

A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE TO DR. MELVIN E. BANKS, FOUNDER OF URBAN MINISTRIES, INC.

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, today it is my distinct honor and privilege to rise to acknowledge and congratulate one of my state's unsung jewels. Seventy-five years ago today, on October 15, 1934, Melvin E. Banks was born into this world in the, then, relatively small town of Birmingham, Alabama. From his humble beginnings in the segregated South, through hard work, perseverance and an abiding faith in God, today, Melvin Banks presides over the strong and thriving Urban Ministries, Inc., the largest independent African American-owned Christian publishing company in the United States.

UMI is located in Calumet City, Illinois, and this global, family-operated business is a vital part of our state's thriving, south suburban community. With all of the accolades and accomplishments that Dr. Melvin Banks has rightfully earned over the years, I stand here, tonight, Madame Speaker, simply proud to call him my friend.

Melvin Banks' life story is uniquely American. He often tells the story of discovering his faith in his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at the age of 12. Even at that young age, his sense of faith and guidance was so strong that he accepted his personal call to minister the gospel to all who would listen. His evangelism began, literally, on some of the dusty back roads of Birmingham. One day, young Melvin encountered an elderly gentleman who recognized his spiritual gifts and referred him to a scripture that influenced his life's work. That scripture, Hosea 4:6, states, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Upon hearing those words, young Melvin knew that God's purpose for his life was to help spread the knowledge of the gospel of Christ through the unique, cultural lens of the African American experience. And from that moment on, Melvin Banks' dreams and life's work continued to grow and to prosper.

As Melvin Banks grew in the Lord, he also embraced the value of a good education. Banks graduated from Parker High School in Birmingham, in 1952, and he went on to study at the Moody Bible College, in Chicago, where he graduated in 1955. Continuing his education, Banks attended Wheaton College, earning a B.A. degree in theology, in 1958, and his master's degree in biblical studies in 1960.

After graduation, Dr. Banks chose to remain in Chicago and he soon got a job with Scripture Press Publications, a job that included sales. Dr. Banks' work with Scripture Press gave him his first opportunity to begin to understand how to market to African American consumers. It was that passion to serve his community coupled with his godly vision, professionalism and drive that ultimately led him to launch Urban Ministries, Inc., in 1970.

After founding Urban Ministries, Dr. Banks and his small staff operated out of the basement of his home for 12 years. As Dr. Banks' faith grew, so did his media ministry. In 1982, Urban Ministries occupied the second floor of a building located at 1439 West 103rd Street in Chicago. Guided by a vision that continues to serve him well to this day, Dr. Banks moved

Urban Ministries, in 1996, to its current 46,000-square-foot headquarters in Calumet City. Shortly before that milestone, it's worth noting that, in 1993, his alma mater, Wheaton College, conferred its esteemed graduate with an Honorary Doctorate in Literature, a recognition of his consummate stewardship over the written and published word.

And so, Madam Speaker, as I enter these words into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on this day, it's my pleasure to note these words from UMI's website:

UMI is the largest independent, African American-owned and operated Christian media company. UMI publishes Christian resources, including Christian education and Vacation Bible School curricula, books, movies and websites designed for African American churches and others seeking a diverse, Christ-centered perspective on faith and life issues.

Today, UMI is the largest, independent African American Christian publisher in the United States. UMI, literally, serves thousands of churches nationwide with curriculum resources, teaching materials, videos and other products aimed at instilling character in the youth and adults of our nation.

Madam Speaker, today, more than 10,000 churches utilize UMI materials, on a weekly basis, and a dozen different denominational groups call UMI their publishing partner—a distinction that gives this Illinois-based company its national and global impact.

Madam Speaker, for the more than 50 years that Dr. Melvin Banks has been a citizen of our great state, I'm proud to report that he has also been a devoted husband to his wife and business partner, Olive Banks, and the father to his children, Melvin Banks, Jr., Patrice Banks Lee and Reginald Banks, all of whom have worked with their father to help make this company the global leader it is today.

As I conclude this well-deserved tribute, let me also say that as my heart breaks for the thousands of children in this nation whose lives are cut short because of violence and unrealized dreams, my hope is that as these words enter the permanent annals of history that some young boy or girl will look upon these words and be inspired by the tremendous life of Dr. Melvin E. Banks.

