

Mary Levell Peart Straker, the late Andrea May Levell Franklin, and one son Bryan James Levell. Mrs. Levell used to say having four children in five years was like having her own classroom. A graduate of the New York City public school system, she completed her undergraduate degree at Brooklyn College and received her Master's degree in Linguistics from Long Island University.

Armed with her faith, a wonderful mother and supportive extended family, Juanita pushed ahead to achieve her goals. She began working in the New York City public school system as a teacher of English as a Second Language commonly known as E.S.L. Juanita was serving in a school that had students from well over 50 countries speaking over 100 languages. She has taught from elementary through high school, as well as adult education. Her participation in conferences, seminars and workshops for over 30 years has kept her current and well qualified in her profession.

Juanita retired in 2008 from her full-time teaching position but continues to work part-time as an English teacher. The connection to her community and her faith has been a steady part of Juanita's life from her work in the church, in school and in her neighborhood. Juanita has been a member of civic and social groups from childhood to the present. She has been active with Cornerstone Baptist Church, the Jewels S.C., NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.—Delta Rho Omega Chapter, Jack and Jill of America, Inc. (Brooklyn Chapter), American Association of University Women, Verona Place—Macon Street Block Association, United Federation of Teachers, National Council of Negro Women, Brooklyn Historical Society, Schomburg Center for Cultural Learning, Brooklyn College Alumni Association, Association of Blacks in Education—NY, Business and Professional Women's Organization of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Women's Caucus for Congressman Towns, and AARP.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Juanita Theresa Williams Levell.

SALUTING THE MEMORY OF BEN ALI, FOUNDER OF WASHINGTON D.C.'S BEN'S CHILI BOWL

### HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the memory of Ben Ali, founder and owner of Ben's Chili Bowl, a local historical landmark. Dubbed "King of the Half-Smoke" by Washingtonians who flocked to Ben's daily, Mr. Ali died earlier this month at the age of 82.

Ben Ali exemplified the American Dream through his entrepreneurial spirit and endurance. An immigrant from Trinidad, Ben opened his namesake restaurant on August 22, 1958 with the help of his wife, Virginia. In the process, Mr. Ali shaped the city of Washington and its unique U-Street Corridor by serving his trademark chili dishes to generations of diners.

Opened during U Street's heyday as an African American Cultural Mecca, Ben's Chili Bowl has withstood major neighborhood construction projects, national economic shifts,

and the notorious 1968 riots, which ravaged much of the city. During that dark night, Ben's Chili Bowl was one of only two establishments left unscathed.

In the early 1990s, Ben's Chili Bowl stood as an unyielding anchor of the neighborhood's rebirth, and continues to serve dignitaries, celebrities, and local guests alike. All are loyal customers of Ben's Half-Smokes and Chili Cheeseburgers, a personal favorite of mine since 1969.

Ben's Chili Bowl will persist as a Washington institution, a symbol of unity and strength in a city that has seen its share of hard times. Today, a tourist may dine next to an elected official, or a school boy next to his sports hero, as they all gather together for the incomparable experience of enjoying Ben's famous chili.

Madam Speaker, I ask that we honor Ben Ali for his exceptional contributions to our community. The vital role that both he and Ben's Chili Bowl will continue to play in Washington will be his lasting legacy. I ask that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Mr. Ben Ali.

TRIBUTE TO THE TOWN OF WESTMINSTER ON THE OCCASION OF THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING

### HON. JOHN W. OLVER

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. OLVER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the founding of Westminister, Massachusetts 250 years ago on October 20, 1759. The following history provided by the Town's 250th Anniversary Committee vividly details a community with a rich cultural heritage and great natural beauty.

Nestled at the foot of Mount Wachusett, the highest mountain in central Massachusetts, Westminister was unsettled territory at the beginning of the 18th century. The land had been designated as payment for soldiers who had fought in King Phillip's War, but for many years no one was interested in leaving the comforts of home to settle in the wilderness. In 1737, however, the descendants of those veterans and others were drawn to the region's bounty and began to settle the region. As the population grew it became a district in 1759 and was given the name of Westminister, a name rooted in traditions of England. Full incorporation of the town came in 1770.

On June 10, 1776 Westminister residents voted to "stand by and support the (Continental Congress) with their lives and fortunes if they should declare independence on the Crown of Great Britain." During the American Revolution, three hundred fifty six Westminister men served either as Minutemen or enlisted soldiers in the American Continental Army.

Water was essential to the early industrial growth of Westminister in the 19th century, beginning with sawmills, gristmills, fulling mills, and tanneries. These industries were followed by the manufacturing of chairs, other furniture, and paper. But when the railroad bypassed the center of town in mid-century, the factories lost their ability to cheaply bring raw materials into town and transport their finished products to the world. Today there is little evidence of these early industries.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, residents of Westminister found jobs in neighboring cities. Indeed, it became clear that Westminister now had the strategic advantage of being located on and near major highways that pass through the Commonwealth.

Today, Westminister's cultural heritage and rural, scenic beauty are appreciated by residents and visitors alike. The Westminister Cracker Factory, the longest running cracker bakery in the country, closed in the 1970s but the red clapboard building is a landmark which anchors the east end of Main Street. The town common on top of Academy Hill and the town center are remarkably preserved and greatly contribute to the Town's distinction of having one of the largest National Register Historic Districts in Massachusetts. Visitors of all ages enjoy Westminister—whether by skiing, hiking or viewing the autumn foliage on Mount Wachusett, dining at the Old Mill while watching ducks swimming on the nearby pond, or taking a tour of Wachusett Brewery.

I am very proud to represent this community, which is rich in history, in natural beauty, and in the public spirit of its citizenry. Please join me in congratulating the Town of Westminister as it celebrates its 250th Anniversary.

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 20, 2009*

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a milestone event in the cultural history of New York City. This month, El Museo del Barrio, New York's leading Latino cultural institution, celebrates its 40th Anniversary. There is much to be proud of when we speak of El Museo: the beautiful physical space it now occupies; the extraordinary talent it continues to attract; the superb quality of its collections; and the professionalism and dedication of its staff. But for me what stands out most about El Museo is that it has never stopped growing and evolving. Much like the community in which it makes its home, El Museo continues to reinvent itself for new waves of residents and new generations of New Yorkers.

El Museo del Barrio was founded 40 years ago by Puerto Rican artist and educator Raphael Montañez Ortiz, who gathered together parents, artists, and activists, to address the absence of Puerto Rican and other Latino artists at larger mainstream institutions. Since its founding, El Museo has been dedicated to showcasing Latino culture. Its permanent collection includes over 6,500 objects which span more than 800 years of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino artistic expression. A wonderfully diverse body of art, this collection includes everything from pre-Columbian Taino artifacts to twentieth-century drawings and paintings, to prints, sculpture, photography and documentary film and video. Located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and E. 104th Street, El Museo is firmly situated on New York's illustrious Museum Mile, but is also far enough uptown to reach into Manhattan's historic El Barrio. Today, more than 100,000 people visit El Museo each year from all backgrounds and walks of life.