is a great accomplishment, there should be more.

It is my hope that this resolution encourages girls to pursue what they may feel is impossible.

The “Mercury 13” continue to inspire women of all ages to go above and beyond, so that they can fulfill their dreams. The sacrifices of these women deserve to be honored.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 421, a resolution to honor the achievements of women in space exploration.

In the 1960s, a courageous group of women challenged themselves, and the stereotypes of our Nation, to become the First Lady Astronaut Trainees.

These women were all accomplished pilots with a dream to explore the unknown.

Thirteen of these women—“the Mercury 13”—were chosen to be part of America's space team, breaking boundaries with their passion and determination.

Though the program was discontinued before these women could actually fly in space, they paved the way for future female astronauts through their hard work and relentless efforts.

Finally, NASA got the message and began recruiting women again, starting with the class of 1978 astronauts and culminating in the first American woman in space in 1983.

Without the efforts of the Mercury 13, women with skills and interest in science and exploration would have had a much tougher time breaking through gender barriers.

The Mercury 13 women saw roadblocks as challenges to overcome.

I hope that all of the young women in my district and across America may be inspired to make change by their example.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 421.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING ASTRONAUT WALTER MARTY SCHIRRA AND EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON HIS PASSING

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 446) honoring the life and

accomplishments of Astronaut Walter Marty Schirra and expressing condolences on his passing.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 446

Whereas Walter Schirra was born on March 12, 1923, in Hackensack, New Jersey;

Whereas as an exchange pilot with the 154th Fighter Bomber Squadron during the Korean War, he flew 90 combat missions in F-84E jets and was credited with downing at least one MIG fighter;

Whereas on October 3, 1962, Walter Schirra became the fifth person to fly in space when he piloted Mercury 8 (Sigma 7) on a six-orbit mission lasting 9 hours, 13 minutes and 11 seconds;

Whereas on December 15, 1965, Walter Schirra piloted Gemini 6A in what was the first attempted rendezvous by two manned spacecraft in earth orbit;

Whereas on October 11, 1968, he concluded his third and final mission when he was launched as commander of Apollo 7, the first manned Apollo mission, making Commander Schirra the only astronaut to fly aboard Mercury, Gemini and Apollo spacecrafts;

Whereas Commander Schirra was the recipient of many distinguished awards, including three distinguished flying crosses, two air medals, two NASA Distinguished Services Medals and induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame;

Whereas after he retired to San Diego in 1984, Wally dedicated much of his later years to working with children on connecting them to the amazing possibilities that a career on space exploration could provide, and as a tireless advocate for discovery, Wally was an inspirational figure for countless San Diegans; and

Whereas Commander Schirra was an exemplary resident of the State of California where he resided in La Jolla until the time of his death on May 2, 2007: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the life and accomplishments of Astronaut Walter Marty Schirra and expresses condolences on his passing; and

(2) recognizes the profound importance of Astronaut Schirra's record as a pioneer in space exploration and long-time contributor to NASA's mission as a catalyst to space exploration and scientific advancement in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 446, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of one of our heroes of the American space pro-

gram, astronaut Walter Schirra, known as Wally Schirra. In his 84 years, spanning 1923 to 2007, Captain Schirra took great risks on behalf of his country, including while serving in the Pacific during World War II.

□ 1120

During the Korean War, Captain Schirra served our country as an exchange pilot with the 154th Fighter Bomber Squadron and flew 90 combat missions and downed at least one MIG fighter.

In April of 1959, Wally Schirra was selected by NASA as one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts. On October 3, 1962, he became the third American to orbit the Earth when he piloted his Sigma 7 spacecraft on a six-orbit mission that lasted 9 hours 13 minutes and 11 seconds.

As a brand new American who had just been in this country for a year and about 8 years old, I remember that, and I just remember that as one of the signal moments that I indeed had come to a country where anything and everything was possible, and Wally Schirra and others of the Mercury 7 group demonstrated that to America and to the world.

Wally Schirra went on to pilot the Gemini 6A mission in 1965, which involved the first attempted rendezvous by two manned spacecraft in Earth orbit, and he made his third and final mission in October, 1968, as commander of the first manned Apollo mission, Apollo 7.

During his career as an astronaut, Wally Schirra was the only astronaut to fly aboard all three generations of our late sixties-early seventies spacecraft, the Mercury, the Gemini and Apollo spacecraft. His outstanding service to the U.S. space program is marked by several awards, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Force Medal, NASA Distinguished Service Medal, and induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

Wally Schirra was a tireless advocate for discovery and spent his later years helping to connect children with the amazing possibilities that a career in space exploration can offer.