My hope is that they will see in his life the hope, the determination and the abiding faith that God gave him. While every child may not have all the spiritual gifts that Dr. Banks enjoys, my hope and prayer is that they will see in his life what a made up mind can do.

PROJECT MEND-A-HOUSE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS IN PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Project Mend-A-House and its twenty-five years of service to the citizens of Prince William County, the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park.

A joint effort between private citizens and the Prince William County government, Project Mend-A-House was created in 1984. At the time, Lily Blackwell was a volunteer delivering meals to seniors who were confined to their homes due to disabilities. Her call to action began with the observation that a number of

seniors along her delivery route could no longer perform necessary home repairs. Basic home repair and some structural improvements were needed to ensure that these disabled seniors remained safe and independent. Ms. Blackwell partnered with Toni Clemons-Porter and Lin Wagener of the Prince William Area Agency on Aging to create the foundation of an organization that has now provided humanitarian assistance for a quarter of a century.

Project Mend-A-House completes home repairs and safety modifications to facilitate independent living for seniors, the disabled and low-income residents. Over the years, projects have ranged from fixing termite damage in an older home to making entire houses more accessible with wheelchair ramps, hand rails, shower seats and transfer benches. The work is truly a community effort. Local corporate partners provide monetary support, volunteers and building materials. Civic associations and faith based groups contribute hundreds of volunteer hours to Project Mend-A-House each year. Project Mend-A-House puts everyone to work regardless of skill level to improve the quality of life for our disabled, elderly and low income neighbors.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending Project Mend-A-House and its volunteers. The strength of a community can be measured by how it responds to the plight of the less fortunate, and Project Mend-A-House is certainly contributing to a robust spirit of community in Prince William County.

WEST PAPUA'S MESSAGE OF SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF AMERICAN SAMOA IN AFTERMATH OF DEVASTATING TSUNAMI

HON. ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I submit the following message of support submitted by Tom Beanal, Chairman of the Papua Presidium Council, in response to the massive tsunami that struck American Samoa on Tuesday, September 29, 2009.

PRESIDIUM DEWAN PAPUA, JAYAPURA,
OCTOBER 7, 2009.

Hon. ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN FALEOMAVAEGA, on behalf of the people of West Papua, we are writing to express to you our greatest sympathy for the losses and sufferings of the people of American Samoa and other Pacific Islands caused by the recent tsunami.

Please accept our sincerest condolences to you. Please also extend them to your people. We are with you all in our hearts, tears, and prayers.

With God's grace, may you, our dear Congressman, and the people of American Samoa, find the strength to endure in this tragic tragedy.

TOM BEANAL,
Wakil Ketua,
HERMAN AWOM,
Moderator,
THAHA MOHAMMAD
ALHAMID,
Sekretaris Jenderal.

IN HONOR OF DR. J.H. FLAKES

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. J.H. Flakes of Columbus, GA, who on Sunday, October 18, will celebrate his 48th year as the Senior Pastor of the Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus. I have known Reverend Flakes for many years and feel honored to call him a friend, a constituent, and an inspiration.

Reverend Flakes was born in Phenix City, AL, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from American Baptist College in Nashville, TN. He continued his biblical studies at Morehouse School of Religion in Atlanta, GA, the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education in Houston, TX, and the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia in Rome, GA. In addition, he has received an honorary doctorate from A.B. Lee Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, FL, and an honorary doctorate degree from his alma mater, the American Baptist College.

As the Word says in Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Reverend Flakes has truly lived by this principle. Since his arrival at Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church, he has sought to implement the church's mission to "obey the will of God through preaching, teaching, witnessing, stewardship and fellowship."

Reverend Flakes has received numerous awards and recognitions to honor his steadfast commitment to his parishioners and his community, including the Outstanding Personality of the South, Ten Outstanding Ministers in the State of Georgia, the Alpha Phi Alpha Martin Luther King Award, Operation PUSH Martin Luther King Award, as well as the Knighthood Award from the Congress of Christian Education.

With ordained leadership and divine grace, Reverend Flakes has built a church that delivers God's message and works daily to implement God's vision. Reverend Flakes personifies the love of God through his teaching and his way of life. I thank him for his years of service to his parishioners, the Columbus community, Georgia's Second Congressional District, and the Nation. Moreover, I wish him many more fruitful years to come.

