

TRIBUTE TO GENE MCCARTHY,
IRISHMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today on the floor of this House in recognition of Mr. Gene McCarthy from Buffalo, NY in my district, as the 1999 Goin' South "Irishman of the Year."

Born in Buffalo's "Old First Ward" in 1926, Gene McCarthy is a lifelong member of our community. After high school, Gene began working on Buffalo's waterfront at Pillsbury grain elevators, where he spent twelve years.

In 1955, Gene wed Mary (Dories). He and his wife raised their three children, Patti, Bill, and Maureen to respect their proud Western New York and Irish-American heritage. In addition, the McCarthy's now have seven grandchildren.

Twenty-five years ago, Gene and Mary opened McCarthy's, a fine restaurant and tavern in the heart of the Old First Ward, at the corner of Hamburg and Republic Streets. Famous for its corned beef, fish fries, and friendly service, McCarthy's has become a true landmark. It is a proud symbol of not only his community, and not only the McCarthy family, but of our Irish heritage in Buffalo.

In 1996, I invited the Honorable Dermott Gallagher, then Irish Ambassador to the United States, to Buffalo to dedicate a monument which was erected in honor of the Great Famine in Ireland. During his stay, I took him to McCarthy's. Ambassador Gallagher has said that the tavern was his favorite place in all of Western New York, no doubt a reflection on the McCarthy's overwhelming hospitality.

Whether it is for the famous Notre Dame football parties in the fall, the Shamrock Run, the many local organizations and causes which the McCarthys support, or the best St. Patrick's Day atmosphere outside of Ireland, McCarthy's Tavern and Gene and Mary McCarthy will always be an important part of the proud history of our City. I am proud to call him my friend.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to join with the entire McCarthy Family, the Goin' South community organization, and indeed, all of Western New York in tribute to Mr. Gene McCarthy, Irishman of the Year.

DEMOCRACY PROGRESSES IN
SLOVAKIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, this week a distinguished delegation from the Slovak parliament visited Washington to meet with congressional leaders and other officials. I regret that, because of a hearing on urgent developments in Kosovo, I was unable to meet with them. Nevertheless, the occasion of their visit prompts me to reflect on some of the developments in Slovakia since the elections there on September 25 and 26, 1998.

Since a new government was installed on October 30, there has been a sea change in

Slovak political life. The very fact that a peaceful transition of power occurred is something we could not have taken for granted, given the increasingly authoritarian rule of Vladimir Meciar manifested by, for example, the refusal of the parliament he controlled to seat two duly elected members.

Today, the situation is very different. The formation of a new government has included key changes that were much needed and will foster greater confidence in Slovakia's renewed process of democratization. In particular, the appointment of a new head of the intelligence service, the resolution of competing claims to the position of chief of the armed forces, and the selection of a new general prosecutor help address many of the concerns that arose during Meciar's tenure. The new government's efforts to hold previous officials accountable for their violations of the rule of law and manipulation of parliamentary and constitutional democracy is also a positive sign. During local elections in the fall, non-governmental monitors were permitted to observe the counting of the vote, further fostering public and international confidence in Slovakia's democratic structures. Direct presidential elections are scheduled to be held in May, which will fill a constitutional lacuna. The decision to permit, once again, the issuance of bi-lingual report cards restores common sense to the discussion of issues of concern to the Hungarian minority. The government's stated intent to address the concerns of the Romani minority—concerns which have led many Slovak Roma to seek asylum in other countries—is a welcome step in the right direction.

In short, Mr. Speaker, the new government is Slovakia has already undertaken important steps towards fulfilling the promises made when communism collapsed.

Slovakia is now at a critical juncture, having succeeded by a slim electoral margin in peacefully removing Vladimir Meciar after 4 years of increasing authoritarian rule. The new government must struggle to restore Slovakia's good name, repair the economy, and get Slovakia back on track for NATO and EU membership. If Slovakia is to succeed in this effort, it is critical that the current coalition hold together long enough to implement real reforms. As it seeks to do so, the new government will be aided by a wellspring of credibility with the internationally community and certainly in Washington, where as the Meciar government, in the end, had none.

That wellspring of credibility, however, is not bottomless and time is truly of the essence in Slovakia's reform process. I hope all of the parties participating in the ruling coalition will quickly address some of the issues that have been of special concern to the international community, including the adoption in the first half of this year of a minority language law. Such a step would be a concrete demonstration of the differences between this government and the last.

