

HONORING THE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (MCFSC) OF IDYLLWILD, CALIFORNIA

**HON. RAUL RUIZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council (MCFSC) of Idyllwild, California for their tireless dedication to keeping the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountain communities safe from devastating wild fires.

Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council of Idyllwild is the local chapter of more than 125 Fire Safe Councils of California. Since 2002, volunteers and staff from the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council have helped raise awareness among residents about the dangers of wild fires and helped residents take action to protect their land and property.

MCFSC has organized members of the community to reduce hazards that can spread the devastation of wildfires in our mountains. MCFSC volunteers known as the "Woodies" are the heart of the organization. These selfless volunteers donate their time, tools and equipment to decrease wildfire hazards and reduce fuel storage on properties owned by elderly, disabled and low-income residents. Since the organization's inception, MCFSC volunteers have contributed more than 915 cords of firewood to the Idyllwild Help Center, and volunteered more than 24,107 hours.

In 2009, MCFSC received a U.S. Forest Service grant and worked to remove fuels from the areas surrounding structures in the Silent Valley Campground. Their extraordinary work in promoting fire preparedness and adaptation before the devastating 2013 Mountain Fire was credited by the U.S. Forest Service for reducing the severity of the fire and aiding firefighters.

I congratulate the extraordinary volunteers of the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council on their efforts and dedication to protecting our mountain communities.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF EARL C. HARGROVE JR.

**HON. STENY H. HOYER**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a friend and a great Marylander, Earl Christian Hargrove Jr., who passed away on April 6 at the age of eighty-six. I've known Earl for many years, and I am certain that he will be missed by a great many people throughout the Greater Washington area.

Earl was a larger than life presence in Harwood, Maryland. His estate—Holly Springs Farm—attracts thousands of neighbors and residents from throughout the region each Christmas with a captivating display of holiday lights and decorations. A graduate of Bladensburg High School in 1946, Earl served in the U.S. Marine Corps that same year and was honorably discharged in 1948. When the Korean War broke out, however, Earl re-enlisted and served his country in uniform until

1954. Following his military service, he returned to Maryland and to the business he had launched with his father, Earl Hargrove Sr., in the late 1940s creating parade floats and specialty decorations.

Known affectionately as "the President's prop-man," Earl provided event staging for every presidential inauguration since Harry Truman's in 1949. In January 2013, his company, Hargrove Inc., did so once again for the second inauguration of President Barack Obama. Earl Jr. became president of the company after his father's sudden death in 1971, and today the business is run by Earl's daughter, Carla Hargrove McGill, and son-in-law, Timothy McGill. Hargrove Inc. continues to employ talented artists and craftspeople who design and plan some of Washington's largest events and conferences, including the National Walk for Epilepsy, the annual AIPAC Policy Conference, and the White House Correspondents Dinner.

My thoughts and prayers are with his beloved wife of sixty years, Gloria Love Hargrove, his children Earl "Chris" Hargrove III, Kathleen Hargrove Kelly and her husband Clyde, Carla Hargrove McGill and her husband Timothy, Cynthia Diane Hargrove and her husband Michael Busada, and Carey Martin Hargrove and his wife Wendy Miller, and his seven grandchildren. May his memory continue to bring strength and comfort to them and to all of us who were fortunate to know and cherish Earl Hargrove Jr.

RECOGNIZING DAVE MCCONNELL ON HIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY REPORTING FOR WTOP RADIO

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Dave McConnell, WTOP's Capitol Hill correspondent who is celebrating his 50th year of reporting for the Washington all-news radio station.

"A True Journalism Icon" was how the Merrell College of Journalism at the University of Maryland described Dave in a recent tribute. Members of Congress and media colleagues have heaped deserving praise on Dave in recognition of his 50-year milestone. Most recently, Dave was the recipient of the first ever Career Achievement Award from the Radio and Television Correspondents Association, and he has won other honors including the Society of Professional Journalists Hall of Fame Award.

Dave has a voice that was made for radio. He has a delivery that is authoritative and commanding but at the same time reassuring and resonant. His voice is readily recognizable by several generations of radio listeners in the Washington region. He has earned the respect of listeners and news sources because of his encyclopedic knowledge of Congress, his thorough and objective reporting on the complex issues that come before this body, and his professional manner and demeanor.

While many reporters have moved from station to station and city to city as they moved up the media ladder, Dave began his career in his hometown and has reported in Washington throughout his career, most of it from his third

floor perch in the Capitol that he refers to as the "booth." As WTOP Senior News Director Mike McMearty joked in a recent tribute to Dave, "It's part of WTOP lore that Dave McConnell, while other kids were skipping school to go catch a baseball game and see the Senators, he was sneaking into the Capitol to hear the actual senators debate."

There are few reporters in Washington who can boast they have covered 12 presidential elections, five inaugurations, and many other milestones spanning a half-century of the nation's history. Dave McConnell is one of them, although he would never boast about it; it's not his style. He is all business and all about the news.

At a time when men of Dave's age are spending their Golden Years doting over their grandchildren (and Dave has seven), WTOP's Capitol Hill correspondent continues to use his vast institutional knowledge to give perspective on a daily basis to the comings and goings of Congress.

Dave McConnell's colleagues say Dave has no intention of retiring any time soon and that is good news for many Washington-area residents who have grown accustomed to getting their news about Congress over the radio from "a true journalism icon."

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dave on this wonderful milestone and in wishing him continued success.

HONORING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

**HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Memorial High School in San Antonio for its exceptional music education program. This year, Memorial is one of just 120 schools in the nation to be awarded the prestigious SupportMusic Merit Award from The National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation. The school's outstanding commitment to music education is particularly evident in the spirited, talented, Memorial High band.

Music education is so important for our young people. Not only does it help students develop leadership skills, but new research shows that participation in music education programs can improve brain function, spark language development, and lead to increased academic success in subjects like reading and math.

Despite the proven benefits of music education, arts departments are often the first to suffer budget cuts, or to be eliminated altogether, when school funding is tight. Receiving the NAMM SupportMusic Merit Award helps schools like Memorial High demonstrate the importance of music education to their students' overall success in school and draw attention to the need for further resources to sustain these vital programs in the future.

Again, I want to congratulate Memorial High School for this achievement and for giving San Antonio students the opportunity to experience the joy of music and all the other academic advantages music education affords.