**RECOGNIZING THE VITAL ROLE
FAMILY READINESS VOLUNTEERS
PLAY IN SUPPORTING
SERVICEMEMBERS AND THEIR
FAMILIES**

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today in support of H. Res. 408, "Recognizing the vital role family readiness volunteers play in supporting servicemembers and their families". I would like thank my colleague, Representative

DAVIS, for introducing this resolution, as well as the co-sponsors.

Since 2001, nearly 2,000,000 active duty and reserve sailors, soldiers, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guard personnel have deployed for duty in the battlegrounds of Afghanistan and Iraq. To add to this service, the more than 1,800,000 family members of regular component members of the Armed Forces and an additional 1,100,000 family members of reserve component members make significant sacrifices on behalf of the United States in support of their loved ones deployed overseas.

But while the readiness of the United States Armed Forces is predicated on the ability of each member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard to focus on their mission during deployments, this military necessity of long and often unpredictable deployments, frequent relocations, and infrequent family contact for members of the Armed Forces can be extremely challenging for members and their families.

In response to these sacrifices and challenges, family readiness volunteers from each branch of the Armed Forces have stepped forward to provide critical support during deployments to servicemembers and their families. These programs in each service help commanding officers have a better understanding of the welfare of the families within his or her command during a deployment and allow families to be informed about the status of their loved ones' unit overseas.

The thousands of family readiness volunteers are generally spouses of members of the Armed Forces who provide assistance to military families while also enduring the challenges of military life. They consist of Army Family Readiness Volunteers, Navy Ombudsmen, Coast Guard Ombudsmen, Air Force Key Spouse Volunteers, and Marine Corps Key Volunteers. These volunteers are motivated by the desire to improve the lives of other military families and to assist future generations.

Family readiness volunteers also connect the community with military families and local military installations, often leveraging donations and resources for military families, as well as provide their services on a voluntary basis, with little public recognition and financial assistance, and often contribute their own resources to help other military families.

It is no exaggeration to say that the outstanding performance of our servicemembers is a testament to the great success of family readiness volunteers. That is why I join this distinguished body in recognizing and honoring the family readiness volunteers of each branch of the Armed Forces who selflessly devote their time, talent, energy, and resources in service to the United States and commend family readiness volunteers for their dedicated contributions to the quality of life of members of the Armed Forces and their families.

**RECOGNIZING VIRGINIA STOP
MODERN SLAVERY**

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Virginia Stop Mod-

ern Slavery (VASMS) and its efforts to educate parents, teachers and child-care providers on the danger sex trafficking poses to our communities.

VASMS was established in August of 2009 by Jessica Johnson of Annandale, Va. Its volunteers work to preserve safe, family friendly communities. They work to eliminate human trafficking in America by educating and supporting victims' service providers, legislators and local law enforcement officials. Members of VASMS build community partnerships and coordinate outreach events because they understand that bringing this issue to the forefront of public discussion starts with a dedicated grassroots effort.

On October 10, 2009, VASMS hosted The Safe Child Fair in Gainesville, Va., through a partnership with the Bridge to Freedom Foundation, Courtney's House and RIJI Green. The fair offered children's activities and games while parents learned how to protect their children from child exploitation. Events like The Safe Child Fair bring communities together to rally around a common call to action. Eradicating sex trafficking in America requires the involvement and due diligence of all communities, and I urge all to join in this battle to protect our children.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the efforts of Virginia Stop Modern Slavery. The prevalence of human trafficking in the United States is deplorable, and I wish VASMS continued success in its campaign to raise awareness for this issue.

**H.R. 3632, THE "FEDERAL JUDICIARY
ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENT
ACT OF 2009"**

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The purpose of H.R. 3632 is to implement non-controversial administrative provisions that the Judicial Conference and the House Judiciary Committee believe are necessary to improve the operations of the Federal judiciary and provide justice for the American people.

The Judicial Conference is the policy-making body of the Federal judiciary and through its committee system evaluates court operations. The Conference endorses all of the provisions in the bill.

H.R. 3632 affects a wide range of judicial branch programs and operations, including those pertaining to financial administration, process improvements, and personnel administration.

The bill incorporates nine separate items, including:

A section that clarifies that senior judges must satisfy minimum work thresholds to participate in court government matters, including the selection of magistrates.