

DANTE "GLUEFINGERS" LAVELLI

HON. STEVEN C. LATOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, when you were a Cleveland Browns fan, there is no halfway. To be a Browns fan requires a lifelong devotion, an unflinching loyalty, a reverence for all those who came before. As a Browns fan, you come to accept that your loyalty will be tested often, and in ways you cannot fathom—the Drive, the Fumble, the stealth, dark-of-night move to Baltimore. Yet, the loyalty never wavers—mostly because the rewards and the memories forged on Sunday afternoons between fathers, sons, friends and neighbors are so powerful—even when they are few and far between.

One of pillars of the Browns recently passed: Dante "Glue Fingers" Lavelli. He played with Otto Graham, Marion Motley and Lou "The Toe" Groza and was coached by the legendary Paul Brown. He led the team to seven championships in the 1940s and 1950s. He was a gridiron star in his hometown of Hudson, OH, which is part of my district. He led his high school team to three straight undefeated seasons.

Dante Lavelli was a World War II Army veteran who missed most of college to defend our Nation, trading the Horseshoe at Ohio State for the beaches of Normandy. The famed receiver—nicknamed "Gluefingers" because he never dropped the ball—was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton more than 30 years ago, where his 386 catches for 6,488 yards and 62 touchdowns are part of football lore. He loved one woman for more than 60 years, his beloved wife, Joy. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, a son, and four grandchildren, including Aaron Bill, who worked for me in Washington and now attends law school.

I want to submit into the RECORD a column written by renowned Cleveland Plain Dealer sportswriter Terry Pluto, who so eloquently captured the magic of a man who meant so much to his family, his community, the Browns and the NFL. The article was published on January 25, 2009, the day after Lavelli's funeral in Hudson, OH.

He was a man who put salt on almost everything, especially a salad. He drank a huge can of ice tea each night and would drive his grandchildren around, forcing them to listen to polka music in the car.

Dante Lavelli was so much more than a Hall of Fame receiver for the Cleveland Browns, as family and friends made clear during his funeral at St. Mary's Church in Hudson on Saturday.

Aaron Bill walked up to the pulpit with a comb as he prepared to talk about his grandfather, who died Tuesday at the age of 85.

"He was always trying to comb my hair," said Bill. "He'd tell me that my sideburns were too long, that I needed a haircut. He wanted me to pull up my pants even when they were as high as they could go."

Yes, he's Dante Lavelli, "Gluefingers." He was Dante Lavelli, Mr. "Clutch." He was Dante Lavelli, the receiver's receiver, a player whose football personality was opposite to so many of the self-absorbed types who play the position today.

He's the man "who never dropped a pass that he touched, not in practices or games." So said great Browns coach Paul Brown at

Lavelli's Hall of Fame induction in 1975. He also never did a celebration dance in the end zone, because he had been there before—a total of 62 times in his 11-year Browns career.

Lavelli caught all but 20 of his 386 receptions from Hall of Famer Otto Graham. He also played games in 1956, his final season, with a notebook and pencil tucked inside his pads so he could sign up opponents after the game to join the new Players Association that he helped assemble.

"When my father walked, the floor shook," said his son, Edward Lavelli.

Or so it seemed.

He led Hudson High to three undefeated seasons in the late 1930s.

He played only three games at Ohio State before joining the Army, where he was in the 28th Infantry.

The flag on his casket was a reminder that Lavelli was part of the group of men who landed at Omaha Beach. He was in Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944-45, where the Allies lost an estimated 81,000 men.

In an interview with Scout.com, Lavelli said at one point in the fighting, "I spent three days in a foxhole." He also said he prayed the "Our Father" constantly for three days.

After his football career, Lavelli had ownership interest in a furniture store, in two bowling alleys and other business ventures. He had been the oldest living member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He pushed for recognition of the 1948 Browns for their undefeated season, which had been dismissed by the NFL because it happened in the old All-American Football Conference.

As Father John Betters said in his homily, "Dante Lavelli truly was one of America's Greatest Generation."

Lavelli was married for nearly 60 years to Joy, and spent much of his later life in Westlake. His family members mentioned how he loved to win at anything, from gin rummy to golf to negotiating to buy a car.

Oldest daughter Lucinda said her father often offered this advice: "Save your money and get some rest."

Or as grandson Aaron Bill said, looking up and speaking to his deceased grandfather, "I love you very much, and I'll miss talking to you every day. And don't worry, my shoes aren't untied. I wore loafers."

IN RECOGNITION OF ARMY STAFF
SERGEANT CARLO M. ROBINSON

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a true American hero. On January 17, 2009, our Nation and our state lost a brave soldier when Army Staff Sergeant Carlo Montel Robinson died in Bagram, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He died of wounds sustained in Kabul, Afghanistan, when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle.

Staff Sergeant Robinson grew up in Hope, Arkansas—a tight-knit community where I had the privilege of growing up as well. Although I never had the honor to meet Staff Sergeant Robinson, on behalf of the community of Hope, I extend my utmost condolences to his family, friends and all who knew him for this devastating loss.

Staff Sergeant Robinson was assigned to the 1st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade at

Fort Polk, La., and carried out his duties with pride in his country and without reservation. Staff Sergeant Robinson spent the last thirteen years in the U.S. Army where he served with distinction and dedication, epitomizing a true patriot.

My deepest thoughts and prayers are with his daughters, Carneshia and Destiny, son, Da'karia, mother, Jennifer, grandmother, Martha, and the rest of his family, friends and loved ones during this difficult time.

Today, I ask all members of Congress to join me as we honor the life of Staff Sergeant Carlo Robinson and his legacy, and all those men and women in our Armed Forces who gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CITIZENS
INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGNS
(CIVIC) ACT

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today, Representative PAUL KANJORSKI and I are introducing bipartisan legislation to establish a program of limited tax credits and tax deductions to get average Americans more involved in the political process. This bill, the Citizens Involvement in Campaigns (CIVIC) Act, will broaden the base of political contributors and limit the influence of big money donors in federal elections.

We need to take a fresh look at innovative approaches to campaign finance reform, with special attention paid to ideas that encourage, and not restrict, greater participation in our campaigns. Toward this end, I have been advocating tax credits and deductions for small political contributions for many years. An updated tax credit system would be a simple and effective means of balancing the influence of big money donors and bringing individual contributors back to our campaigns. The impact of this counterweight will reduce the burden of raising money, as well as the appearance of impropriety that accompanies the money chase.

Most would agree that the ideal way to finance political campaigns is through a broad base of donors. But, as we are all painfully aware, the economic realities of modern-day campaigning lead many candidates to focus most of their efforts on collecting funds from a few large donors. This reality alienates many Americans from the political process.

The concept of empowering small donors is not a new idea. For example, from 1972 to 1986, the federal government offered a tax credit for small political contributions. This provided an incentive for average Americans to contribute to campaigns in small amounts while simultaneously encouraging politicians to solicit donations from a larger pool of contributors. Currently, six geographically and politically diverse states (Oregon, Minnesota, Ohio, Virginia, Arkansas, and Arizona) offer their own tax credits for political contributions. These state-level credits vary in many respects, but all share the same goal of encouraging average Americans to become more involved.