

facilities in the county. She helped establish the Buies Creek Sewer District and later served on the Northeast Metro Water District Board.

She was also on the organizing board of the Harnett County Habitat for Humanity. She served as president of the Dunn-Erwin Rotary Club, conducting their foreign exchange program and leading an exchange group back to her homeland in 1993. She was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow and was Rotarian of the Year in 1993. Also a member and past president of the Coats Kiwanis Club, she was honored as a George F. Hixson Fellow in 1999. Always interested in promoting and recognizing the work of women, Lenore was the county coordinator for the N.C. United for ERA. A devoted Democrat, she was a member and officer of the county and state Democratic Women. Last year she received the state Democratic Women's Star Award. Her political activism began long before she came to the United States.

She grew up during the Japanese occupation of her homeland, where she became a patriot and resistance member. Later she was a member of CONDA, a YMCA-sponsored Congress to promote post-World War II understanding among students in the Asian countries. She served as president of the Congress, which is credited with the election of Romoán Magsaysay as President of the Philippines.

Mr. Speaker, I marvel that any single human being could have been as active in so many agencies, organizations, and associations. Or that any single individual could have accomplished so much. Moreover, Lenore's accomplishments include being a mother to Dr. Paul D. Tuck, mother-in-law to Sarah Tuck, sister to Julia Borromero, as well as six brothers, and grandmother to Ryan, Hunter, Alden, and Karson Tuck. All of whom will truly miss her.

I know that Lenore would not want us to be sad. I know that she would caution us that life is for the living, that day will follow the darkest of nights, and that we should leave this place with our spirits high, our hopes redeemed. I believe, based on what I knew about her, the life she lived, the successes she enjoyed, the way she loved life, she would want to say to us: "Be happy, my friends. I went willingly into that long night." Heaven is a happier place since Lenore arrived. Lenore is rushing around greeting those who have gone before. She is already planning projects that, even in Heaven, need doing. She is seeking out children she can help, and planning her flower garden for this spring. Indeed, in this case, as the Bible tells us:

"O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" Amen.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH AND
AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION
DRUGS

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, May is Older Americans Month, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our parents, grandparents, and all others who have gone before us, protecting and nurturing us through good

times and bad, and providing opportunities for younger generations to grow and live responsible, comfortable lives.

Our responsibility, in return, is to ensure that our parents and all older Americans live the rest of their lives free from overly burdensome financial concerns related to their health. Yet today, one of the greatest worries of older Americans is how to pay for prescription drugs since Medicare does not provide for this most basic need. On average, one in three Medicare beneficiaries have no drug coverage for the duration of any given year; nearly half have no coverage for some portion of the year. Of those who have coverage, most have it from their employer. Seventeen percent are covered by Medicare HMOs. But in North Dakota, very few of our seniors have employer-provided prescription drug coverage and none of the Medicare beneficiaries in North Dakota have access to a Medicare+Choice plan offering drug coverage. In my state that has the highest per capita population of seniors, M+C plans offering drug coverage are not an option!

The need for a comprehensive prescription drug benefit is clear. Older Americans make up 13 percent of the population but account for 34 percent of all prescriptions dispensed and 42 cents of every dollar spent on prescription drugs. Seniors in my state, Mr. Speaker, are regularly forced into the absurd choice of paying for their prescription drugs or covering their food and rent for the month. This is no choice at all and we should be ashamed for allowing it to come to that.

This month, the Alliance for Retired Americans and other groups will provide buses for seniors from states that border our northern neighbor, including North Dakota, to travel to Canada to fill their prescriptions. It is an embarrassment to our health care system that older Americans must leave the United States in order to purchase affordable prescription drugs. We must correct this by including meaningful prescription drug coverage as a standard option to all Medicare beneficiaries.

Many states have become frustrated by the lack of action here in the nation's capital. They are trying to take steps on behalf of their own citizens to curb prices. But, they are facing challenges in the courts and in the press. States are trying their best to make drugs affordable to seniors, but this is a national crisis. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that prescription drug prices will incur double-digit inflation each year over the next decade. This crisis is only getting worse and we must act now to protect our seniors today, and in the future.

Congress has the authority to make an affordable and comprehensive prescription drug benefit available to all Medicare beneficiaries. We have the authority, now we must show we have the will. Let's not kid ourselves: a meaningful prescription drug benefit is going to be very expensive—the \$350 billion some are talking about probably isn't even in the ballpark. We must make some hard—and responsible—budgetary decisions to fund such a plan, but our seniors deserve nothing less. Mr. Speaker, let us honor older Americans by enacting a comprehensive, affordable, and voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ALFRED A.
MCKETHAN

HON. KAREN L. THURMAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to pay tribute to Mr. Alfred Augustus McKethan, a devoted civic leader and philanthropist in Hernando County and the State of Florida, who passed away on April 1 at the wonderful age of 93.

It is impossible to fully describe the extent of Mr. McKethan's reach during his lifetime. He touched so many lives, in such positive and lasting ways.

His family roots were and continue to be solidly embedded in Hernando County—a place his family helped to settle starting in 1842 when Florida was just a territory and not a state. He was very proud to be a fourth generation Brooksville native and devoted his entire life to making the community in which he lived a better place.

After attending the Virginia Military Institute for two years, Mr. McKethan graduated from the University of Florida and returned home to Brooksville to work at Hernando State Bank, fondly known in the community as HSB. The bank was founded in 1905 and, from early in its existence, was led first by his father, Will McKethan, and then by Alfred, and would flourish under this son's leadership. When Will McKethan became ill and could no longer be active in the bank, Alfred's mother, Alice Hale McKethan, known to all as "Allee," became the first, and for many years, was the only female bank director in Florida. Mr. McKethan, and the other stockholders, sold the independent bank to Sun Banks Inc. in 1985 and retired as chairman in 1994.

During his banking career, Mr. McKethan became a mover and shaker in the banking industry. In 1947, he became the youngest person to become president of the Florida Bankers Association. He was only 38 years old at the time and would thrive in the position. He is credited with helping to push through significant banking legislation that, according to the St. Petersburg Times, resulted in the "modernization of the state's banking industry."

Dade City banker and longtime friend, Hjalma Johnson, described Mr. McKethan's banking career this way, "He is the dean of banking. No one has had more influence over the course of the banking industry and its ability to deliver services to the ever-growing state of Florida than the chairman." (St. Petersburg Times)

Jim Kimbrough, who married Mr. McKethan's daughter, and who would one day take over as head of SunTrust Bank/Nature Coast, said of his banking career and role as mentor: "It's been a privilege to be at his side professionally." (St. Petersburg Times)

But his interests and political involvements stretched far beyond that of the banking industry. According to Brooksville lawyer Joe Mason, McKethan's nephew, "His influence is everywhere you look. Probably no one in the last half-century has had as much of an impact on the community as he has had." (St. Petersburg Times) Mr. Mason also pointed out Mr. McKethan's unique and very effective style of conducting business. "Over the years, much important business was transacted at