

from throughout the area of southeast Texas ranging from ages six to eighteen years of age. The school focuses not only on dancing, but also on the importance of discipline and character. In addition to studying in the Jardell School of Dance, the students also participate in academic, athletic, and religious activities within the community. Practicing 12–15 hours a week, these young ladies have demonstrated an ability to balance their responsibilities and excel in them with grace. Lessons like these give the students of the Keely Jardell School of Dance skills that will be invaluable to them as they encounter challenges in their futures. These young ladies serve as role models to their peers and to members of the community as well.

Recently, sixty-nine of these students participated in regional competitions in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in Houston, and across the state of Texas. Members of the team devoted countless hours to perfecting their craft; their efforts have paid off. At regional competitions, the school was awarded the highest score, judge's choice, choreography, overall high score, and spirit awards. Their outstanding performances at the regional level has qualified them for the National Competition in San Antonio, Texas this summer. The prestige of the school and its talented performers is known well throughout the nation. In late 1999, an invitation was received inviting the girls to perform in Washington D.C. and in New York City during the month of July, 2000. The members of the school have graciously honored the request and will be performing Sunday July 2nd at 5:30 p.m. at the Post Office Pavilion, here in Washington. I urge all who have the opportunity to enjoy a truly amazing show worthy of your time.

After the appearance in Washington, the performers will attend special dance classes at the Broadway Dance Center in New York City. Numerous fund-raisers and community events are being staged to defray the expenses of the trip. It has been a total commitment of all involved, but well worth the work. The members of the Keely Jardell School of Dance have relentlessly committed themselves to perfecting their talents in preparation for the National Competition.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to have the honor of commending the students of the Keely Jardell School of Dance on their astounding achievements and abilities. Young people such as these should serve as examples to America of the extraordinary breed of leaders it can expect in its future. These young ladies deserve our attention, support, and best wishes as they demonstrate the remarkable product of their labor and talent.

50TH BIRTHDAY OF THE MANCHESTER, NH, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER

HON. JOHN E. SUNUNU

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Manchester VA Medical Center, located in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, on the occasion of the Hospital's 50th birthday, July 2, 2000. This outstanding facility continues to provide exem-

plary health care to thousands of veterans who have served America with distinction and honor. As the hospital celebrates its 50th year, I hope we will also take a moment to reflect on the service and sacrifice of those service men and women. The devoted staff of the Hospital, including Public Relations Director Paul Lamberti who provided me with an extensive historical background of the Center, also deserves special thanks and appreciation for their dedication to the health care of our veterans.

The establishment of the Manchester VA Medical Center began at the conclusion of World War I with the World War Veterans' Legislation Subcommittee on Hospitals' recommendation that the New Hampshire project be funded. Congressman Fletcher Hale followed suit with legislation seeking Presidential approval for the construction of a facility to treat veterans throughout northern New England. Specifically, the measure called for "a modern, sanitary, fireproof, two-hundred bed capacity hospital plant for the diagnosis, care, and treatment of general and medical and surgical disabilities and to provide Government care for the increasing load of mentally afflicted veterans regardless of whether said disability developed prior to January 1, 1925, at a cost not to exceed \$1,500,000."

Final legislative approval came in 1945, and in 1946, after the end of World War II, the United States Government acquired a parcel of land, previously owned by Governor Frederick F. Smyth, that would become the site for the Hospital. Smyth served from 1866 to 1880 on the Board of Managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and was well acquainted with the needs of veterans everywhere. The Smyth Tower, the replica of a famous Scottish lookout, can be found on the grounds today. The structure was erected by Smyth in 1888 and is named as an Historic Site on the National Register.

Construction of the VA Medical Center began in 1948 and two years later, on July 2, 1950, the VA Medical Center was officially dedicated. In the following decade, staff attended to the health care needs of approximately 23,500 patients.

The VA Medical Center joined with Harvard Medical School to become a training facility for surgical residents in the late 1960's and has remained an active teaching hospital for Harvard and Dartmouth Medical School residents. Through the years, students aspiring to become nurses, dentists, physical therapists, physician assistants, occupational therapists, optometrists, medical assistants, dieticians, and pharmacists, have found a diverse clinical experience there.

Recognizing the need to address the long-term residential health care need of aging veterans, the Hospital dedicated a Nursing Home Care Unit in the late 1970's. Expansion continued in 1977 with the groundbreaking for a new Ambulatory Care wing.

Outpatient care became an important priority in the years that followed. Those patients requiring specialty care were previously required to travel to other VA hospitals in the region to receive care. After determining veterans should not have to travel long distances for their care, the staff formed specialty clinics including Orthopaedics, Optometry, Audiology, Neurology, Pain, Ear, Nose, and Throat.

Locally accessible care continues today in the form of Center-sponsored health

screenings in local communities throughout the state. The Manchester VA Hospital also serves as a research center for a large number of health care programs. Of note is the facility's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder research center which has received both national and international recognition for its work.

Although New Hampshire's veterans' population has decreased, their health care needs remain a high priority. These men and women sacrificed a great deal for each and every American and their needs continue to be met today. Community Based Outreach Clinics can be found throughout the state including the communities of Tilton and Newington and future facilities are planned for Lancaster, Conway, Wolfeboro, and Keene.

Through its changes, the VA's importance holds strong with a purpose "to serve those who have served us well," its commitment "to advocate for the total well-being of veterans," and its promise "to be there when veterans need us."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 293, I was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was unavoidably absent on a matter of critical importance and missed the following votes:

On the motion that the Committee of Whole House on the State of the Union Rise, introduced by the gentleman from California, Mr. WAXMAN, I would have voted "yea."

On the amendment to the rider on H.R. 4635, regarding the use of Veterans' Administration funds for tobacco litigation, introduced by the gentleman from California, Mr. WAXMAN. I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on June 15, 2000 and in the early hours of June 16, 2000, I was traveling to my District, and therefore unable to cast my votes on rollcall numbers 280 through 291. Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 281, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, and 290; and "nay" on rollcall votes 280, 282, 288, 289, and 291.