

Judge Wapner is a lifelong resident of southern California. After graduating from Hollywood High School, he earned his bachelors degree from the University of Southern California and his law degree from USC Law School. He served in World War II and was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his tremendously courageous acts in that conflict.

After being appointed by Governor Pat Brown to the LA Municipal Court where he served for 2 years, he was elevated to the Los Angeles Superior Court, where he served until his retirement. During those years, Judge Wapner starred in the nationally syndicated program, "The People's Court" which made him a bona fide celebrity. Judge Wapner has also recently appeared as a judge in a "Major League Baseball on Fox" pregame People's Court parody segment called "The Player's Court." He has starred, as well, in a number of influential political spots.

Judge Wapner also is the author of two well-received significant books, *A View from the Bench* and *Judge Wapner's Guide to Small Claims Court*. The latter tome is widely used as a helpful tool to navigate the intricacies of our legal system.

With an impressive list of civic organizations in which he takes an active interest, Judge Wapner is a highly respected member of the community. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of Alternative Living for the Aging, and serves as honorary chairman of the National Jewish Hospice. He is also the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Golden Glow Award from Senior Health and Peer Counseling and the Maimonides Award from the Legal Services Division of the Jewish Welfare Fund.

Judge Wapner and his wife, Mickey, have been longtime supporters of the Brandeis-Bardin Institute, and the construction of the Moelle Library and tennis and basketball courts at the institute stand as symbols of their generosity and leadership.

I ask my colleagues to join me in extending birthday greetings to my dear friend, Judge Joseph Wapner and in paying tribute to his dedication and outstanding contributions to our society.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL CHUPA

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 6, 2009

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Michael Chupa, an educator, public servant, community leader, businessman, avid hunter and proud family man in Michigan, who passed away on October 5, 2009.

Mr. Chupa was born December 31, 1943, in the city of Detroit. He graduated from Lawrence Technological University and was a grade school teacher at Immaculate Conception. He owned and operated the North American Adjustment Bureau providing property damage adjustment, appraisal and estimation service for southeast Michigan. A leader within the Ukrainian American community he worked

to create the St. Josaphat Parish in 1961 where he served as church council president. St. Josaphat continues to be a strong center of activity for the Ukrainian American community in southeast Michigan.

Mr. Chupa served on the Warren City Council for 16 years. His colleagues describe him as "fair and good-hearted" and even those who may have disagreed with him on a certain policy issue describe him as a "gentleman." Mr. Chupa cared about his community; he always made it a priority to help people and to advocate on behalf of local charities. I appreciated his friendship and always enjoyed working with him and attending alongside him numerous community events.

Mike Chupa was a proud and supportive parent. He and his wife Margaret have four children (Michael, Joseph, Jennifer and Jannen) who continue the tradition of involvement in their church and community.

I am pleased to rise today and pay tribute to the lifetime of service of Michael Chupa, and ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing his achievements. I extend my condolences to his wife and family and join with the entire community in celebrating his life.

REINTRODUCING THE BRAVE ACT

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 6, 2009

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Benefit Rating Acceleration for Veterans Entitlements Act of 2009 or BRAVE Act. The BRAVE Act will cut through unnecessary red tape so that our most disabled veterans receive the benefits they deserve. It would make a common sense change to allow veterans receiving a rating of total disability from the Veterans Administration to also receive Social Security disability benefits without going through a separate and duplicative medical evaluation process, a process that can take years to navigate.

In early 2007, when I was first elected to Congress, a veteran-constituent contacted my staff to obtain assistance with his application for social security disability benefits. This veteran had already received a 100 percent disability rating from the Veterans Administration but had been waiting for more than a year to be approved for benefits at the Social Security Administration.

The Social Security Act states that disability means the "inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment." By regulation, the Veterans Administration defines total or 100 percent disability as "any impairment of mind or body which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation." Despite the fact that these definitions are virtually the same, many veterans including my constituent endure two complicated and time consuming processes to prove the same condition.

The Commission on Veteran's Disability Benefit found that only 61 percent of those granted Individual Unemployability and 54 per-

cent of those rated totally disabled by the Veterans Administration are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance. The Commission further explained that "it is apparent that either these veterans do not know to apply for SSDI or are being denied the insurance." The Veterans Disability Benefits Commission concluded that "increased outreach should be made and better coordination between VA and Social Security should result in increased mutual acceptance of decisions."

It is for these reasons that I first introduced the BRAVE Act, with broad bipartisan support, in the 110th Congress. The legislation was supported by a range of veteran service organizations including the American Legion, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. The bill is all the more important at a time when we face significant increases in Social Security applications as a result of the aging baby boomer generation and as veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan come home.

Madam Speaker, our Nation's veterans don't deserve a bureaucratic runaround when they return home. I hope my colleagues will join me in support of the BRAVE Act.

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
TRUCK DRIVER APPRECIATION
WEEK

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 6, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service, dedication, and sacrifices of America's professional truck drivers who serve our Nation daily by delivering the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and yes, even the medical prescriptions upon which many of us must rely.

This week, November 1-7, is designated National Truck Driver Appreciation Week and is set aside to honor the 3.5 million professional truck drivers in the United States. One out of every fifteen people across this country is employed in the trucking industry, which is one of our Nation's largest employers.

Truckers serve as the backbone of their industry, which is responsible for a large portion of the total U.S. freight tonnage. Estimates suggest that a majority of communities rely solely on the trucking industry for their goods and commodities. In turn, our economy not only relies, but thrives, on the good work of these men and women.

America's truck drivers work to help keep our highways safe. They follow stringent safety regulations, attend frequent training programs, and help educate the motoring public to make sharing the roadways with tractor-trailers safer.

Finally, Madam Speaker, America's truck drivers sacrifice precious time from their families, all the while, they deliver for ours. This week we pause to say thank you to them and to their families.

I salute these fine individuals along with their understanding families for their commitment to America's future stability, increased prosperity, and for delivering life's essentials safely and securely.