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TRIBUTE TO THE 16TH ANNUAL
MAR ADDAI CHALDEAN CHURCH
FESTIVAL

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Chaldean American community of Michigan, who celebrated the 16th Annual Mar Addai Chaldean Church Festival on Sunday, June 23, 2002.

As Michigan is home to a thriving Chaldean American community, we have the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of a fabulous people. They possess a focused vision of their future and will do all they feel is necessary to ensure prosperity.

Today, the United States is enriched by the many Chaldean Americans who have made this country their home. As one of the largest communities in Michigan, Chaldean Americans are making their mark, serving as hard working members of the civic, business, and professional communities. They have made major contributions to nearly every facet of American society. The Chaldean American community of Michigan truly adds to the wonderfully diverse American culture by sharing with us their customs, traditions and beliefs.

The 16th Annual Mar Addai Chaldean Church Festival attests to the wealth of the culture we have developed here in Michigan. An all day festival of food, music, dancing, and fun, the Mar Addai Festival is attended by thousands of Chaldean and non-Chaldean people and is one of the largest and most successful family festivals in Oakland County. The spirit and enthusiasm of the Chaldean American community of Southeastern Michigan has been such an invaluable asset to our great state, and will surely continue to bring families and communities together for many years to come.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Chaldean American community of Michigan on this landmark day, and I salute them all for their tremendous contributions and support.

HONORING MARY "BILLY"
BOATWRIGHT

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2002

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, Mary "Billy" Boatwright, a wife, a mother, an athlete, a newspaper reporter, a tireless advocate of better education, and a member of the National Republican Committee for nearly two decades, passed away on May 31 at the age of 82, a victim of cancer. She was a model Republican, a woman of principle, and an integral part of my hometown, Stonington, Connecticut. Her family and friends mourn her and remember the way in which she gave her life to her community.

Billy Boatwright was a role model for me and for the many people whose lives she touched. Friends who confided in her did so in faith. Candidates who sought her advice found a ready ear and a bright mind. Many of us can look back on our lives and find a person upon whose advice and counsel we built our careers and forged our ideals. For the people of Stonington Billy was that person.

Billy believed in loyalty and was willing to elevate principle above party lines. Her decision to oppose a party nominee for Governor and support instead a lifelong friend forced her to give up her seat on the Republican National Committee. She also vacated her seat on the Stonington Republican Town Committee. In her absence the Committee made the decision not to fill her seat. After the election, Republican leaders invited her to return. This is one of many examples of the respect in which she was held by her peers.

Mr. Speaker, politics does not build character. It reveals it. Those of us who knew Billy Boatwright had the honor of knowing a woman of the highest character, the image of honesty and learning, a woman who understood the importance of serving the interests of the public. She will be greatly missed. We are fortunate to have been a part of her life and even more fortunate that she was a part of ours. I would like to submit Westerly Sun columnist Jeff Mill's story on her legacy for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Westerly Sun]

STONINGTON LOSES "BILLY" BOATWRIGHT,
POLITICAL LEGEND

(By Jeff Mill)

Mary H. "Billy" Boatwright, a power in Republican politics on the national, state and local levels and an integral part of Stonington life for over 40 years, has died.

Boatwright, who had been ill in recent months, succumbed to cancer Friday. She was 82.

A wife, mother, sportswoman, newspaper reporter, staunch advocate of reading and learning, and member of the Republican National Committee for 17 years, she was described as "a life force" in Stonington since moving here with her husband, Victor, in 1957.

Expressions of sympathy and admiration flowed in Saturday, as word spread of her death. (An obituary appears in the obituary section of the online Sun.)

"She was really a remarkable woman," declared Andrew W. Maynard, the warden—a post akin to mayor—of Stonington Borough. "Her death is certainly an enormous loss to the Borough and really to the entire area of southeastern Connecticut."

Spare and direct, Boatwright was the grand doyen of Republican politics in town and throughout the region. Candidates on the local and state levels regularly sought her out for advice and counsel. Those who didn't rarely succeeded.

Yet, she was equally at home every August behind tables sagging with books in the Borough's Wadawanuck Square as part of the Stonington Community Center's annual Village Fair. She ran the book tables for years, and they became known as "Billy's Books."

Second District U.S. Rep. Robert R. Simmons, R-Stonington, was one of those who went to Boatwright for advice.

"As a Republican, she was a great leader," he said. "I think she was the first woman to represent Stonington in the General Assembly, back when that was not an easy thing to do."

"She was a staunch member of the Republican Town Committee and a great mentor to

people like me and Michael Blair (a former Borough warden) who wanted to get involved in politics but didn't know how. She really was an extraordinary woman."

"She loved to travel, and she had so many friends, and she was quite independent," said her daughter Mary T. "Tolly" Boatwright. "She was so devoted to so many things—to her country and the democratic process and to the Republican Party. And yet, she never followed anything blindly."

Boatwright was, for instance, a strong and loyal supporter of Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr., even when that became unfashionable in some circles. It was a measure of her loyalty that she bolted the Republican Party to join Weicker's A Connecticut Party—and in doing so gave up her seat on the Republican National Committee.

"I would put her, literally, in a handful—and I mean five people—who were the greatest influences in my career," the former governor said Saturday evening from his Virginia home.

"She had enormous integrity and a great sense of humor, and she was one of the most loyal people I know," Weicker said, noting that Boatwright gave up her seat on the RNC "when just about any Republican woman in the state would have died for that seat. But that was Mary."

"Every leader should be surrounded by people with that integrity (who are willing to relay bad news even) when you don't want to hear it."

Simmons recalled that when she resigned from the party to back Weicker's independent run for governor, "I was chairman, and the town committee decided not to fill her seat. After the election, she was invited to come back and occupy the seat. That's just one sign of the respect in which she was held by her fellow Republicans."

Her son, Bill Boatwright, mentioned another instance in which his mother remained loyal—to Richard Nixon, whom she first met during her postwar career as a newspaperwoman at the San Francisco Chronicle. He said "she supported him and remained very hopeful that his policies" would achieve the recognition she felt they deserved.

"As an individual, she would follow the strength of her convictions," he said.

William S. Brown, a selectman and chairman of the Republican Town Committee, recalled Boatwright as "a lovely lady. She was very bright and intelligent and a stalwart Republican."

Respect and affection for Mrs. Boatwright crossed party lines.

James M. Spellman, a Pawcatuck Democrat, was often in Mrs. Boatwright's sights during the 24 years that he served as Stonington's first selectman. And yet, he praised her Saturday, saying, "Mary was an outstanding citizen of Stonington. She was very knowledgeable, and she always quietly offered her time for many different programs. It could be the (Stonington) Community Center, the town of Stonington, or Westerly Hospital. But I believe her first love, no doubt, was politics, in which she played a major role on the local, state and national level."

"I always admired her," Spellman continued, "because she knew the issues and she worked in the best interests of our area, and I respected her as a friend and a political opponent."

Boatwright was by equal parts direct and humorous. She did not suffer fools gladly, but she could be supportive and funny—often devastatingly so.

Her youngest daughter, Tolly Boatwright, recalled just such an incident during World War II, when her mother drove a tractor at the North Island, Calif., Naval Station.

"She met Eleanor Roosevelt once and Mrs. Roosevelt said how interesting her job must