Mr. Speaker, today, I seek the support of this Chamber to honor the life and accomplishments of astronaut Wally Schirra, to express condolences on his passing, and to recognize the profound importance of astronaut Schirra's record as a space pioneer and a long-time contributor to NASA's mission of space exploration, scientific advancement and education in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, it is only fitting that this Chamber honor Wally Schirra's achievements, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank Mr. WU, my friend from Oregon, for

this resolution and want to speak in favor of H. Res. 446, which honors the life and accomplishments of an extraordinary man, astronaut Walter Marty Schirra. Wally Schirra, as he was known to nearly everyone, was truly a great American and a terrific human being.

Wally Schirra was born in Hackensack, New Jersey, on March 12, 1923, and was perhaps best known as an accomplished NASA astronaut and human spaceflight pioneer, with the distinction of being the only astronaut to fly aboard the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo spacecrafts. He was named one of NASA's original Mercury 7 astronauts in April of 1959 and became the fifth American to fly into space. Then, as the commander of the Gemini 6A spacecraft, he completed a dramatic rendezvous in space with the Gemini 7 spacecraft.

Schirra then served as commander of the Apollo 7 mission, which was the first Apollo flight after the catastrophic 1967 launch pad fire that killed the original Apollo 1 crew. At the conclusion of the Apollo 7 mission, Schirra had logged 295 hours and 15 minutes in space.

Before his service with NASA, Wally Schirra had already served his country with honor as a pilot in the 154th Fighter Bomber Squadron during the Korean War. Schirra flew over 90 combat missions in F-84E jets and was credited with downing at least one enemy MIG fighter.

What is perhaps less well-known about Wally Schirra is his personal warmth, his contagious sense of humor and his tireless dedication as an advocate for discovery. After his retirement in 1984, he spent many years working to inspire children to pursue their dreams by connecting them to the amazing possibilities of space exploration.

Schirra captured the pride of our entire Nation when he wrote, "We shared a common dream to test the limits of man's imagination and daring. Those early pioneering flights of Mercury, the performances of Gemini and the trips to the moon established us, once and for, all as what I like to call a spacefaring nation. Like England, Spain and Portugal crossing the seas in search of their nations' greatness, so we reached for the skies and emboldened our Nation."

I am deeply saddened by Wally Schirra's passing on May 2, 2007. He was truly an American hero. I am proud to support this resolution honoring such a prominent American citizen, military veteran and astronaut.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 446.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY).

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to, first of all, thank the chairman from Oregon and the ranking member for

supporting my bill, H. Res. 446, in recognition of the life of Wally Schirra. I would just have to say that when we go through the record of the life of Wally, he was a San Diegan for a long time; and we celebrated Wally as a neighbor and as a friend and as a national and international hero.

The fact is that he did serve extensively, like many San Diegans, in the military, with three Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Air Medals, more than a MIG or two on the side. He obviously went into the space race with a lot of accomplishments.

Being the only individual to fly in all three of the first stages of manned space flight for America was unique, but I think, as was pointed out before, Wally is a man that filled in so often when others might have hesitated.

After the terrible disaster of losing astronauts in a major fire, he did not hesitate to look forward to being the first to step back into those capsules and move on and move up with our space race. That kind of bravery we didn't really take into consideration at the time. What a huge challenge it must have been to explain to your wife, "Honey, I am going to get in this capsule. Somebody has to do it, and I will be the one." We don't think about that family, that personal aspect of being a hero and moving forward with those kinds of accomplishments.

I also would like to say that we forget that, without the docking procedure that Wally was able to master, there was not going to be any trip to the moon. It was an essential component, as important as any missile, any rocket, any control system. The ability for man to dock with another spaceship was an essential part, and Wally was a major part of that.

But I want to thank all my colleagues for supporting this bill. Wally was our neighbor, he was our friend, and he really did live a life that San Diegans are proud of in public service. He spent his later years working with the local museums for flight history, and he also spent a lot of time on his sailboat in San Diego.

But I want to thank all of you, because Wally was not just a hero to the world and to America; he was a neighbor and a friend to those of us in San Diego.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is a terrific resolution. Mr. BILBRAY is rightfully proud to call Wally Schirra a neighbor and a friend. I think America can call him a neighbor and a friend as well.

