

REGARDING THE RETIREMENT OF
GEORGE O. WITHERS

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, this is the time of year that we say farewell to some old friends. That's never easy. But it is even harder when the friend in question spent considerable time and energy helping make us all look good.

George Withers, who is leaving the Armed Services Committee staff at the end of this year, came to Capitol Hill in 1978. He had served his country in the Navy during Vietnam. But he has spent twenty-four years proving that national service doesn't end when you take off the uniform. As legislative director on a personal staff, then press secretary and a professional staff member of the committee, George has made America better every day.

A lot of young go-getters come to work on the Hill, Mr. Speaker. But George proved that you don't have to be obnoxious to get things done. His real sense of decency and values have provided a reference and example for not only the Armed Services Committee staff, but all of us who worked with him.

George has been the conscience of the committee staff. He is a devoted advocate for those Americans who most need and deserve Congress's protection. Discussions of national security can get pretty esoteric, but George makes sure that we keep our focus on people, both those in uniform and those our military exists to protect. As a former enlisted man and NCO, he never lets the former officers on the staff forget who the real troops are.

Mr. Speaker, while our staff works in a non-partisan way, George is a determined, thoroughgoing, old-school Democrat. But look at the pictures on his office walls. Yes, he has photos of himself with our former colleagues Ron Dellums and Silvio Conte. But there's John Kasich, too, and President Bush. All of which speaks to the fairness and openmindedness with which George approached his job. He lets his political beliefs inform his work, but never get in the way of doing what was right for the country.

To my way of thinking, George has only one flaw. The B-2 bomber is the pride of Whiteman Air Force Base, in my district. George led the fight at the staff level against the B-2, and succeeded for quite some time. In gratitude for George's exemplary service, I promise not to have one named for him.

In recent years, George's primary duties have concerned the military construction budget. Every member of this body whose district has received military construction funds—and that's most of us—has George Withers to thank.

But he was also our committee's driving force on policies concerning Latin America. Whether the question was the naval bombing on Vieques or the United States' role in Colombia, George fought for a sensible, humble foreign policy.

George's decency doesn't stop at the Capitol door, either. When he isn't here—during the few hours each year we let the staff out—George actively supports charities. He loves riding his bike, and he loves it even more when he's getting contributions for every mile he rides.

While he will tell you that he loves his work here, just ask him about his children, Sam and Lizzie. You'll see what love really means by the sparkle in his eyes. And we were all thrilled when George married Donna earlier this year. His departure from our little world means that he will have even more opportunities to love and care for them, and even his cat, Tom. But I warn you, George, cats don't always love you back.

I will miss George Withers cheerful counsel personally. The Congress will be poorer for his departure. But the real accolade is that people around the world who will never know his name have better lives today because George Withers was part of this House.

HONORING HERBERT D. AND
ELEANOR MEYERHOFF KATZ

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor community leaders, Herbert D. and Eleanor Meyerhoff Katz, for their strong commitment to the Jewish community on a local, national, and international level. Their dedication and distinguished leadership has enabled many communities to be stronger and more vibrant while maintaining a deep connection to their Jewish roots and culture.

As a couple, Herbert and Eleanor have served as a model for the concept of charity. However, each has taken on numerous leadership roles on their own. The United Jewish Community of Broward County was formed under the direction and guidance of Mr. Katz. He is a past-president of the Jewish Federation and was an integral leader in the creation of the UJCBC, which combined two existing federations and now serves the 3rd largest Jewish community in America. Mr. Katz's other posts include: President of American Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Vice Chair of the United Jewish Appeal; recipient of a Presidential Appointment to Board member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council; Secretary/Treasurer of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee; University of Pennsylvania Associate Trustee and Chairman of the Board of Overseers for the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.

Eleanor Meyerhoff Katz is a graduate of Wellesley College, and has been heavily involved in education. Mrs. Katz is a long-standing Board member of the Jack and Rose Orloff Central Agency for Jewish Education. She is also a member of the Executive Committee of Hillel, The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, Chairman of the Board for Curry College, a Board member for the Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, a past president of the Beth Shalom Day School and the Jewish High School of South Florida, and a committee member for the Jewish Federation of South Broward.

Mr. and Mrs. Katz were also instrumental in establishing the Chair for the Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Katzs have played an integral part of life in South Florida. Their commitment and love for their community has led them to take

a leadership role in the Community Capital Campaign for the United Jewish Community of Broward County, with the new Eleanor M. and Herbert D. Katz Building, which will house many religious organizations and serve as a focal point for Jewish life.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a truly special occasion that I stand here today and commend these fine individuals for their outstanding achievements and service to the world community. Their unparalleled dedication to the ideas of community serve as an example for us all.

COMMEMORATING THE 50-YEAR
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

Mr. DOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Westlands Water District, which celebrates its 50-year anniversary on November 17, 2002. I have the privilege of representing many Westlands water users in Congress.

The Westlands Water District encompasses over 600,000 acres, of which 560,000 acres are applicable for irrigated agricultural production in Fresno and Kings counties. Westlands is comprised by approximately 600 family-owned farms and 2,400 landowners, making Westlands the largest water district in the world.

For 50 years, the Westlands Water District has been a leader in innovative irrigated agriculture and water resource utilization in the Western United States. Through its irrigation practices, Westlands and its farmers have helped develop the west side of the San Joaquin Valley into one of the leading agricultural producing regions in the world.

Farming in the area known as Westlands began during California's Gold Rush era. Irrigated agricultural production began around 1915 and by 1942, landowners organized to develop a water supply system.

Westlands Water District itself was formed in 1952 and began delivering contracted water from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to farms on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley in 1968.

The leadership that has characterized the first 50 years of the Westlands Water District has helped to make the west side of the San Joaquin Valley a unique place of opportunity for families and small businesses.

Today the farmers of Westlands produce over 60 different commercial food and fiber crops sold for fresh, dry, canned and frozen food markets, both domestic and for export. The estimated annual production value of agricultural commodities produced in Westlands is \$1 billion, which generates approximately \$3.5 billion in related economic activity for Fresno and Kings Counties.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating the Westlands Water District for fifty years of valuable service to the residents of the west side of the San Joaquin Valley and in wishing them continued success in the future.