

IN MEMORY OF MILTON ROEMER—
ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING
PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCATES
AND HEALTH POLICY THINKERS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, one of the world's most thoughtful health policy experts and advocates, Dr. Milton L. Roemer has passed away. His brilliance and insights will be sorely missed by all those who were his students and who had the privilege of working with him.

Few of us in Congress ever get a law named after us, and even fewer people throughout the world get a law of nature or science named after themselves—but Roemer's law is a law that all of us in health policy and finance must live and deal with daily. In popular language, Roemer's law is "build it and they will come"—which he postulated way before the movie was ever dreamed of. In health policy, it means that in an insured population, if you add beds to a health care facility, they will get filled. In medicine and health care, supply can drive demand. The implications for health policy, costs, and financing are key to many of the problems we face and will be facing in the decades to come.

Roemer's law is just one of the innumerable contributions he gave the world. Since earning his medical degree 60 years ago, he worked on public health problems in 71 nations, published as sole author 20 books[!], co-authored 12 other books, and 430 articles. The doctor was obviously possessed of energy and talent almost beyond imagination.

Dr. Roemer earned the MD degree from New York University in 1940, along with a master's degree in sociology from Cornell University in 1939, and a public health degree from the University of Michigan in 1943.

As a medical officer of the New Jersey State Health Department, he supervised 92 venereal disease clinics, as they were called in 1943. During World War II as a member of the commissioned corps of the US Public Health Service, he served as Assistant to the Chief Medical Officer of the War Food Administration and Associate in Medical Care Administration to the Chief of the State Relations Division. His 1948 book, written with F.D. Mott Rural Health and Medical Care was the first to analyze systematically rural health care needs and services in the United States.

As county health officer of Mononghela County, West Virginia, he introduced public health innovations, including pioneering a cancer detection clinic, for this mining community, against the objections of organized medicine. Dr. Roemer explained to the doctors that this screening clinic would provide more patients for them to treat. This experience led him later to establish a prize for a creative, local public health leader who had overcome opposition to advances in public health. He early called for the integration of public health and medical care and launched the Medical Care Section of the American Public Health Association.

Dr. Roemer's international work began in 1951 when he served as chief of the Social and Occupational Health Section of the newly formed World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland. In 1953, in the midst of the McCarthy hysteria, he was forced to leave

Switzerland and his work as an international civil servant, when the US government withdrew approval of his appointment at WHO.

In 1953 the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada, had just introduced hospital insurance for its people in this prairie province and was on the verge of extending it to include insurance for doctors' care Dr. Roemer was appointed Director of Medical and Hospital Services of the Saskatchewan Department of Public Health, North America's first social insurance program for hospital care.

After teaching at Yale and Cornell Universities, in 1962, Dr. Roemer came to the UCLA School of Public Health, where he taught health administration for 38 years and served as chairman of the Department of Health Services for eight years. The capstone of Dr. Roemer's many publications was his 2-volume work, National Health Systems of the World, a monumental, comparative analysis of national health systems of countries of the world set within a logical and coherent framework.

At UCLA, Dr. Roemer's research encouraged the development of not for profit HMOs, promoted the use of ambulatory care, and documented the need for a national health insurance covering the total population. He advocated the development of doctoral training in health administration to prepare students for leadership in public health practice and established an endowed fellowship to support students in this program.

The American Public Health Association awarded Dr. Roemer its International Award for Excellence in Promoting and Protecting the Health of People in 1977. In 1983, APHA awarded him its highest honor—the Sedgwick Memorial Medal for Distinguished Service in Public Health. In 1992, the Centers for Disease Control gave Dr. Roemer its Joseph W. Mountain Award. In 1997, he was given the Lifetime Achievement Award of the APHA International Health Section and the Distinguished Career Award of the Association for Health Services Research.

Dr. Roemer is survived by his wife of 61 years, Ruth Roemer, his son, John E. Roemer, of New York City, his daughter, Beth Roemer Lewis, of Berkeley, California; and six grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at UCLA in the spring. Contributions in Milton Roemer's memory may be made to the American Public Health Association, Washington, DC, the Department of Health Services, UCLA School of Public Health, or Physicians for Social Responsibility.

To repeat, America and the world have lost a wonderful teacher who truly had a sense of the whole and of the oneness of mankind—and that a just and honorable society should join in helping ensure that no member of that society goes without health care.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE R.P. "BOB"
STRINGER

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of my friend and constituent R.P. "Bob" Stringer who passed away on January 15, 2001, at Scott Regional Hospital in

Morton, Mississippi. Bob, as he was affectionately called by his close friends and colleagues, was preceded in death by his wife, Mrs. Mary Cooper Stringer, who died on the same date as Bob, two years ago.

Bob was a native of Noxubee County and lived in Forest, Mississippi, since 1960. He was a World War II veteran and was actively involved in veterans activities that enhanced and promoted esprit de corps among veteran organizations at the local, county, state, and national level. He was a member of the Forest Presbyterian Church, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion. He served as past county and district president of the Mississippi State University Alumni Association. He was also a past post commander of the VFW. As if this was not enough to keep him busy, he was a board member of the MF&G Association and served on the Forest Board of Aldermen for sixteen years.

My predecessor, former Congressman G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, was a very close friend of Bob's and has been quoted as saying that "Bob Stringer was really an All-American. He loved his family and country very much. He served in the Marine Corp at Iwo Jima and after the War he was very active in the VFW and the American Legion. He was proud of his community and served both the City of Forest and Scott County in a commendable manner. I have lost one of my closest friends."

Bob is survived by daughters, Anne Stringer Land and Jean Stringer Ellis; sons, Robert P. Stringer, Jr., and John Walter Stringer; their husbands and wives, thirteen grandchildren, one great grandchild, and one brother, John.

Bob was the originator of the G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery Annual Hunters Stew held in Forest and personally hosted it, along with members of the American Legion and VFW, for more than twenty-four years. He even continued this tradition after Congressman Montgomery stepped down from office in 1996 because he knew how much the community loved and respected "Sonny."

The legacy that I am sure Bob would want us to remember him by is his love for the Lord, his family, his friends, his country, his state, and by all means his love for the City of Forest and Scott County. Thus, it is an honor for me to express my appreciation, and that of all the citizens of the Third Congressional District, for his life of service and contributions to the betterment of our world.

HONORING A LIFELONG COMMIT-
MENT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend a law enforcement leader in Southwest Missouri.

John T. Pierpont has always had law enforcement blood running through his veins. John's personal experience with law enforcement began early in life; his father was Sheriff of Greene County. During the last two decades of the 20th century, the Sheriff of Greene County in Missouri was again a Pierpont, this time John.

John Pierpont started his law enforcement career as the U.S. Marshall for the 66 counties of western Missouri, a job he held for eight years.