

In December of 2002, Bishop Sheard received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by the St. Thomas Christian College. He is married to Grammy Award-winning gospel artist Karen Clark-Sheard and they have two children, Kierra Valencia and J. Drew, II.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in saluting and congratulating Bishop J. Drew Sheard, Pastor of Greater Emmanuel Institutional Church of God In Christ, on the celebration of his outstanding leadership in the great State of Michigan.

HONORING BRANT MEREDITH

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Brant Meredith is a sophomore at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

Our government is what represents each citizen of the United States. It is important to be politically active because we all have a voice in the path that our country takes. It is necessary to express your governmental opinion so that the best choices for the majority may be made. Because our government represents us, it should play a major role in our lives. Our representatives voice our opinion so it is important that we elect them and advocate who we think will do the best job so they will in return play an active duty in our own lives.

The government of the United States should regularly exercise its powers. The people elected their representatives to represent them in the government. Therefore, they should represent the people by enacting decisions that would satisfy who they are representing. In order to please the masses our government should play an active role by satisfying the popular goals. The needs of the public are very numerous. In order to meet all of them, it is necessary for our government to play an active part in our lives. If they do not play a crucial part then many needs will not be met.

As an American it is very important to be involved in the political process. It is necessary to vote for an official that will best meet your needs. If you are not involved with elections then officials who will not meet your needs could come to office. If the majority of our country does not vote a politician who should not be in office could come to it because the vote would be lopsided due to political inactivity. By not being politically active, your needs will not be met. That is why everyone needs to be involved in the political process.

One of the most memorable events that has greatly impacted our history were the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001.

This marked the beginning of the war on terrorism. We also began to enter a recession. These attacks marked the beginning of hard economic times. America has encountered many problems and potential threats since 9/11. This one day was the most Significant event in the 21st century.

In conclusion, we are represented in our government by people who represent us and make decisions for us. It is important for us to be involved with this political process so we can choose pleaders who will do a good job representing us and getting through hard times.

RECOGNITION OF WILLETT THOMAS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and to honor Ms. Thomas. A native of Macon, Georgia, Ms. Thomas has enjoyed nearly a century of good health with the love of her family and her deep faith in God. We celebrate your 100th birthday.

Ms. Thomas was born Willett Evelyn Smith on March 19, 1912, in Macon, Georgia. She is the oldest of three daughters born to her mother. During the early years of her life, Ms. Thomas grew up in Macon, Georgia in the household of her grandparents, Lucinda Jackson (Momma Lucinda) and Papa Dudda. Ms. Thomas has said, "Her family was very poor people, but she lived a rich and privileged life surrounded by lots of love."

Ms. Thomas completed her elementary education at Rutland Station School, a public school with grades one through seven. She attended high school at Hudson High located in the city limits of Macon, Georgia, but she had to walk a long distance to reach the bus line, where she then took a bus through the city to the school. She was motivated by her cousin Mary Washington, who was also determined to get an education. They, along with a few others, weathered many a stormy days in triumph of a better life.

Ms. Thomas moved to New York where she would meet and marry the late Nelson Brown. They had one son, Thomas Brown, but the marriage would later fall apart. Ms. Thomas continued to attend Antioch Baptist Church and served at Brooklyn Hospital until she met and fell in love with Army officer, Leroy Thomas.

Ms. Thomas struggled with her husband's post war syndromes but they weathered the storm and raised her son together. When her son took ill becoming disabled in 1976, she and her husband needed to share sacrifice. For several years, she continued to work her night shift while her husband worked during the day. This worked out great for them because one of them was at home at all times to be of assistance to their son.

Ms. Thomas took advantage of new opportunities and landed a position as a Nurses Aide at Brooklyn Hospital. She was a devoted, prompt and competent worker until her reluctant retirement after 60 years of service in 1996.

As her son's health continued to decline, Ms. Thomas turned to worship and began attending New Faith Community Baptist Church every Sunday. Over time his health improved

and together they attended fundraising events and became very active at the church. On December 29, 2005, her son passed quietly in his sleep.

Today, Ms. Thomas remains in good spirits enjoying every moment of every day. She enjoys going out for a ride, taking in the sights of the city and various cultural events.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Ms. Willett Thomas on her 100th birthday. She continues to live a life full of joy and is a model citizen to us all.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system:

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Chair, I am caught between a rock and a hard place on this bill. I spoke and voted against the health care bill that is most frequently referred to as "ObamaCare."

I am strongly opposed to this Independent Payment Advisory Board, which many see as being a major step towards rationing of medical care.

I strongly favor protecting access to healthcare which is the title of H.R. 5.

However, legislators have been talking about \$250,000 caps probably since the late 1970s, if not earlier.

I can assure you that \$250,000 in the 70s is far more than \$250,000 today.

Secondly, it does not seem fair to me to tell all of my constituents—or at least more than 99 percent—that they can be sued for everything they have, but we are going to limit suits against this one small, privileged segment of our society.

I have great admiration and respect for physicians, but I also believe they should not be placed on a pedestal way above everyone else.

Third, every trial judge sits as a 13th juror and can set aside or reduce a ridiculous or unjust judgment. If the trial judge does not act, then there are courts of appeal. There are safeguards throughout the system, and most really excessive judgments have been reversed in some way by a trial court or at a higher level.

Fourth, USA Today published a box 4 or 5 years ago which showed that for the then most recent five-year period, medical malpractice judgments had gone up only 1.8 percent while medical malpractice premiums had gone up 131 percent.

A few big insurance companies have given the public a very false impression of what is really happening in the courts so that they can impose very exorbitant rate increases.

Last, some members, including me, believe that this should be handled by the states under our Constitution and that this malpractice part of the bill goes against the spirit and intent of our tenth amendment.