Mr. Speaker, I wish this new coalition government of Slovakia every success in their resolve to make lasting reforms.

TRIBUTE TO GRANDMARIE'S
CHICKEN PIE SHOP

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Grandmarie's Chicken Pie Shop on the occasion of their 42nd Anniversary. Grandmarie's has enjoyed 4 decades of success at their Tower District location.

Keeping it simple and keeping it delicious was the slogan of Marie Ross, the restaurant's namesake, original owner, and grandmother of current owner Gary Ross. The Ross chicken pie tradition dates back to the early part of the century when relatives to Marie Ross made creamy chicken tarts and left them on the window sill to cool. A legendary treat was formed and soon the Chicken Pie Shop was formed. After 42 years, Grandmarie's Chicken Pie Shop still follows Marie's advice, make it "simply delicious." Simplicity is the key, large portions with all of the food groups represented at a reasonable price continues to attract thousands of Fresnans. A visit of Grandmarie's is a must for those new to the Fresno area, nothing can compare to the fine foods prepared there daily.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Grandmarie's Chicken Pie Shop on the occasion of their 42nd Anniversary. Grandmarie's remains one of Fresno's finest traditions. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Grandmarie's and the Ross family, many years of continued success.

HONORING FREDDIE HAMILTON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Freddie Hamilton, for her tremendous contributions to the Brooklyn community and her exemplary community service.

As a native of New Orleans, LA, Freddie Hamilton has lived and worked in Central Brooklyn for almost 40 years. Over the years, Freddie has participated in numerous civic and political organizations and causes to improve the quality of life for children and families in her community.

Ms. Hamilton is the founding executive director of the Child development Support Corporation, a child welfare agency in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The agency employs 150 people and provides a range of social services to over 3,000 children and families annually.

After losing a 17-year-old son, as a result of gun violence, Ms. Hamilton became a founding member of Parents United to Rally for Gun Violence Elimination (PURGE). The organization was created to address the issues of gun violence among African American youth. Ms. Hamilton was successful plaintiff in the first class action strict liability suit against gun manufacturers.

Since 1994, Freddie has served as the elected Democratic Committeewoman (District Leader) for the 57th Assembly District in Brooklyn.

During a recent trip to Ghana, Freddie was honored in a traditional "Enstoolment Ceremony" to designate her a Queen Mother. She

was given the name Nana Yaa Serwaa II and she is now an official elder of the township of Pankese in Ghana, West Africa. She and her husband, Johnnie Ray, have six children and they are the proud grandparents of five grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in saluting Freddie Hamilton for her dedication to her family and her community.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH COMRIE

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to recognize the career of one of Los Angeles' leading public officials. After 35 years of public service, Mr. Keith Comrie is retiring as the City Administrative Officer for the City of Los Angeles. During his illustrious career, Mr. Comrie served both the City and the County of Los Angeles, making significant contributions to both governments.

Mr. Comrie grew up in South-Central Los Angeles and first entered public service with the City of Los Angeles in 1963, after earning a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Southern California. He moved to the County government in 1969 where he rose to become the Director of the Department of Public Social Services receiving statewide recognition from Governor Ronald Reagan for saving County taxpayers \$120 million per year and for making the welfare system one of the most responsive and efficient in the state.

In 1979, Mr. Comrie returned to the City of Los Angeles at the request of Mayor Tom Bradley to serve as the City Administrative Officer. He has served in that position for 19 years, including one year as interim Administrator of the \$200 million Community Redevelopment Agency. During Mr. Comrie's tenure of service, the City of Los Angeles has seen its economic base expand to keep pace with population increases that have made it not only the second largest city in the nation but a city of world class status.

Today, Mr. Comrie can look with pride at his role in successfully steering the City through the recession of the early 1990's with balanced budgets. During this time, he helped maintain the City's position as one of the best managed cities in the nation. Additionally, he played a key role in most of the major developments in the City, including such landmark projects as the renovated Central Library, the Los Angeles Convention Center, and the Staples Center Arena. He also played a central role in rebuilding the City after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake and oversaw over \$3 billion in capital improvement projects such as libraries, fire and police facilities, and sewer system reconstruction.

Many of these projects are in my Congressional District, which includes much of the central business district of the City of Los Angeles. Therefore, I can attest to the significance of these projects, many of which were started under Mr. Comrie's watch.

