

said Charlene Bridges, president of the Lamar school. The other Colorado schools are at Trinidad State Junior College and the Colorado School of Trades in Lakewood.

Bridges' husband, J. Earl Bridges, is director and chief instructor. He has been a gunsmith for 15 years and has been teaching the craft for the past six.

Since it opened, the academy "has worked on no less than 3,000 firearms, and maybe four have been returned to redo something or because we overlooked something," Earl Bridges said.

In addition to learning how to build their own rifles from stock to trigger assembly to barrel, students are expected to repair or remodel a minimum of 40 firearms during their mandatory 2,240 hours at the academy.

Roughly one-third of their time must be spent on "design, function and repair of firearms." Only 175 hours are spent on theory. There is no homework, just many hours of painstaking precision work, and students are encouraged to read, said Charlene Bridges.

A major difference between this school and others is the emphasis on the basics involved in building a gun from raw metal bar stock, said instructor and part owner Michael Syler, who owned a gun shop near Dallas before moving to Lamar.

Tuition, excluding room and board, is \$11,760 for the course, and students pay an additional \$5,300 to acquire the tools of their trade.

"The quality of the work here is impeccable. Everything approved by (Bridges) must be top notch," said student Jay Crowder, 27, of Knoxville, Tenn.

Although the school doesn't guarantee job placement, "it seems like anyone who needs a job gets one. Eventually, I want a place of my own," Crowder said.

Student Mike Fricks, 29, of Texarkana, Texas, said he appreciated the opportunity to "do finer quality work at a higher standard rather than just basic gun repair."

Fricks' current project, and his last before graduating, is a double gun, which has two independent triggers and barrels just in case one malfunctions. He already has lined up a job after sending a perspective employer a gun he made.

Kevin Macluskie, 28, said he finished his rifle in 270 hours. The school is open 10 hours a day, four days a week, although students may elect to go only six or eight hours a day and take longer to graduate.

Several other students, each of whom has his own spacious work bench, spoke positively of the close, careful supervision and the encouragement. Recently, there were 10 students in the academy, each working at his own level.

The academy's system produces fine results, says Taylor Carroll of Carroll's Gun Shop in Wharton, Texas, who hired academy graduate Dave Wright after visiting the school.

"I've been in business 38 years," said Carroll, who sells guns and has always employed a gunsmith for custom work and repairs. When his veteran gunsmith retired after more than 30 years, "I began searching for a gunsmith."

He knew Earl Bridges by reputation, visited the spacious shop south of Lamar twice and talked with the instructors. "I was happy with what I saw," and he is delighted with Wright.

"I'm very, very satisfied with everything he has done for me," Carroll said.

## HONORING THE LATE LEONARD HARPER

### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 25, 1998

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Leonard Harper on his remarkable achievements in the field of theater and stage shows.

Mr. Harper was one of the leading figures who transformed Harlem into a cultural center during the 1920's. His nightclub productions at Connie Inn, Lafayette Theater and the opening of the new Apollo Theater drew people from all over the world.

Mr. Harper's accomplishments on Broadway include the all-Black "Kentucky Club Revue" at the New Amsterdam Theater, and his work as a director on the big musical hit, "Hot Chocolates" at the Hudson Theater. The production was a milestone, the first-ever production with three Black men as the sole creative force, which changed Broadway forever.

Mr. Harper brought the cabaret form of entertainment to a professional level. As a producer and a brilliant choreographer, he introduced some of the most extraordinary talents to ever perform on stage and cabaret.

Mr. Harper was previously honored by the New York State Assembly and the City Council of New York for his remarkable achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in saluting Mr. Leonard Harper for his contributions to the community and his extraordinary accomplishments.

## TORTURE AND MURDER OF AKAL TAKHT JATHEDAR BY INDIAN POLICE MUST BE INVESTIGATED AND PUNISHED

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 25, 1998

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the truth about India's brutality towards the Sikhs continues to come to light. A group of 13 human-rights activists issued a statement on May 19 at a press conference in Chandigarh about the torture and murder of Gurdev Singh Kaunke, the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, from December 25, 1992 to January 1, 1993. After being tortured for a week, Jathedar Kaunke, the religious leader of the Sikh Nation, was murdered by the police.

Jathedar Kaunke was abducted on December 25, 1992 by the police from the Jagraon subdivision of the Ludhiana district. Even Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal, now the Chief Minister of Punjab, condemned this action. He was briefly detained for his statement. Yet he has refused to refer this terrible incident for investigation by India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on the flimsy pretext that it would demoralize the murderous, out-of-control Punjab police. It is a well-known fact among the people of Punjab that the person responsible for the torture and murder of Jathedar Kaunke is SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna. Ghotna is not a last name, but a very inhumane torture technique used by the police for which he is infamous.

On January 2, 1993, the police claimed that Jathedar Kaunke had escaped. This claim was false. He had been killed the day before. According to a news article, he was murdered by being torn in half, similar to the way that the driver for another religious leader, Bbab Charan Singh, was murdered by the Indians.

The human-rights activists created a commission to look into the matter. According to their statement, they seek "an appointment with the Chief Minister of Punjab to acquaint him with its findings and to demand registration of a case against the culprits." They pointed out that this demand "is no more than a reiteration of the position that Parkash Singh Badal himself had taken at the time of the incident. The Akal Takht is the highest institution of the Sikhs that embodies their sacral and secular aspirations. Its former Jathedar was inhumanly tortured to death. We are confident that the Sikh Chief Minister of Punjab would not treat this matter in the same lackadaisical spirit that generally marks his attitude on our human-rights concerns." They also demanded police protection for key witnesses in the case because India has a record of intimidating, bribing, even killing witnesses.

Signers of this statement include Hindu human-rights activist Ram Narayan Kumar, Justice Kuldip Singh, President of the World Sikh Council, Justice Ajit Singh Bains, chairman of the Punjab Human Rights Organization, Inderjit Singh Jaijee, chairman of the Movement Against State Repression, Dr. Sukhjit Kaur, Maj. Gen. Narinder Singh, Amrik Singh Muktsar, D.S. Gill, R. S. Bains, Amar Singh Chahal, Jaspal Singh Dhillon, Mrs. Baljit Kaur, and Navkiran Singh. They should be recognized for their courage in standing up to the Indian tyranny.

This incident reveals the truth that for minorities living under Indian rule, there is no democracy. The mere fact that they have the right to choose their oppressors does not mean that they live in a democracy. In this light, it is not surprising that there are 17 freedom movements throughout India. If the United States is interested in real freedom, peace, and stability in South Asia, we must support self-determination for the Sikh Nation and all the nations of South Asia. I call on my colleagues to join in supporting an internationally-supervised plebiscite in Punjab, Khalsitan, so that the political status of this troubled country can be decided the democratic way. I also call for my colleagues to vote to stop all aid to India until the basic human and democratic rights of all people are respected. I would like to introduce the statement from The Committee for Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab in the RECORD.

#### THE COMMITTEE FOR COORDINATION ON DISAPPEARANCES IN PUNJAB

Bhai Gurdev Singh Kaunke, former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, was illegally arrested from his village home in Jagraon subdivision of Ludhiana district on 25 December 1992. The police authorities later claimed that Bhai Gurdev Singh Kaunke escaped from the custody of 2 January 1993, a claim that was widely condemned as false. Holding the then Chief Minister Beant Singh responsible for the murder of Jathedar Kaunke, Akali Dal (Badal) had not only demanded his resignation but had also asked for a high powered judicial inquiry to determine the truth. Prakash Singh Badal, the present Chief Minister of Punjab, was himself detained when he was visiting the bereaved at