

Since that date millions of Americans, driven by a deep sense of responsibility and compassion for their neighbors, have risked their lives on a daily basis to ensure the safety of others. Currently, over a million Americans serve their communities as fire fighters.

I would like to specifically honor the following individuals who have been named Firefighters and Rescue Persons of the Year by the McDowell Fire and Rescue Association: for the Ashford North Cove Fire Department, Thomas Swofford; for the Crooked Creek Fire Department, Glen Anderson; for the Dysartsville Fire Department, Billy Driggers; for the Glenwood Fire Department, Ryan Spencer and Curtis Grant; for the Hankins North Fork Fire Department, Charles Parker; for the Marion Fire Department, Amy Hudgins; for the Nebo Fire Department, Alan Snypes; for the Old Fort Fire Department, Nick Stafford; for the P.G. Fire Department, Bradley Wyatt; for the Sugar Hill Montford Cove Fire Department, David Patton; for the Woodlawn Fire Department, Lucas Davis; for the McDowell County Rescue Squad, Randy Freeman.

I want to offer tribute to the following First Responders of the Year: for the Ashford North Cove Fire Department, Bradley Washburn; for the Crooked Creek Fire Department, Kirk Lunsford; for the Dysartsville Fire Department, Jeff Walker; for the Glenwood Fire Department, Gene Morgan; for the Hankins North Fork Fire Department, Jimmy Hardin; for the Marion Fire Department, Phillip Finley; for the Nebo Fire Department, Shane Kirkpatrick; for the Old Fort Fire Department, Roy Crisp; for the P.G. Fire Department, Danny Killough; for the Sugar Hill Montford Cove Fire Department, Chris Parker; for the Woodlawn Fire Department, Gary Cook.

I would also like to recognize Brian Lonon, McDowell County Paramedic of the Year, and Derek Carlson, McDowell County Telecommunicator of the Year.

It is with great respect and gratitude that I commend these brave and dedicated fire and rescue workers. I am honored to be able to stand with the McDowell Fire and Rescue Association in recognizing their hard work and service.

HONORING THE REVEREND WILLIAM A. LAWSON ON FATHER'S DAY

**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I would like to honor a man who exemplifies what it means to be an excellent father—a man who is a community leader, an upstanding and moral man, and a positive role model for our youth. The Reverend Dr. William A. Lawson, who lives in my congressional district, has done great things, and I am proud to express my congratulations to him for all he has done for our community.

Reverend Lawson is a tremendous father figure and fixture in our community. He has been married to his wife Audrey for over fifty years and admirably raised four children. He was the founding pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church and continues to lead that con-

gregation. Reverend Lawson has also been deeply involved in the community even outside of his church, having conceived and organized the United Way's Houston Homeless Initiative, which raised over \$4 million in a four-year period. He also organized the Houston area's largest and most productive scouting program, leading to his receipt of the 1991 Silver Beaver Award in support of scouting. Clearly, Reverend Lawson has demonstrated the very kind of leadership that we need in our communities to help our youth develop into successful adults.

Reverend Lawson has long been a valued member of the community, and rightly so. On this occasion of Father's Day, I would like to recognize Reverend Lawson for all of his accomplishments and urge people across America to look to leaders such as Reverend Lawson as role models for their work in inspiring and engaging our youth to live productive, positive lives.

REAUTHORIZE THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

**HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I join Representatives CASTLE, FERGUSON and SHAYS in introducing the Assault Weapons Ban Reauthorization Act of 2008. This September will mark the fourth anniversary of the expiration of the landmark 1994 Assault Weapons Ban. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms reported that crimes involving assault weapons dropped by two-thirds while the Federal ban was in effect. As the Nation witnesses a dramatic spread of violent gang activity, it is imperative that we take action to keep automatic weapons out of the hands of these criminals. It is high time to bring back the ban.

This bill will prohibit the domestic manufacture and sale of military-style semi-automatic assault weapons such as AK-47s and UZIs, as well as high-capacity ammunition clips that hold more than ten rounds. It also includes weapons designed to fit accessories such as flash suppressors, silencers, and bayonets—accessories that serve no legitimate purpose outside the military and law enforcement.

The Mexican government is currently engaged in a violent war against heavily armed, extremely violent drug traffickers. Just recently the cartels assassinated the Mexican equivalent of our FBI Director. They are now threatening President Calderon's life.

These gangs operate in every major metropolitan area in the United States, and are increasingly active in suburban America where the local police are ill-equipped to meet this threat. Restoring the assault weapons ban will help level the playing field for these police as they work to keep our communities safe and gang-free.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this commonsense legislation.

HONORING THE REVEREND ROBERT JEFFERSON ON FATHER'S DAY

**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I would like to honor a man who exemplifies what it means to be an excellent father—a man who is a community leader, an upstanding and moral man, and a positive role model for our youth. The Reverend Robert Jefferson has done great things, and I am proud to express my congratulations to him for all he has done for our community.

Reverend Jefferson has long devoted himself to improving our community, especially for our young people. Along with serving as the pastor of the Cullen Missionary Baptist Church, which I attend, he is the Founder/President of the Ministry Advisory Council, Special Projects Director to the Houston Ministers Against Crime, and the Founder/President of A Brand New City. He has played a critical role in creating the Teen Court, a program to be implemented with the Houston Independent School District that would allow students to be punished for infractions without developing a criminal record. I have personally observed Reverend Jefferson's work with children and other at-risk individuals and I can testify that he is an exemplary leader for our young people.

Reverend Jefferson has long been a valued member of community, and rightly so. On this occasion of Father's Day, I would like to recognize Reverend Jefferson for all of his accomplishments and urge people across America to look to leaders such as Reverend Jefferson as role models for their work in inspiring and engaging our youth to live productive, positive lives.

