TRIBUTE TO JERRY CLEVELAND WHITMIRE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN
OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2001

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Jerry Cleveland Whitmire who passed away on December 19, 2000. Mr. Whitmire was a loyal servant of his community and of his country as an infantry officer in Korea and Vietnam. I believe the eulogy given by Reverend Charles M. Blackmon gives the most appropriate praise to this wonderful South Carolinian. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me today in honoring Mr. Whitmire.

EULOGY FOR JERRY CLEVELAND WHITMIRE DECEMBER 19, 2000

We are gathered, this afternoon, for a soldier's farewell. On his last journey in this world, Jerry Cleveland Whitmire—"Trigger"—will be draped in the flag of the United States of America, the flag for which he fought. And he will be escorted at each step by an Honor Guard, fellow soldiers of the United States Army.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have presided at more military funerals than I can possibly count. I am always impressed by the dignity and precision of the Honor Guard. I am also impressed by something else: These superbly trained men are a special purpose. They are here to remind us that it is not only family and friends who have come here to say farewell to Jerry. A grateful nation has also come here to say farewell. America is here to say farewell to a son, a dutiful servant, a hero.

It strikes me that to truly understand and appreciate this man, we need to look at his roots. We need to go back two generations to Jerry's grandfather and namesake, Jeremiah Cleveland Whitmire. Jeremiah was born in 1836. He was a lawyer and yeoman farmer in the foothills of upper Greenville County. He did not own slaves—no Whitmire ever owned slaves. And when the legislature here in Columbia passed a law in 1776 to free the Union Negro, Jeremiah might not have agreed with all the reasons.

But Jeremiah was a man of duty and loyalty. When the war came, he hiked north to Ashville, where he mustered with the 14th North Carolina. In the ensuing years, he fought with General Joe Jackson of North and South Carolina, Virginia: at Richmond, Spottsylvania Courthouse, Sharpsburg, Gettysburg, to the bitter end at Appomattox. At the conclusion of the war, Captain Whitmire walked the hundreds of miles back to his beloved farm in Greenville.

Let me say that Jeremiah would have been very, very proud of his grandson Jerry. He would have been proud that Jerry chose to go to The Citadel. He would have been proud of Jerry's tour with the 1st Illinois Infantry. He would have been proud that in the bitterest, coldest engagements in Korea, Jerry stood and fought at the point of maximum danger as commander of rifle company on the front line. He would have understood Jerry's agony when a comrade fighting at his side, an African-American, sustained a bullet wound


It's ironic. Jerry was a soldier who knew war intimately. But if the world did a better job of organizing it, Jerry could have lived his whole life without seeing theRITE OF PASSAGE—EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS March 29, 2001

The result of this lifetime of generosity and giving is that Jerry did not die a rich man. Money was not what drove him. Jerry understood that we make a living by what we give. Money was never what drove Jerry. He was forever giving: himself, his labor, his money. As a result he takes to the grave the only wealth that really matters: the wealth of our respect and admiration and love.

Of course, for Jerry, his greatest wealth was his family, especially Tweetie, his beloved wife and partner of nearly a half century. Yes, Jerry had a powerful love for his daughters Laura and Marguerite. And yes, he loved his grandchildren. But truth be told, in his heart was a very, very special place in his heart for the youngest: his great-grandson Daniel.

And as Danny grows up to be a teenager and then a man, he will have the enormous privilege to learn more about Trigger, the great-grandfather he loves so much. Daniel will do well to live by his great-grandfather's example.

There is an old expression: Sometimes life is not as simple as it seems—it is even simpler. Often our lives can be captured best in the fewest, simplest words. To capture the essence of Jerry's life, I once again go back to his great-grandfather, Jeremiah. Jeremiah is buried at Ebeneezer Baptist church not far from the Greenville farm. And on the gravestone, his epitaph is exactly eight words. It says: "Confident, selfless, Christian, Citizen, Faithful to Every Trust."

With one necessary amendment, those same words can now sum up Jerry Cleveland Whitmire's life: American soldier, Christian citizen, faithful to every trust. We will remember him with love. May he rest in peace.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ANNUAL HONOREES

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Police Officer Edward Ryan, Firefighter Brian O'Sullivan, and EMT Lt. Raymond Brangan, all of whom will be honored by the Knights of Columbus on March 31, 2001.

For the past eight years, The Fourth Degree Assembly 675 Knights of Columbus of Bayonne, New Jersey has honored officers from the city's three branches of service. The award honors both individuals who go above and beyond the call of duty and the departments that employ these brave men and women.

Police Officer Edward Ryan is being honored for evacuating the occupants of two burning buildings. On January 22, 2000, Officer Ryan was dispatched to a call regarding a fire at 86 W. 16th Street. Upon arrival, Officer Ryan found the building engulfed in flames, threatening lives and property.

Firefighter Brian O'Sullivan is being honored for recently saving a life. He is a member of
Bayonne’s Engine Company 6. In December 2000, Engine Company 6 was dispatched to Marist High School in response to a call about an unconscious female. Upon arrival, Firefighter O’Sullivan recognized that she was not breathing, so he used an external automatic external defibrillator and a bag valve mask to save her life. Brian O’Sullivan became a firefighter in 1999, and was a member of the first class trained as both a firefighter and an EMT.

Lieutenant Raymond Branagan is an EMT, and is being honored for his administrative and instructional work with McCabe Ambulance. He is currently the lead instructor and administrative assistant to the Director of the McCabe Institute of Emergency Preparedness. Lt. Branagan is in charge of arranging courses on CPR for the American Heart Association, on First Aid for the National Safety Council, and on OSHA/PEOSH blood and airborne pathogens for the Bayonne Police and Fire Departments, the Bayonne Board of Education, and Bayonne Head Start.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Officer Ryan, Firefighter Sullivan, and Lt. Branagan for their courageous contributions to their community.

HONORING OSCAR FELDENKREIS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 29, 2001

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it is my very great pleasure to warmly congratulate Oscar Feldenkrais on being honored for receiving the National Community Service Award by the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Oscar Feldenkrais has become a successful entrepreneur and civic leader in the South Florida community. Following the wonderful example of success established by his father, Simon Wiesenthal Center Trustee and Miami leader, George Feldenkrais, Oscar diligently worked to build his empire in the apparel field. He began his career while still a student in high school, first in retail sales and then working at the headquarters of Supreme International Inc. He has served the tobacco community within our country.

Those of us who have been privileged to work with Ernie will miss his hard work, honesty, and dedication. We will also miss his great smile.

Congratulations Ernie on an outstanding career and best wishes to you and your family upon retirement.

Mrs. Speaker, I am pleased to warmly congratulate Mr. Feldenkrais on being honored for receiving the National Community Service Award by the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Mr. Feldenkrais has become a successful entrepreneur and civic leader in the South Florida community. Following the wonderful example of success established by his father, Simon Wiesenthal Center Trustee and Miami leader, George Feldenkrais, Oscar diligently worked to build his empire in the apparel field. He began his career while still a student in high school, first in retail sales and then working at the headquarters of Supreme International Inc. He has served the tobacco community within our country.

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Congratulations Ernie on an outstanding career and best wishes to you and your family upon retirement.