

In 1946 when he returned to Selma after the war, he went to the courthouse to register. He was given three forms that had to be signed by three white men testifying that he was “a good boy.” He persuaded three men who knew his father to sign the forms, but that was not sufficient. He also had to show that he owned \$3,000 worth of land—not cash, which he had, but real property. So he gave up. As he walked down the courthouse steps, he met a white veteran going to register to vote. The white man just signed up—no forms, no attestations, no real property. Having experienced the discrimination himself, Mr. Montgomery wanted to change the system. He was moved by having the opportunity to join with the other protesters, where they prayed on the steps of the very courthouse where his registration had been rejected. A sheriff with a large gun came by and advised them to go pray in church. Mr. Montgomery says he told him, “We feel sorry for you. All you have on your side is your gun. We have truth on our side, we have God on our side, and the truth and God will last forever; your gun will disintegrate.”

Mr. Montgomery volunteered to be a bodyguard for Mr. King during the march from Selma to Montgomery. The first time the marchers tried to cross the bridge, they were turned back. A federal court gave permission and more than 3,000 people marched over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. White people drove by and called them names. Undeterred, they made the 54 mile march that helped bring about the Voting Rights Act saying that all Americans should have the right to vote. In recent years, Mr. Montgomery’s service is earning him honors. In 2007, he and the other surviving Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor. On the morning of his inauguration, President Barack Obama had breakfast with the Tuskegee Airman, and Mr. Montgomery was there. He also took part in the reading of the U.S. Constitution at the Newseum. Fittingly, he was given Amendment 24, sections 1 and 2, barring a poll tax. Local 237 President Greg Floyd will present him with a Trailblazer Award at the Retiree Division’s Founders Day celebration tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing the achievements of Dabney Montgomery, an outstanding veteran, hero, civil rights activist and civil servant.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF  
SAMUEL L. GRAVELY, JR. ELE-  
MENTARY SCHOOL

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 4, 2009*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the dedication of the Samuel L. Gravelly, Jr. Elementary School in Haymarket, Virginia. The school is named in honor of Vice Admiral Gravelly, a Virginia native, who forged the way for a more diverse United States Navy. I cannot think of a more appropriate person to inspire our children to break barriers and achieve their highest potential.

On December 14, 1944, Samuel L. Gravelly, Jr. became the first African American to be

commissioned as a United States Naval Officer through the Navy Reserve Officer Training Course. He went on to become the Navy’s first African American vice admiral.

During his distinguished 38-year career in the Navy, Vice Admiral Gravelly became the first African American to command a warship, the USS Theodore E. Chandler; the first African American to command a major warship, the USS Jouett; the first African American to achieve flag rank and eventually vice admiral; and the first African American to command a numbered fleet.

However, his service was not just one of firsts. Admiral Gravelly was highly decorated with the Legion of Merit, a Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Navy Commendation Medal. He moved to Haymarket, Virginia upon his retirement in 1980, and passed away on October 22, 2004.

Just two weeks ago, the U.S. Navy commissioned a new Arleigh Burke-class destroyer in honor of Vice Admiral Gravelly during a ceremony at the shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. His widow, Alma Gravelly broke a bottle of champagne across the bow to christen the vessel.

Vice Admiral Gravelly’s life accomplishments and service to his country represent the values that we would like to instill into our future generations. The Prince William County Public Schools’ vision statement identifies a commitment to a diverse, multicultural education that produces students who enjoy a life-long pursuit of learning. Vice Admiral Gravelly lived up to these ideals by setting a precedent of diversity in our nation’s military and continuing his education throughout his life. Whether it was at Virginia Union University, Columbia University or the Naval War College; his thirst for knowledge never ceased. Vice Admiral Gravelly’s life embodied the vision that the Prince William County School System has for its students.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me honoring this American hero and endorsing the example he set for our nation’s younger generation. I applaud Prince William County Public Schools for their decision to dedicate this school to Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravelly, Jr.

ADDRESS TO ESCAMBIA COUNTY  
HIGH SCHOOL’S CLASS OF 2009  
AS READ BY TRAY SMITH,  
CLASS SALUTATORIAN

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 4, 2009*

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, last month I had the privilege of giving the commencement address to Escambia County High School’s Class of 2009. My friend, Tray Smith of Atmore, the class salutatorian, also had the opportunity to address his fellow classmates. In just 18 years, Tray has already compiled an impressive list of accomplishments. In 2008, he served as a page in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., and earlier this year, he was named Atmore’s 2008 “Citizen of the Year.”

I rise today to ask that his address be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for I believe it to be one of the finest and most in-

spiring addresses given by a high school student that I have ever heard:

LEAVING OUR CHILDREN A BETTER COUNTRY  
THAN WE INHERIT  
(By Tray Smith)

Thirty-five years ago, my father graduated from ECHS. Then, the country was shaken by the scandal of Watergate and the Vietnam War. Every year since, a different group of faces has arrived here during its own unique period in our history. Over time, America and the world have greatly changed. So now, we, the Class of 2009, come to graduate under different circumstances than those that faced our parents. Yet, the challenges that face us are just as great as those that faced them. And just as our moms and dads responded to the problems facing our nation by spreading freedom to every continent and the Internet to almost every home, we will meet our own challenges. For we know as our parents knew, that our greatest responsibility as Americans is to leave our children a better country than the one we are about to inherit.

Graduation means we are ready to meet this task—not because we know everything we will ever need to learn, but because we know how to learn anything we will ever need to find out.

I have the honor of commemorating this moment as the salutatorian of a class that has many talented students. And it is a special honor to stand before Joy Marshall, our valedictorian and my good friend. Joy, I am so proud for you, I will miss you, and I know this school will miss you, as well.

Congressman Bonner, Mr. Means, parents, teachers, friends, guests, and members of the community; thank you all for being here to join with us in this great moment in our lives. And on behalf of the entire Class of 2009, I extend a sincere thanks to you all, especially our parents and grandparents, for the contributions you have made to make this moment possible.

I want to specifically thank Congressman Bonner for making this event a priority. Congressman, the fact you are here signifies your strong commitment to our young people, and our future. While in Congress, you have done many great things for this district. On a personal basis, though, I am most appreciative for the life changing doors you have opened for me, a young kid from Atmore. I can’t imagine my high school years without the experiences I had working in Washington as your page. And the reason my class wanted you to come speak tonight is because, as we look forward to the future, there is no better person for us to emulate. Again, thank you.

Even though we graduate tonight, we will still depend on many of you in this room. I am sure I will not be the only member of the Class of 2009 to call Mom every time I have to do laundry in college. I still have no clue how to work the machines. Okay, I might be alone on that one. But I want our parents and mentors to know we will always be open to your advice and appreciate your insight.

Mom and Dad, Nee Nee and Paw Paw, Aunts and Uncles, Mrs. Bonnie and Mrs. West, other family members and friends, I love you all and I am so thankful for the role you have played in my life. And I know for all of my 132 fellow graduates, there are an equal number of people who share in the credit for this day, and who will share in the credit for the successes that come in the future.

When Mom asked me to describe my first day at ECHS years ago, I said it was like walking through the mall. But now, after having spent several years with classmates in school, at events, and serving our extra-curricular responsibilities, the faces that