

two of the greatest defenders Congress has ever seen—the senior Senator from my own state . . . and Jack Murtha.

Jack was a leader. His respect for his colleagues and his commitment to this House informed his role as Chairman. Jack recognized the importance of what we do here, and Jack was always—always—prepared. There was never a man more suited to the gavel than Jack Murtha.

Jack was a Marine. If he had not been a Marine, he could have played the part—the man radiated strength and purpose in every action he took. But Jack not only looked the part, he was the genuine article. And there is, of course, no such thing as a former Marine—once a Marine, always a Marine. As fiercely as Jack defended the prerogatives of Congress, his commitment to our House took a back seat to his commitment to men and women in uniform. The service member—an infantryman outside Fallujah, a Marine in Afghanistan, an airman in Bagram, a sailor in the Persian Gulf—has never had a better protector than Jack Murtha. Jack was one of them.

That is the chief reason he didn't hesitate when he came out so publicly against the War in Iraq—something that earned him the respect of many and the enmity of some. I don't know that he didn't care about either judgment, but I do know that neither applause nor condemnation guided his decision at all. His allegiance was to the men and women in the field.

To me, Jack was a friend and a mentor. In a sense that was a relationship I inherited. My

father, who represented West Virginia's First District until he retired in 1982, worked closely with Jack. Shortly after I won election to his seat, Dad told me that I would never go wrong seeking Jack's counsel. He was right.

Finally, Jack was a family man, a loving husband and partner to his wife, Joyce, and parent to Donna, John, and Patrick. Their loss cannot be described by words. They have my deepest condolences.

Jack will be missed by all.

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HONORING PASTOR WALTER  
THOMAS RICHARDSON

**HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 25, 2010*

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor one of the most devoted and beloved leaders in South Florida, Dr. Walter Thomas Richardson, whose dedication to God, his faith and his community has allowed him to break social barriers and touched thousands of lives.

Since 1983, Pastor Richardson has served as Senior Pastor of Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church in Perrine, Florida and his preaching has enriched the faith and lives of many. He is a Miami native, married to M. Dolores, father to Walter L. and LaKisha, and proud grandfather of seven. His family has played a key role in his development as pastor and community leader. He learned of the im-

portance of community service at a young age, from his parents, Bishop Walter H. and Mrs. Poseline M. Richardson and in 1969, while serving in the military, felt a calling for the ministry. His education has also played an important role in his formation. He obtained both Bachelor and Master Degrees from St. Thomas University, and a Doctorate from Trinity Theological Seminary.

Pastor Richardson is a leading voice of social justice and multicultural integration. His congregation is formed by Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Haitians and several Caribbean Islands among many other groups. His love of service has manifested itself in multiple ways. He is a professor of religion at St. Thomas University, Chaplain in the Miami-Dade Police Department, and Board Member of Florida Memorial College, New World School of the Arts, the Community Relations Board and the Alliance for Human Services, to name a few. He is also author of *Going through Samaria*, a book which teaches about the importance of Christianity, and had recorded 30 songs and composed more than 100. His unique service and leadership has gained him recognitions from the City of Miami, the City of Fort Lauderdale and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

As we celebrate Black History Month, I ask you to join me in honoring the work of Pastor Walter Thomas Richardson and thanking him for his service to our community. He has improved the lives of many.