Mr. Comrie oversaw a staff of more than 100 and worked with over 30 council members during the terms of two mayors. Mr. Comrie's accomplishments on behalf of the City of Los

Angeles have been recognized by his peers. Of his many prestigious awards, he is very proud of being named the "Best City Administrative Officer in America" by City and State Magazine.

At 59, Mr. Comrie and his wife Sandra McNutt-Comrie can look forward to many productive years in retirement during which he can pursue his interests in cars and auto racing while taking satisfaction in a job well done for the City of Los Angeles.

TRIBUTE TO AMANDA CHRISTINE DRESCHER OF GIRL SCOUT TROOP 395

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to salute an outstanding young woman who has been honored with the Girl Scout Gold Award by the Cahaba Girl Scout Council in Birmingham, Alabama. She is Amanda Christine Drescher of Girl Scout Troop 563. She has been honored for earning the highest achievement award in U.S. Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Gold Award symbolizes outstanding accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service, career planning and personal development. The award can be earned by a girl aged fourteen through seventeen, or in grades ninth through twelfth.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.5 million girls, has awarded more than twenty thousand Girl Scout Awards to Senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the program in 1980. To receive the award, a Girl Scout must earn four interest project patches, the Career Exploration Pin, the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, as well as design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling these requirements is created by the Senior Girl Scout and carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout Volunteer.

As a member of the Cahaba Girl Scout Council, Amanda Christine Drescher began working toward the Girl Scout Gold Award on February 12, 1998. She completed her project, Art Day Camp, and I believe she should receive the public recognition due her for this significant service to her community and her country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday when the House was taking rollcall vote No. 39, an amendment by Representative GEORGE MILLER to the Education Flexibility Partnership Act, I was unavoidably detained and unfortunately missed the vote. Had I been present I would have voted "yea."

72ND ANNIVERSARY BANQUET OF YESHIVAH OF FLATBUSH

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to the Yeshivah of Flatbush and its honorees on the occasion of its 72nd Anniversary Banquet.

The Yeshivah of Flatbush has long served as a pillar of strength for my constituents by providing our children with the tools they will need to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Dr. Mayer Ballas, recipient of the Keter Shem Tov Leadership Award, has dedicated himself to helping members of the community as an advocate and spokesperson for Jewish people in need. He is the founding President of the Council of Rescue of Syrian Jews and has served as a member of the Federation Oversight Committee, the arm of Operation Abraham concerned with the resettlement of the most recent wave of immigrants from Syria. At the Yeshivah of Flatbush, Dr. Ballas sits on the Board of Directors and Board of Education and is a member of the Tuition Assistance Committee. He participates in all school functions and generously gives of himself and his time to the Yeshivah.

Hon. Steven Cohn, recipient of the Keter Shem Tov Community Service Award, is staunchly committed to both the Yeshivah and his community. For the past sixteen years, Mr. Cohn has served as the Democratic State Committeeman for the 50th Assembly District. He is the Vice-Chair of the New York State Democratic Party, Secretary of the Democratic Party of Kings County and has served as Parliamentarian to the Democratic National Convention. Working side by side with community leaders, elected officials and neighborhood residents to protect the environment, improve homeless shelters and maintain quality medical care in his district. His affiliation with the Yeshivah of Flatbush parallels his children's education and has strengthened over the years. In addition to working on the Banquet Journal, Chinese Auction and Building Committees, Steve is currently an Associate Treasurer on the Executive Board of Officers and sits on the school's Board of Trustees and Board of Education.

Dr. Cheryl Fishbein, recipient of the Alumna of the Year Award, is an alumna of both the Elementary School and the Joel Braverman High School. Throughout her adult life, Cheryl has focused her efforts on serving the community. She is President of the Jewish Community House in Bensonhurst and is currently overseeing its capital building campaign. She serves as the Metro Chair of the Institutional Trustees Campaign for UJA and sits on the organization's Planning and Allocations Committee. Additionally, Dr. Fishbein devotes much of her time to the Board of Jewish Education and serves as a Vice President of its Board of Directors. She also sits on the Boards of Geshet and the National Board of the Jewish Community Center Association.

Each of today's honorees have long been known as innovators and beacons of good will to all those they come into contact with. In recognition of their many accomplishments on