

the one's who tried to conquer us.

My mother told me the stories,
the stories of the past.

Of how Mr. Chavez held on, never letting go,
strong and always steady-fast.

I held on tightly and whispered in my
mama's ear

"I'm gonna be just like him mama,"

"I'm gonna be just like him."

There were eight first place winners. Of these eight, I will enter the essays of the first three first place winners today. The essays of Sabrina Hernandez of Andrew Hill High School, Aberin Rodrigo of James Lick High School, and Kathryn White of Oak Grove High School follow:

Sabrina Hernandez of Andrew Hill High School.

"THIS SPIRIT WE FOLLOW"

Why are people of past struggles as well as successes remembered in spite of their death? Why, because they are leaders. Cesar Chavez died in 1993 and still, today, he serves as a model for youth throughout the world. Cesar Chavez had fire in himself, a spark of divine madness as he would march, boycott, and strike to win rights for migrants. But above all, Cesar Chavez helped all Hispanic people to dignify their deepest desires, convinced many to follow his own footsteps in the making of a great history, and finally, gave people a sense of glory about themselves.

Today people may wonder who Cesar Chavez really was and, as a youth, one may question how Cesar Chavez became the person he is remembered to be. Cesar Chavez helped people to dignify their deepest desires, no matter what they were to be. In doing so, people's desires today are to keep Cesar Chavez' spirit alive in the hearts of his followers and, most of all, in the hearts of the youth. We, the youth of today, will become the leaders of tomorrow. In order to become successful adults, we need people like Cesar Chavez, who struggled to keep his dreams alive so they could become a reality. Together we may look up to and follow in his footsteps, determined to reach our goals despite the hardships that we may come to face.

Cesar Chavez was like a mirror, reflecting back to people their own sense of purpose, putting into words their hopes and dreams, transforming their needs and fears into coherent policies and programs. On July 29, 1970, Cesar Chavez and his followers signed union contracts with the U.F.W. known to be the United Farm Workers union. This union helped migrant farmworkers join together to dramatize the plight of America's poor farmhands. Today youth are able to look upon this heroic man and into the future so that we may finally realize, "Yes, we can be leaders too." In the mid 1900's, people had glory in themselves, though they did not know it. They were too busy working the fields, picking lettuce, picking fruits, and least liked of them all, picking grapes. Now that we are approaching the year 2000, thanks to Cesar Chavez, farmworkers, some from our own families, do not have to suffer as much to earn a living. We still have to work, yet we have time to hope, to wish, and to dream.

Our strength made him strong; our determination made him determined; our courage made him a hero; he was and still is, in the final analysis, the symbol of our dreams and hopes, shaped by our own spirit and will . . . his name, Cesar Chavez. He led the making of memorable history and today our grandparents and our parents are able to tell us the story of this wonderful man. Cesar Chavez' beliefs were bolder than a pair of eagle's wings. He stood strong and tall surpassing his own hardships while achieving dreams

that were interlocked in his heart and the hearts of us that believed in him. He worked hard to break the wall of obscurity that seemed to combine work with pain. The paths that Cesar Chavez traveled are here for us today so that, we too, can experience life's forsaken treasures.

Cesar Chavez was a leader and today, for many, still remains a leader. He spent his whole lifetime uniting people, a quality he possessed even in death. He dignified, he convinced, and he gave his life to all those that believed in him. What Cesar Chavez stood for is relevant in our world and lives today, and now he is able to serve as a model for all youth to believe in, to follow, and to become.

(Aberin Rodrigo of James Lick High School)

CESAR CHAVEZ

In this crumbling society, where everything seems to retrogress instead of progress, role models are needed to guide the youth of the world in a positive direction. One might suggest that the youth today do have role models, but these role models are usually athletes or superstars. These athletes and superstars may be rich and famous, but they hide behind them the real models of today. Ordinary people who struggle and battle for what they believe in should be the role models of our youth because they display characteristics that are not often shown today. There are so many of these "secondary" role models, but one seems to stand out. This man was not very big physically, yet his heart was one of enormous proportions. A courageous and determined leader was what he was, and his name was Cesar Chavez.

Starting out his life as a farmer, Chavez began to realize how poor the conditions were that migrant farmers faced. They lived in shacks that were merely chunks of wood piled on one another. The food they were given were of the worst quality and plumbing was not available in these shacks. To make it worse, these farmers were given no benefits, even though they worked approximately sixteen hours a day, six to seven times a week. These ridiculous facts awakened the leader which was hidden in Chavez. His calm rage became visible when he organized the United Farmworker's Union. With this union he planned to call upon the nation's attention concerning the rights of these "invisible people." He wanted to let everyone know how pitiful the migrant farmers' living conditions were. If some people could be reached by Chavez's actions, which included going on two hunger strikes, then maybe these people could help make these conditions less ridiculous and heinous. One might say, "Well, why did they not just leave and find another job?" They could not. Who else would give them a job knowing their background? Even though they were paid so little, and were treated so poorly, no one else would pay and treat them better. This is what Chavez tried to change, and with great patience, determination, courage and leadership, he would die trying.