CELEBRATING 80TH BIRTHDAY OF GERALD (JERRY) KOPEL AND 56TH ANNIVERSARY OF JERRY AND DOLORES KOPEL

**HON. DIANA DeGETTE**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize a dual celebration for two distinguished members of the First Congressional District. This week the Kopel family of Denver celebrates the 80th Birthday of Gerald (Jerry) Kopel and the 56th Anniversary of the marriage between Jerry and Dolores Kopel.

Jerry and Dolores have led an interesting and engaged life together, balancing careers in journalism, law, politics, and policy. They were the original "power couple" long before dual careers were more outwardly prevalent and socially acceptable. What is truly admirable is the Kopels managed to pursue these accomplishments while raising a family and contributing to the broader well-being of our community.

Dolores and Jerry met at the University of Colorado when Jerry was managing editor of the Silver and Gold newspaper and Dolores was a reporter. Jerry graduated from the University and Dolores transferred to the University of Denver College of Law. They married at

the end of her first year of law school, while Jerry was working for the Rocky Mountain News.

Dolores graduated from law school cum laude in June 1954. Jerry enrolled in law school in January 1958 but continued to pull night shifts at the Rocky Mountain News as a copy editor. In 1958, Jerry graduated cum laude from the University of Denver. The Kopels had the unique experience of practicing law together until 1979, when Dolores was appointed U.S. Trustee for the District of Colorado and Kansas.

In the Kopels' life-long dedication to giving back to the community and preparing the next generation for careers in law, Jerry directed a review course for law students preparing for the Colorado bar exam from 1958 through 1985.

In 1964, Jerry combined his background in journalism and his law degree to become an influential member of the Democratic Party. He served as state representative for a total of twenty-two years, spanning two decades.

Jerry was known as the consummate legislator, reading every bill and every amendment that came before the House chamber. He carried 110 bills as chief sponsor, including the nation's first sunset law.

Jerry's 22 years in the State Legislature and his extensive involvement in community issues and Colorado politics are encapsulated in "The Gerald Kopel Papers," which are housed in the Denver Public Library's Western History Collection. The papers are perhaps the most extensive archive of the public career of any American state legislator from the 20th century.

After retiring from the Legislature in 1992, Jerry continued to produce a printed newsletter, titled "Jerry Kopel's Report" until 1998. However, to this day, Jerry prepares weekly reports for House Democrats and suggests amendments to bills being debated on the House floor.

Since retirement, Jerry has returned to journalism. He writes a weekly column for the Colorado Statesman and other newspapers and has joined the technological age with an extensive Web site chronicling his columns and exhibiting his extensive knowledge of Colorado politics, law, and history.

Over the years, Jerry has won numerous awards from the Colorado Press Association, most recently in 2006 in the Public Service

writing category. All of his 600-some columns were edited by his wife, Dolores. Both Jerry and Dolores have received recognition from the Denver Bar Association for 50 years of practice. Their son, David, is an attorney and author who is a columnist for the Rocky Mountain News.

Jerry is also an accomplished cocktail pianist, and has entertained at many local functions. He has issued several fine CD's which are in my personal collection.

I have personally known Jerry and Dolores for many years, eagerly accepting Jerry's sage advice on politics and I am an ardent reader of his weekly columns. Jerry and Dolores have had a distinctive lifetime at the forefront of Colorado politics, policy, and history and their commitment to public service and the betterment of their fellow Coloradans serves as a sterling example for younger generations and those entering public policy careers.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Kopel and his wife Dolores a wonderful 56th Anniversary and Jerry a healthy and prosperous 80th birthday and pay tribute to their longstanding service and dedication to the City of Denver and the State of Colorado.

#### HONORING DISABLED VETERANS

### HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor today to honor those defenders of liberty who do not get the honor, the respect, and the recognition that they are due. Because, Madam Speaker, as hard as we try we can never adequately repay those disabled while fighting for our freedom.

I am often reminded of a quote from President Calvin Coolidge, who was known as "Silent Cal" because he said very little. But when he spoke, people listened. One of the things he said was that "a nation that forgets its defenders will soon itself be forgotten." So, one of the things I try to do as a member of Congress is to ensure that we never forget our defenders of freedom and that I find opportunities to celebrate their achievement and to celebrate their sacrifice. That is why we are here today, to defend disabled veterans for their sacrifice.

One quality unique to disabled veterans is the continuous sacrifice they make each and every day. After the war is finished, their battle is not over. These veterans and their families will forever have a reminder of the price they paid for our freedom.

Madam Speaker, I am humbled and privileged to represent these individuals in the U.S. House of Representatives and as long as I am serving in this body, I am committed to ensuring that this nation never forgets these heroes.

#### HONORING THE REVEREND HUAN NGOC NGUYEN ON FATHER'S DAY

### HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 2008*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I would like to honor a man who exemplifies what it means to be an excellent father—a man who is a community leader, an upstanding and moral man, and a positive role model for our youth. The Reverend Huan Ngoc Nguyen, who lives in my congressional district, has done great things, and I am proud to express my congratulations to him for all he has done for our community.

Reverend Nguyen, a father of three sons and two daughters, has been married since 1945. He fled to Thailand from danger in Vietnam in 1979 and came here to the United States in 1980, where he quickly became an active and valued member of the community, eventually becoming an American citizen in 1986. Reverend Nguyen, who preaches at Houston's Vietnamese First Alliance Church, has taught Sunday school since 1985 and became a pastor in 2005.

Reverend Nguyen has long been a valued member of the community, and rightly so. On this occasion of Father's Day, I would like to recognize Reverend Nguyen for all of his accomplishments and urge people across America to look to leaders such as Reverend Nguyen as role models for their work in inspiring and engaging our youth to live productive, positive lives.