I expect to be proudly this Friday evening down at Cape Canaveral where we will hopefully send the next shuttle flight into space with some good luck and good fortune. And as I am down there I will join many Americans in thinking about Wally Schirra and the other great heroes that have come forward and made these great feats today

possible and the many more opportunities in space that would not have happened without heroes like Wally Schirra.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and accomplishments of Astronaut Walter Marty Schirra, one of our heroes of the American space program.

In his 84 years of life spanning from 1923–2007, Captain Schirra took great risks on behalf of his country.

During the Korean War, Captain Schirra served the country as an exchange pilot with the 154th Fighter Bomber Squadron and flew 90 combat missions and downed at least one MIG fighter.

In April of 1959, "Wally" Schirra was selected by NASA as one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts.

On October 3, 1962, he became the third American to orbit the Earth when he piloted his Sigma 7 spacecraft on a six-orbit mission that lasted 9 hours, 13 minutes, and 11 seconds.

He went on to pilot the Gemini 6A mission in 1965, which involved the first attempted rendezvous by two manned spacecraft in Earth orbit, and he made his third and final mission in October 1968 as commander of the first manned Apollo mission, Apollo 7.

During his career as an astronaut, Wally Schirra was the only astronaut to fly aboard the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo spacecrafts, and his outstanding service to the U.S. space program is marked by several awards, including Distinguished Flying Crosses, Air Medals, NASA Distinguished Service Medals, and induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

Wally Schirra was a tireless advocate for discovery and spent the later years of his life helping to connect children with the amazing possibilities that a career in space exploration can offer.

Mr. Speaker, today I seek support to: honor the life and accomplishments of astronaut Walter "Wally" Schirra; to express condolences on his passing; and to recognize the profound importance of Astronaut Schirra's record as a space pioneer and a long-time contributor to NASA's mission as a catalyst to space exploration and scientific advancement in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, it is only fitting that this House honor Wally Schirra's achievements, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 446, honoring the life and accomplishments of Astronaut Walter Marty Schirra and expressing condolences on his passing.

Astronaut Walter Marty Schirra was a member of the Mercury 7, who were named by NASA in April of 1959.

He piloted the six orbit *Sigma 7* Mercury flight, the *Gemini 6* flight and was Command Pilot on the *Apollo VII*.

Walter Schirra became the first man to fly in space three times after being pilot of the *Apollo VII*. Schirra received numerous awards and honors while being a member of NASA. Schirra logged more than 295 hours in space.

After he left NASA in 1969, he worked as a television commentator during the Apollo moon landings, was an engineering consultant and worked on corporate boards.

Not only was Walter Schirra an astronaut, but he was an advocate for students who want to pursue careers in science and engineering.

He helped to found the Mercury Seven Foundation, which creates college scholarships for engineering and science students.

The passing of Walter Schirra has been a huge loss to the space community and America as a whole.

His contributions will never be forgotten, and he leaves a strong legacy of bravery and service. I urge support of this resolution.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life of one of our great space pioneers, Walter M. "Wally" Schirra and to speak in support of H. Res. 446, a resolution to recognize his many accomplishments and honor his memory.

Wally Schirra was one of the original seven Mercury Astronauts and the only astronaut to fly in all three of the earliest manned space programs: Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo.

He was known for being an exact and precise pilot, and this aviation excellence speaks for itself as Capt. Schirra flew 90 combat missions while serving in the Navy during the Korean War. Later, during his Gemini 6 mission as a NASA astronaut, Schirra conducted the first rendezvous of manned spacecraft in orbit, considered one of the most challenging tasks in space flight at the time.

Capt. Schirra was a great astronaut and a great American. What many of my colleagues may not realize is that Wally Schirra became an active businessman and citizen in Colorado after retiring from the space program.

In the decade after he retired from NASA's Astronaut Corps, he moved to Denver where he lived a life as a successful businessman and an active environmentalist. When he first came to Colorado, he became the president of an investment company. Several years after that, he started an environmental management firm that concentrated their efforts towards developing solutions for environmental problems faced by the government and private industry.

In addition to being an advisor to Colorado State University, Capt. Schirra was also an avid outdoors man, as evidenced by his tenure as a trustee of the Colorado Outward Bound School.

Later in his life, while he continued to be busy in civic life, he played an active role in Colorado politics and served as Colorado's honorary chairman for Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign.

I and my fellow Coloradans will miss him, and I urge my colleagues to honor his memory by passing H. Res. 446.

□ 1130

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 446.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.