

country. In honor of their many charitable and civil contributions, I join my colleagues in the House of Representatives in recognizing May 12, 1998 as National Students In Free Enterprise Day.

I congratulate SIFE as they continue their mission of helping people achieve their dreams through free enterprise education.

A TRIBUTE TO BLUE RIBBON  
WEEK

**HON. JERRY LEWIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 5, 1998*

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention today the dedication and fine work of the many peace officers serving the cities and County of San Bernardino in California. To recognize the work they do to protect and serve our citizens, the week of May 11, 1998 has been designated as Blue Ribbon Week. Inland Empire Chapter 67 of the International Footprint Association—an organization made up of police, attorneys, and local business people—is a leading sponsor of this worthy effort.

Blue Ribbon Week has been established to show public confidence for all peace officers and law enforcement agencies and to provide a moral boost for the men and women who display a badge in the name of protecting our local communities. During the week of May 11th, each citizen displaying a blue ribbon will demonstrate support for every police agency now serving both the cities and County of San Bernardino.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in remembering the brave, devoted peace officers who willingly put their lives on the line every day. Blue Ribbon Week is an appropriate means of recognizing the many law enforcement personnel in San Bernardino County. It is only fitting that the House join Inland Empire Chapter 67 of the International Footprint Association and the many citizens of California's 40th district in paying tribute today to these dedicated men and women.

IN MEMORY OF AL McNABNEY

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 5, 1998*

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, it was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Al McNabney last week. I knew Al well, enjoyed our conversations and highly regarded his opinions on local and national concerns. California has lost a tireless leader whose many contributions as an environmental activist will be remembered and revered by the citizens of Contra Costa County and all who knew him.

Al McNabney was an outstanding citizen whose passion for the environment began with an interest in birds and later developed into active memberships with a variety of advisory councils and environmental organizations, including his service as Vice President of Conservation for the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society. Al is remembered as a respected source of in-

formation about most conservation issues, and he wrote many letters to me about his personal environmental concerns and pending legislative policy issues. His vision for the development of the Delta Science Center, a state-of-the-art facility for environmental research, education and recreation, will soon become a reality and a valuable resource for the citizens of my district.

My heart goes out to Al's wife Helen, to whom Al was married for 57 years, his family and his friends. Al will be sorely missed, but his contributions toward environmental conservation will be enjoyed for generations to come. I ask that the following article from the Contra Costa Times, "Al McNabney Battled for Nature in East Bay" be printed below in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Contra Costa Times, May 3, 1998]

AL McNABNEY BATTLED FOR NATURE IN EAST BAY

(By Abby Collins Sears)

WALNUT CREEK.—There may never be another environmentalist like Al McNabney in Contra Costa County, say friends, fellow advocates and even opponents.

The man was synonymous with environmentalism in the East Bay. He died Friday morning of natural causes.

Al belonged to more environmental organizations, projects and advisory councils than Heather Farm Park has trees, the Delta has islands or Mount Diablo has trails, he said in a January interview. He knew because he monitored them for more than two decades. "He was a great environmental warrior," said Walnut Creek resident Steve Barbata, who knew Al for 12 years after meeting him at an environmental event.

"Even before that, I was always aware of his eminent presence," he said. "He made the environment more tolerable for all life forms."

HEAVILY INVOLVED

Funny thing was, Al rarely got outdoors.

In his later years, the Rossmoor resident used most of his energy to read land-use studies, attend meetings and write letters. On average, he wrote more than 25 letters a week to developers, politicians and public agencies. He also subscribed to 37 conservation publications and would read every page.

When one saw Al in action at a city planning commission or the county Board of Supervisors meeting, you would know that was no exaggeration. He would spew facts and figures at bullet speed—without forgetting to flash a smile.

"He was exceptionally competent and always very thorough," said Martinez resident Ted Radke, a member of the East Bay Regional Park District board. "He earned a great deal of respect from everybody he came into contact with, whether people agreed with him or not."

DEFUSING TENSION

Several people commented that one of Al's greatest talents was infusing dry humor into heated discussions.

"He would defuse steamy or difficult situations with humor," Barbata said. "He knew people learned better through humor than pointed criticism. He was a master of it."

His presentation were often facetious. He often gave a spiel about the bugs and bees, birds and flowers, water and soil, animals and trees—yet steely facts would glint through the friendly fluff.

Al's passion to save the county's natural milieu from eradication began about 30 years ago with a simple affinity for a bird. Every day, he passed the pet shop near his former San Francisco home. Eventually he made

regular stops to admire one bird—a green Amazon parrot.

One day the owner suggested Al take it out of the cage. It bit him. But the owner said he handled the bird very well. So he bought that parrot, and soon after, another.

LOVE OF BIRDS

Al then read everything he could about parrots, an interest that expanded to other birds.

He even took a job studying hospital systems in Australia so he and his wife, Helen, could spend their free time studying the country's native species.

Al and Helen were two lovebirds themselves. Even after 57 years of marriage, they still exchanged affectionate glances and coy grins. Helen matched Al's clever witticisms with her own gentle quips.

She said she appreciated numerous qualities about him, but was shy about commenting on her husband out of respect for his humble and private character.

Helen's only half complaint was having to put up with his bird Coco, a talkative African gray parrot that he had for more than 30 years. She and Coco could never hold a conversation.

VOLUNTEERED AFTER RETIRING

After retiring in the late 1970s, Al said he had nothing better to do so he volunteered with the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society. It was the beginning of his environmental work.

"They sounded like they had something to do with birds, and by then I was pretty well steeped into bird life," he had said in the interview earlier this year.

The organization made Al vice president of conservation, and he fought to maintain ecological equilibrium ever after. That involvement sprouted into other environmentally related issues, such as overseeing effects of Tosco refinery emissions, and developing the Delta Science Center, a proposed research, education and recreation facility that became his pet project the past five years.

"He called it a world-class center," said Radke, the park district board member. "He wanted everyone involved with it to think big. It was a dream of his, which will someday soon become a reality."

MANY MEMBERSHIPS

Al was also a member of the Sierra Club, CalFed, Advocates for Bird Conservation, Committee for the American Federation of Aviculture, Commission for Endangered and Exotic Species, Committee on the Conservation on International Trade and Endangered Species, and the Lindsay Wildlife Museum. Al also watched over practically every development plan proposed in Contra Costa, making him the county's environmental conscience.

He said he had lived so long that his many lives all helped in his role as an effective activist. Al was a hospital administrator for medical facilities in San Francisco and Tucson, Ariz., and he was once a labor leader and belonged to the American Arbitration Association.

MODEST ACTIVIST

But when asked about other accomplishments, he was always self-effacing.

"There's not a huge rush of people wanting the job and the environment is going to pot in a hand basket," he said a few months ago. "As long as I can negotiate, talk and walk I'm going to keep doing it."

Helen said there will be no services because her modest husband wouldn't have wanted it. She plans to privately scatter his ashes.

"I thought of doing it in the Delta or Shell marsh or maybe Mount Diablo," Helen said. "I'll have to really think about it because he truly loved all those areas so much."