All of Chavez's accomplishments were done with many characteristics not often shown in modern life. His courage was displayed when he spoke his mind representing the opinions of the migrant workers. His determination was displayed in his starvation protests, while his leadership was displayed in his organization of the Grape Boycott and the United Farmworker's Union. His patience undoubtedly was the force behind his continuance to fight for what he believed in. These are the characteristics lacked by the youth today, and even though Chavez has passed on, maybe, just maybe he might have influenced a few youths—youths who need guidance.

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

(Kathryn White of Oak Grove High School)

Cesar Chavez was not just a man, in the eyes of many he was a hero. Although Chavez passed away two years ago, he will always be remembered and looked up to. Chavez was a man who dedicated his life to improving the lives of the American farm worker. He organized the powerless migrant farm workers of California and forced the growers to pay better wages and provide better working conditions for the workers. His struggle was tough, but his commitment to the farm workers was stronger than any of those who opposed him. It was Chavez' honor, dignity, and sense of duty that make him one of the best role models a child growing up in today's world could possible have.

Many children today look to violence to solve their problems. Their only role models are those that they find on the "big screen," and because of this many important values are being replaced by superficial beliefs in the lives of children everywhere. Yet, it is people such as Cesar Chavez who can bring about change in children's lives. Chavez was a nonviolent and hardworking man who followed his heart and used his time and energy to promote peace and make a better life for those around him. The qualities which made Chavez the great man that he was are those that children everywhere should want to instill in their lives.

Chavez had a mission, and although he was opposed by many who did not agree with him, he never gave up. He had a commitment, and his promise to the farm workers of America was one that he intended to keep. The life and hard work of Cesar Chavez demonstrates to children the rewards for having a goal and working hard until it is reached. Chavez can serve as a role model to children around the world in that he was a dignified man who made a promise to himself and the people around him and through hard work and determination reached his goal. With a role model like this, children can learn that working hard and helping others not only makes the other person feel good but will bring about a sense of self-pride, a huge reward for honest hard work.

Cesar Chavez taught the world that working together accomplishes in much more than working alone. He taught the farm workers, the Latino community, and everyone around the world that pride in one's self, belief in those around you, and unending devotion to a worthy cause can make the world a better place. With a role model like Chavez, children everywhere can see that having honor and duty, not giving up when things get tough, and working together with others will provide a better more unified world where everyone can live together in peace.

TERM LIMITS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 73) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the number of terms of office of Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives:

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, just last week, after a historic debate, we discussed and approved the Personal Responsibility Act, sending a clear message: Americans must take responsibility for their own actions.

Two weeks ago, our debate on common sense legal reform also focused on the proposition that individual responsibility is the hallmark of our Nation.

Isn't it ironic that we are now moving to strip Americans of the most basic, crucial responsibility of all: The responsibility to remain alert, active, and informed; the responsibility to monitor elected officials; the responsibility to cast an intelligent vote on election day.

Some of the most well-meaning, thoughtful, and patriotic individuals of our day are strongly in support of term limits, inside and outside of this body. We are reminded that polls tell us a vast majority of our fellow citizens, at least in principle, strongly support term limits.

It is our responsibility, as guardians of the people's liberties, to oppose this undemocratic and self-destructive step backward.

Adoption of a term limit amendment would enhance, not destroy, the public apathy which is already a festering problem. Does anyone in this Chamber truly believe that the 62 percent of the American electorate who stayed home on election day 1994 would really have been motivated to appear at the polls simply by knowing whoever they elected would be limited to 12 years in office? Why would any qualified candidate bother to run for Congress against any incumbent, if he or she knew perfectly well that a wait of a few years would present an open seat? Why would any political party or committee, or the news media, bother to research and publicize the voting record of any Member, knowing that person would be gone within 12 years, no matter what? Who would bother to raise money or devote time to opposing any incumbent if we knew they would soon be gone?

Term limits are being proposed to solve a problem that does not exist. Over half the current Members of Congress began their service here since 1990. During the 8 years that Ronald Reagan was President, the House experienced a 60-percent turnover of membership.

Just this morning—March 29, 1995—the Washington Post pointed out in an editorial:

What term limit supporters want is what is happening without term limits. Of the 435 members of the House, 219—a majority—have been there less than 5 years. Turnover has been especially dramatic in the last two elections: The House class of 1994 included 87 first termers, the class of 1992 included 110 . . . All by themselves, without any law compelling them to do so, voters have shaken up Congress a great deal in a very short time.

The House should vote this week to reject constitutional amendments that would impose term limits.

