

IN MEMORY OF MARGARET  
LESHER-THORSTENSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. TAUSCHER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, the Tenth Congressional District of California was shocked and saddened last week by the untimely death of one of its true community leaders, Margaret Leshler-Thorstenson. Some might say a shining light was dimmed in Contra Costa County with the passing of Margaret Leshler. I say the light will continue to burn bright through her many gifts of generosity, kindness, and friendship.

As individuals and as a community, we are richer for having had Margaret Leshler in our lives. Mrs. Leshler was an extraordinary woman who had many facets to her life: A mother, wife, businesswoman, philanthropist, and friend. In each role she exemplified a spirit of voluntarism and generosity that all of us constantly strive to achieve. In every cause or endeavor upon which she embarked, she would give 110 percent of herself. Throughout all of her community service, Margaret Leshler realized that her family and friends were her foundation.

I had the occasion to meet Margaret Leshler through the Battered Women's Alternative of Contra Costa County, a Contra Costa organization dedicated to aiding and assisting women in need.

In 1990 she established the Margaret Leshler Transitional Housing and Employment Center. She not only gave financially to the program, but she also spent countless hours meeting and talking to the women who went through the center. Mrs. Leshler was always there to listen and support anyone who needed her help.

As first vice president for Leshler Communications, the newspaper chain founded by her late husband, Dean Leshler, she strove to make the papers an accurate reflection of the character and personality of Contra Costa County. Mrs. Leshler worked side by side with her husband to make the publication one of the most successful in California. Even after the newspapers had been sold, the current owners have carried on the exemplary quality established by Dean and Margaret Leshler.

Not many people knew that Margaret Leshler authored music and lyrics for 40 copyrighted songs and 14 poems. In 1982 she was honored with the Bronze Halo Award of Special Merit from the southern California Motion Picture Council for her contributions as a writer, songwriter, and vocalist. These talents inspired her to begin a wonderful collaboration with the arts and the community.

Through the Dean and Margaret Leshler Foundation, the magnificent building bearing the family name houses the California Symphony, the Diablo Ballet, and other theatrical groups. The center, along with many other buildings, are symbols of Mrs.

Leshler's tireless commitment to the betterment of the community.

Barry Jekoywski, the conductor of the California Symphony in Contra Costa County and associate conductor of the National Symphony here in Washington, captured the essence of Margaret Leshler's dedication to the arts when he said that she believed in the vision and importance of the arts in the community, especially for families and children.

Today her memorial service is taking place at the Dean Leshler Regional Center for the Arts, the very center that she was instrumental in establishing. Over 1,000 people are expected to attend today's service to pay tribute to the first lady of Contra Costa County.

It is difficult to explain to my colleagues what a special and unique person Margaret Leshler was. Many people's lives have been touched and blessed by her spirit, warmth, and kindness.

Here on the House floor, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to Margaret's husband, Collin Thorstenson, and her daughters Tricia Ryan Simonds, Wendy Alvs, Roxanne Gibson and Jill Heidt. This is a very difficult time for her family and all of Contra Costa County, an area that considered itself part of Margaret Leshler's family.

With some poetic license, I will borrow the words of Robert Frost to capture the inspiration and dedication Margaret inspired within all of us:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both and be one  
traveler,

Long I stood and looked down one as far as  
I could,

To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, just as fair,  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the  
one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

At a time when it was not popular to support causes like battered women's alternatives, Margaret Leshler took a path that most would not have ventured down. She neither sought approbation nor applause. In fact, many of her wonderful deeds never received public attention. She simply wanted to make Contra Costa County a better place for all of its residents. In the end, the paths she chose were eventually the paths that all of us have followed.

The many wonderful contributions Mrs. Leshler gave to our community will continue to thrive and flourish through the foundation established in her and Dean's name. We will miss her warmth and presence within our community, yet the light of her spirit will live forever in all the good that she has done.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HANSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAFALCE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. LAFALCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HORN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

IN HONOR OF ASIAN PACIFIC  
AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to notable accomplishments by Asian Pacific Americans as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is commemorated here in the Nation's Capital and in other cities nationwide. The annual celebration of this month of meaningful observance stems back to 1978, and is now carried on under Public Law 102-450, which permanently designated the month of May upon finding that "Asian and Pacific Americans have contributed significantly to the development of the arts, sciences, government, military, commerce, and education in the United States."

Comprising nearly 10 million, or 3.7 percent of the U.S. population, Asian Pacific Americans rank among the highest in our educational institutions, hold high political office and log advances in entrepreneurship. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1994, nearly 90 percent of Asian Pacific Islander men and 80 percent of Asian Pacific Islander women aged 25 years and older had at least a high school diploma. In addition, an estimated 46 percent of men and 37 percent of women had at least a bachelor's degree.

Median income of Asian and Pacific Islander households in 1995 was \$40,614. Business ownership figures show that the number of businesses owned by Asian and Pacific Islanders increased 56 percent between 1987 and 1992, from 386,291 to 603,439.

Asian Pacific American visibility in government is also on the rise. My State of Hawaii boasts the first Filipino-American Governor, Benjamin Cayetano. Chinese-American Gary Locke succeeded in his bid for Governor of Washington State in last year's elections. In addition, there are 23 State Senators in Colorado, Hawaii and Oregon, and 40 State Representatives in Arizona, California, Hawaii, New Hampshire, New York, and Washington State. The membership of this body includes five Asian Pacific Americans, as well as two in the Senate, Senators Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inoué.

Of particular note are Asian Pacific Americans who, through singular dedication to the greatness of our Federal Government, have thrived and risen to positions of prominence in Federal departments and agencies. The following is a list of top-ranking Asian Pacific Americans in the 14 Federal Departments:

Agriculture: Lon Hatamiya, Administrator of Agricultural Marketing Service, and Jeremy