

Technical Studies as a member of the National Honor Society. He received a scholarship to Baruch College of the City University of New York. He is also a graduate of Bronx Community College. Ernesto was a Licensed Real Estate broker and Vice President for Milchman Enterprises Company, Inc. in the Bronx.

Mr. Speaker, Ernesto was very active in the Hunts Point community in my congressional district. From 1980 to the time of his passing, he was President of the Spofford Avenue Housing Development Fund Corporation and Chairman of the Board of Lapeninsula Community Organization, Inc. He was also a member of the Hunts Point Task Force from 1990 to 1992 and the Bronx Borough President's Citizen Advisory Committee on Resource Recovery from 1990 to 1991. In addition, he was a very active member of Community School Board District 8. He was a Board Member from 1989 until 1996; during this time, he served as President (1991–92), Vice President (1992–93) and Treasurer (1989–91).

Ernesto married Ramona Santiago on June 6, 1964 at St. John's Church in the Bronx and made their home in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx. They had four children, Eric, Rebecca, Beatriz and Wedalis, and six grandchildren, Michael, Cynthia, Marissa, Carlos, Jr., Christian and David, Jr.

Ernesto inspired me and many other young people from the Bronx. He had a remarkable passion for life, tenacity to accomplish what he set out to do, great courage and sensitivity. He passed away unexpectedly on September 10, 1998. His untimely passing has left a void not only in his family and community, but by all those whose lives he has touched.

Mr. Speaker, on June 11, PS 48 honored his memory during the dedication of the Ernesto Muñoz auditorium. What a fitting tribute.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Ernesto Muñoz and in wishing PS 48 continued success.

EVELYN ABELSON: POINT OF LIGHT

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 15, 1999

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate an extraordinary community activist, social worker, safety net administrator and public policy strategist. From micro issues involving school practices, neighborhood priorities, and area action plans to macro policy concerns and visions for improvements in City, State and Federal benefits programs, she has accumulated an inspiring record of achievements. On the occasion of her retirement I am honored to salute Evelyn Abelson as a Point-of-Light for our community and for all Americans.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ms. Abelson came to Brooklyn with impressive training as a Social Worker and significant political experience. Her compassion for the poor and the powerless is great; and her passion for organizing people for their own empowerment is equally remarkable.

Always the professional competence of Evelyn Abelson is thoroughly blended with her

personal dedication and integrity. As Director of a Mental Health Program in Brownsville, a community composed primarily of low-income housing developments, she changed the lives of many individuals; however, her work with families and groups had a widespread and lasting impact on the entire community. The Abelson lectures on family relationships attracted a large grassroots audience.

Through her work with individuals and the general community Ms. Abelson established a base of trust which made her a very influential and productive force in the embryonic Brownsville anti-poverty program. Evelyn convened the Brownsville Professional Group composed of a cross-section of professionals who worked in the community. The blue-print for the Brownsville Community Action Plan was launched when this group convened a body of local leaders who formed the Brownsville Community Council.

Mr. Speaker, as a local Branch Librarian of the Brooklyn Public Library and later as a Library Community Coordinator, I worked with Ms. Abelson to develop the Brownsville Total Action Plan which began with the election of a Board of Directors for the Brownsville Community Council. For that first election and for many others Ms. Abelson was a one woman Election Commission whose results were never challenged.

Ms. Abelson later established a Community Mental Health Clinic in Brownsville. While her professional work expanded and provided greater support for many more families, she continued in her role as a guiding community activist and policy advisor. In my changing careers from Library Community Coordinator, to Brownsville Community Council Executive Director, to Commissioner of the New York City Community Action Program to New York State Senator and finally to the United States Congress I have steadfastly relied on Evelyn Abelson's unique ability to maintain one open ear for the voice of the people on the bottom while the other ear listened and interpreted the sweep of local, national and international developments.

For this rare mixture of personal warmth, abiding compassion and generosity, as well as a penetrating mind anchored by experience and wisdom, it is appropriate that we honor Evelyn Abelson as a great American Point-of-Light.

IKE SKELTON: A MAN OF VISION,
A MAN OF PASSION, A MAN
OF THE WORLD

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 15, 1999

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I was honored recently to have our friend and colleague, IKE SKELTON, visit my district in California. This gentleman, the Ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, is known to all of us as a man of intensity but earnestness, a man of determination but flexibility, a man of integrity above all else.

Congressman SKELTON was visiting the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, the Navy's premier school for advanced technical, engineering, and strategic education. He was there to address the student body of the chal-

lenges they face as military leaders in an increasingly complex geopolitical world community. While at the school, he was presented with an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Military Sciences.

I was so impressed with the lecture Mr. SKELTON presented and the citation by the NPS Provost, Richard Elster, of Mr. SKELTON'S achievements, I feel compelled to share them with this body. I urge everyone to take the time to read these remarks and consider their meaning, especially as we struggle here with foreign affairs and military and defense questions in a troubled world.

REMARKS ACCOMPANYING AWARD OF DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MILITARY SCIENCES TO THE HONORABLE IKE SKELTON

(Made by NPS Provost, Richard Elster)

Under the authority vested by law and with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations, the Naval Postgraduate School is pleased to award the Degree of Doctor of Military Sciences to the Honorable Ike Skelton, Representative of the Fourth District of the State of Missouri to the Congress of the United States.

Representative Skelton understands the relationship between the nation's security and the maintenance of strong, robust armed forces. He has consistently, and effectively, used every means at his disposal to ensure that the national security policy of the United States recognizes the preeminent role of the armed forces and that the Congress provides resources to the Department of Defense and the military departments accordingly.

Representative Skelton's regard for the military extends far beyond national security imperatives to genuine, heart-felt concern for the well being of every man and woman in uniform. He understands the fundamental relationship between maintaining the most powerful Armed Forces the world has ever known and the education, training, talent, and morale of the individuals who comprise those forces. As Chairman of the Military Personnel and Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, he systematically advanced initiatives to improve the quality of life and opportunities of military personnel. He supported military pay increases and sought to secure acceptance of the principle that military compensation should be comparable to that of the private sector. He oversaw improvements in military health care and attempted to secure a uniform benefit for all eligible personnel, both active duty and retired. In addition, he offered the amendment that repealed the combat exclusion for women on Navy ships.

Representative Skelton has also demonstrated that a true friend of the armed forces will recognize problems and insist that they be corrected even in the face of strong objections from the civilian and military leadership of the Department of Defense. In the early 1980s, he became convinced that the structure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and combatant commands was fundamentally flawed. He was one of a handful of legislators who drafted the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Consequently, history will record that he was instrumental in framing one of the three most significant laws relating to national security since the American Revolution.

As chairman of the Panel on Military Education, Representative Skelton contributed immeasurably to improvements in professional military education. His panel found that the officer corps needs more military