

IN RECOGNITION OF CHERYL
JENNINGS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor one of the most recognizable, watched and listened-to women in the Bay Area: Cheryl Jennings has been in the 5 o'clock news anchor chair at ABC7 KGO-TV for 27 years and worked at the station for 36 years. It is safe to say that she is one of the most trusted and admired reporters/anchors in our area and I am one of her staunchest fans. Cheryl is ostensibly slowing down, but not quite. She will continue to host her weekend show *Beyond the Headlines* and report more long-format stories like the series she recently did in Afghanistan.

Over the decades Cheryl has reported on just about every topic, but all of her stories have one thing in common: she always finds an angle to help people. Cheryl is one of the most giving, empathetic and genuine people I know. The word "no" doesn't exist in her vocabulary.

I have had the distinct honor to work with Cheryl on countless occasions. For years, she has been the masterful emcee at Professional Businesswomen of California and other programs. She has been the keynote speaker at my Congressional events for middleschoolers and seniors. As a journalist, she is warm and inviting, but always professional and insistent on the truth. I took on the issue of rape and sexual assault in the military about five years ago. Many stories have been written and produced about this horrendous epidemic, but it was Cheryl Jennings who produced, wrote and reported the most comprehensive and powerful piece on the subject that I have seen.

Cheryl learned the value of hard work, perseverance and public service early on. She was one of seven children born to a father who served in the U.S. Army and a mother who raised her and her siblings. As the oldest, Cheryl had lots of opportunity to change diapers, feed and take care of babies. The military sent Cheryl's family all over the world. By the time she started high school, she had changed schools more than a dozen times. She says that part was tough, but prepared her well for life in TV.

Her original plans to become a teacher changed when she started college at City College of San Francisco. Her advisor told her to look for another career path because there were too many teachers. Cheryl interviewed two very rare women for a story in the college newspaper. They both worked in television, on air—almost unheard of in that era. The rest is history.

Reporting was not an easy path. While she was earning her Bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University, she was rejected for volunteer-entry-level positions at TV stations 19 out of 20 times. Finally, a woman at the local NBC station hired her to work 50 hours a week while she continued to go to school. Her pay? Nothing. But her hard work and perseverance eventually paid off. The NBC station hired her as a paid receptionist, she worked her way into the newsroom, and in 1979, KGO TV hired her as a night reporter.

The entire Bay Area became her classroom and she has taught her lessons exceptionally well.

Cheryl has travelled the world to tell stories—Mexico, Kosovo, Afghanistan, South Africa, Korea, Israel and the West Bank. Here at home, one of the most memorable stories she covered was the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. She was the first local reporter on the air thanks to the station's quick power generator. KGO's coverage earned the team two of the most prestigious broadcast awards, a George Foster Peabody Award and the Radio Television News Directors Association Edward R. Murrow Award. Cheryl says this was the moment she understood just how vital television is in providing public service.

Doing good is what drives Cheryl. In 2003, she co-founded the Roots for Peace Children's Penny Campaign, a non-profit that removes landmines in war-torn countries and builds and repairs schools. She works with the Taylor Family Foundation and the Okizu Foundation to help children with life-threatening illnesses. She lends her voice and passion to many non-profit events that raise awareness and funds. All of this amazing work has earned Cheryl many awards, including six Gracie Awards, but what matters most to her are the children and families whose lives she has touched.

Cheryl has been married to the love of her life Richard Pettibone for 29 years. They enjoy sharing adventures together, whether it's a safari in Africa or a hike on a local beach.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor Cheryl Jennings, a first-rate journalist and extraordinary woman whom I am honored to call a dear friend. I know that she will continue her outstanding work on the air and off the air. Cheryl is a true treasure to her family, our local community and the world.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, December 2, 2015, I inadvertently voted No instead of Aye on roll call vote 661, the Tonko Amendment Number 22 to H.R. 8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2015. I would like to change my vote to reflect my intended Aye vote.

HONORING THE LEGACY AND IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs)

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize the importance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

As a graduate of the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), I know all too well the importance HBCUs play in the fabric

of our country. They prepare students for careers that span all disciplines, teach students the value of self-worth, the importance of culture, history, and legacy.

Growing up during a time when colleges were not readily available for African-Americans, HBCUs played a vital role in educating African American youth. They continue to play an important role in educating students from all walks of life. They offer students, regardless of race, an opportunity to develop their skills and talents to serve both domestically and internationally. According to the United Negro College Fund, HBCUs are responsible for producing approximately 70% of all black doctors and dentists, 50% of black engineers and public school teachers, and 35% of black lawyers.

I am extremely proud of all the HBCU Caucus is doing to recognize the importance of HBCUs and proud to be a member of the caucus. As a member of the caucus and an HBCU alumnus, I am committed to continue funding these critical institutions and ensuring our nation's youth have access to quality affordable education.

Mr. Speaker, I once again want to stress the importance of HBCUs and urge my colleagues to continue to support them. They are the bedrock of our nation and symbolic of how our nation came together to ensure all students have access to quality affordable education.

CELEBRATING SIXTY YEARS OF
U.S.-LAO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, on December 4th I had the pleasure of attending at the invitation of Ambassador Mai Sayavongs a celebration of both the sixtieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Laos and the United States and the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The event was well attended by ASEAN ambassadors and key U.S. officials including Mr. Ben Rhodes from the White House and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Daniel Russel.

Over the course of these six decades there have been many difficult passages in the bilateral relationship. Today, I look forward and it is my belief that the relationship between the United States and the Lao PDR will improve, strengthen and grow in importance. For me, U.S.-Laos relations has a direct impact on the thousands of Hmong and Lao Americans I represent in St. Paul and the surrounding East metro suburbs. It has been forty years since the first refugees from Southeast Asia arrived in Minnesota, but the family, cultural, and economic ties to Laos continue to be very important. As Laos becomes more engaged in the global economy, respects the rule of law, and embraces human rights for all its citizens my constituents feel more comfortable and more excited about returning to their ancestral homeland.

In the coming year Laos will become chair ASEAN and it is expected that President Obama will be the first U.S. president to visit Laos. It is critical that the U.S. encourage the Lao government to make the necessary reforms that will allow its people to escape poverty and contribute to the long-term success of