

are truly blessed to count her as our friend and neighbor.

DESIGNATION OF THE "EUGENE J. MCCARTHY POST OFFICE BUILDING"

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise with the support of the Minnesota delegation in the U.S. House, to introduce H.R. 2836, a bill to designate the U.S. Post Office Building in downtown St. Paul, MN, as the "Eugene J. McCarthy Post Office Building."

Eugene J. McCarthy served as a U.S. Representative from Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District, the seat that I've been honored to represent. He also served for many years as a U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota. He served for over two decades in Congress and was a much celebrated candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the U.S. in 1968. Gene McCarthy's role in this 1968 campaign was the catalyst that set in place major change in United States and global policy in Southeast Asia and electoral politics in our Nation.

Eugene McCarthy was a teacher in the public schools in Minnesota and a professor at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN. He was also an instructor of economics at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul and a distinguished author of numerous books on subjects ranging from children's literature to history and most renowned for his poetry.

The State of Minnesota is the home of many great leaders, however, few have touched as many lives as Minnesota's Eugene McCarthy. Senator McCarthy is a tireless leader and throughout his recent illness his fighting spirit persists. Therefore I, as well as, the Minnesota delegation and the people of the great State of Minnesota want to honor the accomplishments and service of this historic Minnesota leader from the area of St. Paul, MN, that catapulted him onto the national stage and into the U.S. Congress.

I welcome the support of my colleagues and this Nation in recognition of the career and public service of this great American.

WALTER CAPPS WAS A JOYOUS MAN

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, on October 28 the House of Representatives lost an extraordinary Member. That loss was felt here, and it was felt across the country. Earlier in October the gentleman from California, Mr. Capps, had visited this Member's home State of Nebraska and the city of Omaha, where he was born and grew up. Not surprisingly, Nebraskans responded enthusiastically to his warm and generous spirit. This Member commends to his colleagues the piece by Roger Bergman which appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on November 8, 1997.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Nov. 8, 1997]
WALT CAPPS "WAS A JOYOUS MAN"

(By Roger Bergman)

Even as the lights were coming back on in our house and around Omaha on Oct. 28, another kind of light was being extinguished. Our friend—really a member of the family—Congressman Walter Capps was dead. He suffered a heart attack in Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C.

It seemed impossible that someone so vital—so full of life and with so much to offer—could be claimed by darkness so suddenly, so unexpectedly, so early. Even at 63, even after barely surviving a head-on collision with a drunken driver more than a year ago, Walt Capps was not someone you expected to die. My wife, Dr. Wendy M. Wright, a Creighton University theology professor for whom Capps was an intimate friend and mentor, expressed it well: "He was such a joyous man."

During his recent visit to his native Omaha to attend family and high school reunions and to speak at his boyhood church and at Creighton University, Walt remarked to me that no less a figure in Western civilization than St. Augustine had written both "The Confessions" and "The City of God," respectively classics of spiritual autobiography and political theology.

A longtime and influential professor of religious studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Capps was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives less than a year ago. As he said in his lecture Oct. 12 at Creighton, he was trying in his own way and however modestly to bridge the gap between spiritual values and the concerns of public life. That an accomplished scholar and master of the lecture hall would even consider such a challenge at the time in a career when most of us would be thinking of retirement attests to his insatiable thirst for life generally and to his faith in the democratic ideal specifically.

It was also Augustine who proclaimed that a Christian should be an "alleluia from head to foot." Walter Capps was such a man.

And his joy in life and hope for America in a time of cynicism about politics was infectious. After spending the evening of Oct. 12 listening to the congressman speak enthusiastically of the quality of people he was getting to know in Washington and of the genuine care and concern of so many elected officials and their often young and idealistic staffs to do the right thing, one Creighton political science professor remarked that she had not felt so hopeful about Congress for years. Although 15 years my senior, Walt, with an almost boyish verve for an overwhelmingly difficult job, made me feel somewhat jaded by comparison.

Perhaps some of Walt Capps' hopefulness came from the healing and reconciliation he saw taking place in his course on the Vietnam War. Vets who had never told their stories before were invited to share the podium with him. Students whose fathers were unknown to them personally were sent as emissaries of the class to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington to touch those precious names on the black marble. Sen. Bob Kerrey, Nebraska's then-governor, took an active role in the class for years, becoming a close friend to Capps and mentoring him into political life.

Capps quoted Kerrey in his lecture at Creighton. Politics is often defined as the art of compromise. But Kerrey, reported Capps, described politics as the art of the possible.

The congressman's own philosophy corresponded well with that. Especially after his near-fatal crash in 1996, he said he woke up every morning just grateful for the new day and the opportunities it offered.

He approached his legislative role in Washington in the same spirit: Whatever small advance I can help to make for the general welfare of the people of this country, let me be ready to do it. Not a bad philosophy for the rest of us.

Of Capps' 14 books, the most recent was on the Czech playwright and president, Vaclav Havel, another fine intellect who responded to the call of public service. Havel's most recent book is titled "The Art of the Impossible." Walter would have appreciated that perspective on self-government, too. One of his own books was significantly titled, "Hope Against Hope."

But Walt Capps was not merely a dreamer. He wanted to make a difference. And so he put up with the arduous demands of the campaign trail (and the insults of his opponent, which he did not return) and the daily frustrations of an idealist in the powerbroking world of the national capital. If he tilted at windmills, it was only after being sure it was for the good of his own constituents and the country generally.

Like a combination of Don Quixote, St. Augustine, and Vaclav Havel, our friend Walter Capps dreamed a possible dream. He believed that citizens could govern themselves despite deep moral and ideological disagreements. Perhaps felled by the strenuous schedule that belief demanded of him as a citizen-representative, Walt Capps is a reminder to all of us that democracy has no sidelines.

Professor Capps—he took a leave of absence from his university post rather than give it up entirely—had a more personal dream, too. After several terms in Congress, he wanted to return to the University of California at Santa Barbara to teach about democracy.

Democracy, he said, is not something we inherit as a lifeless monument from the past. It is something we create and recreate every day. Or at least that is the challenge.

He will not be able to fulfill that personal dream—to the loss of all of us, but especially to those UCSB students who will know of him only by reputation. My wife and I are immensely grateful that our children, his godchildren, were touched by his life.

But like the image of a flame that lingers in the mind's eye even after the wick has been snuffed, Walter Capps' joyous, hopeful, generous spirit will linger long after his life has gone out.

May he rest in peace. And may the rest of us get to work.

VETERANS DAY IS AMERICA'S DAY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend to my colleagues an article that was published in the Charleston Gazette of Charleston WV. The article was written by a constituent of the Third Congressional District of West Virginia and a national vice commander of the American Legion, Mr. Robert Vass, Sr., of Huntington, WV.

I am sure that many of my colleagues spent yesterday the same way that I did, visiting with constituents to celebrate Veterans Day. Entire communities come together on November