HONORING CLAIRE NICHOLS
HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Claire Nichols, for receiving the 2002 Educator of The Year Award from the Sanger District Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Nichols was a dedicated educator, and is being recognized for her tremendous efforts.

Claire began teaching Kindergarten in 1955 at Lincoln Elementary. Shortly thereafter, she left the teaching field to become a mother. While absent from teaching, Mrs. Nichols was still very active within the school system, staying on the Jackson PTA, and as a Room Mother. In 1987 she returned to the classroom, this time as a second grade teacher for Jackson Elementary School. Claire brought a lot of attention and affection to her students. When her students were sick, she brought them baked goods at home.

Claire’s dedication to and genuine interest in students extended beyond the classroom. She appeared in the same room at the time, as a second grader, after a deal to help students learn and improve their English skills and provided tutoring on various other subjects.

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TO HONOR MR. AND MRS. VEGA FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK IMPROVING THE LIVES AND EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY
HON. ED PASTOR
OF ARIZONA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to pay tribute to two outstanding citizens who have improved the lives and education of youth in the Hispanic community. For their commitment and dedication, a new elementary school will be named in their honor in McKney, Texas. I speak of Jose de Jesus and Maria Luisa Vega, whom I have the distinct honor of knowing and representing in Congress.

Upon arriving in McKinney in 1950, the Vegas realized that most immigrant children had little opportunity to succeed in the public school systems. Work in the fields seemed a better alternative to the difficulties of integrating for these children. However, after visiting with parents from the community, the Vegas decided to build a school specially to assist the newly migrated children. Through various fundraising events, local contributions and assistance from the parents, a school was built to help students learn and improve their English skills and provided tutoring on various other subjects.

Mrs. Vega, who graduated from the National University of Mexico with a degree in medicine, also opened a clinic in the community and Mr. Vega served as a pastor in the local Episcopalian church.

Years later, the Vegas moved for health reasons to Arizona, where Mrs. Vega taught high school for 22 years before retiring. Nonetheless, their contributions to the McKinney community have been far from forgotten as they continue to be honored and recognized for their work.

For decades, Mr. and Mrs. Vega have educated and helped to provide our underprivileged children with the opportunity to obtain a basic education. They truly serve as a model and inspiration to educators throughout our nation.

A TRIBUTE TO DORITA CLARKE
HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Dorita Clarke in recognition of her commitment and dedication to higher education opportunities in New York City.

Donita is a very active member of the community. Along with a full time job with the Department of Transportation, Dorita has served for the New York State Committee Woman for the 22th Assembly District since 1965. In 1997, she co-founded the “You Can Go to College Committee” where she continues to serve as the Executive Director. This organization prepares ninth through twelfth grade students to take the SAT’s, assists seniors through the application and financial aid process, and provides workshops on college life.

In addition, she arranges college visits to New York area colleges and tours of some Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Many of these students who have worked with the “You Can Go to College Committee” have enjoyed an easier adjustment to college life and maintained at least a 3.0 GPA. Once in the program and attending a college, the Committee continues to track students’ progress and periodically sends care packages. Since the inception of this tremendous program, over 1,000 students have participated.

In addition, Ms. Clarke is affiliated with several other organizations such as the New York State Fraternal Order of Police, Chapter #93; United Democratic Club—Executive Board; Democratic National Committee; Key Women of America, Inc.; and York College Advisory Board.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Clarke has dedicated her life to giving youth in Brooklyn and throughout New York City the opportunity to excel in higher education. As such, she is more than worthy of receiving our recognition and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable woman.