

the jobsite. Her work with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society and Christ Fellowship Baptist Church are testimonials to her warmhearted benevolence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in wishing Earlene, her husband James, and her family all the best as she begins this new phase of her life.

IN RECOGNITION OF HISPANIC
AMERICAN ATHLETES AT THE
2002 OLYMPICS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements of the United States Latino athletes in the 2002 Winter Olympics. At these Olympic games we have seen a number of outstanding United States athletes from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. We have witnessed a number of "firsts" in our minority communities. These athletes have risen to the Olympic challenge against incredible odds, and for this, I honor them. I again recognize Mrs. Vonetta Flowers who won a Gold medal; in bobsledding at the Winter Olympic games, becoming the first African American to win a Gold medal for the United States in a Winter event.

In addition to those accomplishments made by the African American community, I also commend those achievements of Hispanic American athletes as highlighted in the Daily News article on Latino Olympians. The article follows this statement and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Olympians' reference in it. Mr. Parra, 31 years old, is a Mexican American speed skater from Orlando, Florida. He began his athletic career as an inline skater and only picked up speed skating on ice five years ago. Considered the first Hispanic American to ever win a medal in the Olympic games makes Parra incredibly unique, but Parra did not just medal. Parra came in first, receiving a Gold medal and breaking the world record for his performance in the 1,500 meter. He also received a Silver medal in the 5,000 meter race.

In addition, Jennifer Rodriguez of Miami, Florida became the first Cuban-American to medal in the Winter Olympics. A former inline skater—now speed skater, like Parra—Rodriguez competed in the women's 1,000 race and won a Bronze medal. Our nation's Puerto Rican heritage was also represented at the Salt Lake City Games. Though the two-man bobsled team was unable to complete in the end, Puerto Rico's presence was felt and we look forward to their full participation in 2006.

Parra, Rodriguez, and the Puerto Rican athletes have performed to commendable heights. They are a tribute to everything the Olympics stand for: courage, athleticism and national and international unity. I thank them for their hard work and perseverance. These, along with African American and Asian American, athletes are great examples to our future athletes, especially our minority communities. Their faces reflect the composition of our country and are an inspiration to countless young people who might believe the Olympics are not for them. Thank you again and congratulations.

[From the New York Daily News, Feb. 21, 2002]

LATIN OLYMPIANS GOOD AS GOLD

Global warming has affected the Utah Winter Olympics in unexpected ways. And all of them seem to be good.

For one thing, there are all these warm-weather people heating up the ice at Salt Lake City. And doing their part to make the medal count grow for the U.S.

Take Derek Parra.

Believed to be the first Hispanic ever to win a medal in the Winter Games, Parra, a 31-year-old Mexican-American, lives in Orlando, Fla., where Mickey and Donald are found all over the place, but snow is as rare as, well, speed skating.

He is 5-foot-4 and weighs 140 pounds, but Parra accomplished what many bigger men had unsuccessfully attempted before. He broke a world record to take the gold in 1,500 meters speed skating Tuesday in such spectacular fashion that even his competitors were thrilled.

"It sounds stupid, but I enjoyed [seeing] it," said Jochem Uytdehaage, of the Netherlands, who won silver, after Parra broke the world record he had set a few minutes before.

The reverse had taken place the opening day of the games, when Parra set a world record in the 5,000 meters. Uytdehaage destroyed it a few minutes later.

"It is just an amazing thing," Parra said after his 1,500-meter victory.

CUBAN-AMERICAN PIONEER

Now take Jennifer Rodriguez.

Born in sunny Miami to Cuban parents, Rodriguez is believed to be the first Cuban-American to compete in the Winter Games.

Rodriguez not only competed but won the bronze in the women's 1,000 meters. Another American, Chris Witty, won the gold and established a new world record.

That no Cuban-American had competed in the Winter Olympics before is not at all surprising. After all, in Miami, ice is usually found only in drinks. Not exactly an ice-skating paradise.

Baseball, football, swimming, boxing, soccer—all of them are pretty popular in warm, heavily Latino Miami. But a Cuban-American speed skater? Rodriguez's and Parra's feats will do wonders to change that.

Parra and Rodriguez—as did Apolo Anton Ohno, for that matter—got their start as inline skaters. Actually, Rodriguez didn't train on ice until six years ago, and Parra made the switch only five years ago.

The young Mexican-American also was a phenomenal in-line skater, becoming national champion three times in the 1990s and holding world records in short- and long-distance events.

And then take the case of the Puerto Rican bobsled team.

Yes, I know, you are asking yourself what in the world was the Caribbean island—average temperature 85 degrees—doing in Salt Lake City, where freezing weather is their daily bread? Did these sun-tanned, warm-weather guys stand a chance against all those cold-weather-seasoned athletes? We'll never know.

BOBSLEDDERS BLOCKED

On Friday evening, the Puerto Rican Olympic Committee dropped out of the two-man bobsled competition hours before it began. The reason: Michael González, one of the two team members, was not able to demonstrate to the island's Olympic committee that he had lived on the island for the required three years.

Ironically, the International Olympic Committee was satisfied with the two years and one month he was able to prove.

"He's a great, great guy, but those are the rules," said Héctor Cardona, president of the

island's national Olympic committee. "We have to follow the rules. As president of the Olympic committee, I took him out, according to our constitution."

Maybe next time. And count on it, there will be a next time.

HONORING HOLLY JOHNSEN

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 2002

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Holly Johnsen for being recognized by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards as a Distinguished Finalist for her impressive community service activities. The award is presented by Prudential Financial, with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and seeks to honor students who show exceptional achievement in the areas of community service.

Holly Johnsen, a sixteen-year old student at Bullard High School, has been recognized for initiating a "Lunch Buddy" program. The 30 Junior Ladies Auxiliary for Retarded Citizens (LARC) Club members that are involved in this program introduce special-education students to other groups, accompany them on field trips, and organize parties at school. Holly has shown top-quality leadership and organizing skills. The club operates at their school with a shared presidency between Holly and Molly Hopkins. Holly believes the club will make an impact through peer contribution. She encourages students to play a part in the program by taking special-education students to classes, club meetings, and lunch with them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Holly Johnsen for being honored by Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking Holly for her outstanding ingenuity and service to the community and wishing her continued success in all future endeavors.

HONORING MR. RICHARD FIMBRES
ON HIS SELECTION AS "MAN OF
THE YEAR" BY THE TUCSON
METROPOLITAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 2001

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize an outstanding individual who was recently recognized for his exemplary work and dedication to his community. On February 27, Mr. Richard G. Fimbres was honored by the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce as their "Man of the Year."

Mr. Fimbres' work throughout the community is evidenced by the time and energy he devotes to so many organizations throughout the City of Tucson and Pima County. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the Knights of Columbus, the Tucson/Pima Arts Council, the Pima Youth Partnership, the United Way, and the Childrens Action Alliance are just a few of the entities he commits his energies to.