The Washington Post editorial continues, because they are an unnecessary interference with the freedom of voters to elect whom they want. Term limits would also make Congress a less democratic place. By robbing Congress of the expertise that members who manage to get reelected can develop over many years, term limits would concentrate expertise—and thus, power—in congressional staffs, in the executive branch and in this city's growing cadre of paid lobbyists.

Those Americans who have chosen to exercise their responsibility in voting have been remarkably discriminating. It is an insult to their intelligence, and to their patriotism, to contend

term limits are the only possible way to turn out Representatives who have outlived their usefulness.

Our Nation already has term limits: it's called voting.

Cokie Roberts is not only one of our Nation's most respected journalists, she is also the daughter of two former colleagues of ours. She pointed out just prior to the 1992 elections that Congress "is a place to be taken seriously, a place for professionals. That does not mean that everyone in Congress should be a lifelong politician, and few are * * * But some experienced souls will still be there providing an institutional memory, explaining the importance of protecting congressional prerogatives in the face of what may be an aggressive new administration and assuring freshly elected members that they can take principled but unpopular stands and live to fight another day."

The supporters of term limits allude to the old days of the citizen Congress as if there were a time in our history when voluntary term limits were the rule. In reality, the services of such American giants as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, and Thomas Hart Benton would have been denied us, at the peak of their intellectual capacities, had term limits been in effect in the 1800's. Had they been in effect then, the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates, which helped awaken our Nation's conscience on slavery, would never have taken place because Senator Douglas would have been ineligible for reelection.

In our own century, some of the most outstanding services of Senators Hubert Humphrey and Barry Goldwater, of Speaker Sam Rayburn—and the Speaker NEWT GINGRICH—would have been denied us had term limits been in effect.

I do not subscribe to the theory that public service is the only job in our society in which experience is bad, not good.

Some of the criticism of Congress which has led people to support term limit proposals is justified. However, term limits is not an effective means of addressing these concerns, and may be a case of going from the frying pan into the fire. In fact, no problems have ever been resolved by taking rights and responsibilities away from the people.

During the recent 40-year domination which the Democrats enjoyed in this Chamber, all too often committee chairmen utilized their seniority to thwart the will of their colleagues and of the people. The new House rules which we adopted this past January—and which I was pleased to support—precludes this from happening again. Chairmen are now restricted to 6 years in the chairman's seat, no matter how many times the voters at home exercise their right to re-elect them. Long overdue election reforms and changes in campaign finance rules, can also level the playing field, encouraging responsible challenges to incumbent Members of Congress. Term limits will not.

Throughout my many years as a Member of this body, I have never experienced an unopposed election. Every 2 years, I have defended the positions I had taken, explained my voting record, and accounted to the people for my conduct in office. I believe that this was the way our Founding Fathers intended Congress to work, and I see nothing wrong with this.

Some supporters of term limits seem to think it would be desirable to remove this ac-

countability to the people. George Will, perhaps the most notorious spokesperson in favor of term limits, openly states that he favors a constitutional distance between the people and Members of Congress. The theory seems to be that if we in the Congress do not have to worry about reelection, we will do the right thing. Our colleague in the other body—Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky—quite articulately points out that: "The underlying presumption here is that 'the right thing' must be contrary to the will of the people; and once you realize that, you see how vehemently anti-populist and undemocratic term limits really are."

The importance of the Congress to our Founding Fathers is underscored by the fact that it is established by the very first Article of the Constitution. The first section of that article defines the Congress; the second states that: "The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States * * *." It is interesting to note that Members of the House of Representatives are the only public officials whom the Constitution specified, from the very beginning, are to be elected by the people.

Sadly, we know that the term "people" had a different meaning in 1787 than it does now.

To correct these inequities, our Nation has broadened the definition of "people" as times and growing awareness demanded. By the 1840's, the requirement that all voters be property owners, which was taken for granted by our Founding Fathers, was eliminated by law in most of the States. By constitutional amendment our Nation extended the vote to racial minorities and former slaves in 1870, to women in 1920, to residents of the District of Columbia in 1961, to those who cannot afford poll taxes in 1964, and to 18-year-olds in 1971. Through the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent legislation, we made our ideals a reality by enforcing the extension of the franchise to all Americans.

Today, we are asked, for the first time in our Nation's history, to turn the clock back on 208 years of progress. After two centuries of expanding the electorate and the rights of our citizens, for the first time, an amendment is proposed that would restrict the rights of Americans to make a free and open choice regarding their representatives, and which would absolve them of the responsibility of remaining alert and active.

Mr. Speaker, term limits is more than just a bad idea. It is a threat to our system of government. Let us reject this amendment and get on with the business of governing.

TRIBUTE TO THE GOLDEN EAGLES
OF NORTH CAROLINA HIGH
SCHOOL

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 1995

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, for the second time in 3 years, a school in the Sixth District has captured the 1994-95 North Carolina high school 1A/2A dual team wrestling championship. What makes it even more special, is that it is the same team which won both titles.