

Mr. Rakkou was born on April 17, 1938 in the small town of Korisos in the prefecture of Kastoria, Greece. He received his first college degree in forestry in 1959 and later honored his country by serving in the Royal Army of Greece until he was honorably discharged in 1961. After marrying his wife in September of 1961, the couple immigrated to the United States in 1962. In pursuit of higher education, Mr. Rakkou enrolled at The City University of New York where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Economics. He later completed his Masters Degree in Economics from CUNY.

After graduation, and with the addition of two children to his family, Mr. Rakkou joined the Atlantic Bank of New York, initiating thereby a long and successful career in banking. While there he stood out amongst his colleagues for his dedication, extreme work ethic, and overall performance, which subsequently contributed to his professional advancement to Executive Vice President in charge of the Commercial Lending Activities Division of the bank. Mr. Rakkou's past performance, degree of expertise, and dedication to his profession were more effectively demonstrated in 1993, when he joined, as President and C.E.O., the Interbank of New York. It was at this small community bank, where Mr. Rakkou found pleasure in serving his community by creating and providing jobs for community members and contributing to the economic improvement of the area.

Mr. Rakkou furthered his genuine love for his neighbors, by joining the Community Board of St. Spyridon Church in Washington Heights, where he was elected president for 2 consecutive years. He served for several years as a member of the School Board of the Th. Tsolainos and C. Goulandris Parochial School in New York. Mr. Rakkou was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the St. Michael's Home for the Aged in Yonkers, NY, and served as treasurer for 3 years. In addition to these and many other accomplishments, in 2002 Mr. Rakkou was honored with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, an award that pays tribute to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to America.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Mr. Rakkou for his tireless dedication to his community both professionally and civically, and I ask that my colleagues rise and join me in honoring the distinguished Mr. John C. Rakkou.

HONORING DOROTHY B. BIDDLE

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Dorothy Biddle is a very special lady in the hearts of the residents of Fulton County, Ohio and her hometown of Wauseon. Proud to call her friend myself, I am pleased to note an action recently taken by this gracious centenarian, a wonderful and lasting gift she gave to her community.

For many years, Wauseon has been working to establish a ballpark. The "Field of Dreams" has been a goal of the community and special project of the Wauseon Rotary. Mrs. Biddle's husband, Clark, was a Rotarian until his passing, and she has remained in touch with the group's activities. In her 105th

year, Dorothy Biddle decided to offer a bequest to the Wauseon Rotary in order to fulfill this 14 yearlong dream. Long a supporter of youth activities and opportunities, Mrs. Biddle is donating the astounding sum of \$1,254,000.00 for the completion of the park. This gift numbers among the largest ever received by any Rotary organization.

Now the park, which will feature baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and walking trails on 73 acres of land will bear the name of Wauseon's most treasured citizen, who though she has traveled around the world still considers her hometown to be "the best place in the world to live." Children of the future will see by her example what one person can do for her community when the Dorothy B. Biddle Park remains as a living testament to a truly remarkable lady. Thank you, Dorothy, for your beneficence and civic-minded patriotism.

IN SUPPORT OF SSG WILLIAM L.
MURWIN AND H.R. 2998

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2998 offered by my friend and colleague, the distinguished Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. YOUNG of Florida. This vital legislation will benefit thousands of our men and women in uniform, including one brave Nevadan in particular, Staff Sergeant William L. Murwin.

Staff Sergeant Murwin is a Marine Reservist from Nevada whose unit was activated for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom. While in Iraq, he was injured while patrolling with his unit. Sergeant Murwin suffered grave injuries, and was evacuated to the United States for treatment. He received care and treatment for a month at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC, and was then released from active duty and returned to Nevada. He was deeply shocked to receive a bill from the Federal government for more than \$200 for the food he received while being treated for his combat injuries.

Fortunately for Staff Sergeant Murwin, Mr. YOUNG and his wife Beverly visited Walter Reed and personally paid Sergeant Murwin's bill. Then, motivated by his desire to make sure this did not happen to any service member ever again, BILL YOUNG introduced H.R. 2998 to ban this practice forever. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this legislation, and urge every Member of the House to become a co-sponsor of this vital, non-partisan legislation.

On behalf of the people of Nevada, I want to thank Chairman and Mrs. Young for the service and compassion they have shown Sergeant Murwin and all of our men and women in uniform. I am proud to serve in the House with Chairman YOUNG and hope that he continues his career of public service here for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL ROBERT J. NATTER, U.S. NAVY, COMMANDER, U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND, COMMANDER, U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedication, public service and patriotism that personified the Naval career of Admiral Robert J. Natter, United States Navy. Admiral Natter is currently serving as the Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command and Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and he will soon retire from the Navy after more than 37 years of distinguished service wearing the uniform of our Nation.

I have had the pleasure to know the Natter family for nearly 16 years and have personally worked with the Admiral on a variety of important issues affecting the Navy and the U.S. military, so it is with great pride and admiration that I honor a dear friend as he begins the next chapter of his life.

I first met Bob in 1981 when he was a commander. I hired him as a military fellow on my staff and assigned him to work all of my legislative issues on the Armed Services Committee. I was impressed with how quickly Bob became an expert at the complicated legislative and budget processes. In hindsight, it is clear to me that the Navy afforded Commander Natter this position because they knew he was flag officer material, and this professional development opportunity would serve Bob and the Navy well. It did.

During the years following the 1991 Tailhook Convention, the Navy was struggling to repair its reputation. At this critical time Rear Admiral Natter was assigned as Chief of Legislative Affairs. His wartime and operational experience gave him instant credibility. But it was Admiral Natter's knowledge of Washington and the Hill along with his candor, confidence and demeanor that helped navigate the Navy through those rough waters and rebuild and restore the Navy's reputation.

A native of Trussville, Alabama, Admiral Natter grew up in a family of true American patriots. One of nine children, seven boys and two girls, all seven sons joined the military as six naval officers and one Air Force officer. After enlisting in the Naval Reserve, Bob Natter chose the Naval Academy as his commissioning source graduating in 1967. After a few tours at sea, he was sent to Vietnam for duty on riverboat patrols where he learned first hand the harsh realities of war. While serving as the Officer in Charge of a Naval Special Warfare detachment, Lieutenant Natter was seriously injured when his special operations team came under attack. He then earned both the Purple Heart and Silver Star for his heroic actions. His experiences in Vietnam instilled in him the true meaning of leadership, strengthened his desire to serve, and solidified his reputation as a strong leader and most capable warrior.

Throughout his career, Admiral Natter held many positions of great responsibility including command of USS *Chandler* (DDG 996), USS *Antietam* (CG 54), and Commander of the United States Seventh Fleet. In June 2000, Admiral Natter assumed duties as Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet where he was

charged with providing fully trained, combat ready forces to support United States and NATO commanders in regions of conflict throughout the world.

On September 11, 2001, the world changed. As America prepared to go to war, I for one, was pleased to know that Admiral Natter was leading the Atlantic Fleet's 160,000 Sailors and Marines, 162 ships and 1,200 aircraft, as well as 18 major shore stations providing training, maintenance and logistics support.

Then on October 1, 2001, Admiral Natter was assigned additional responsibility as the first Commander of the newly established U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which is responsible for manning, equipping and training all Atlantic and Pacific Fleet ships and aircraft squadrons. His strong and dynamic leadership inspired Atlantic Fleet Sailors, officers, and civilians to perform their best and contribute their utmost during a time of unprecedented military action that resulted in the overwhelming success in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Admiral Natter's was truly an amazing career that was recognized by numerous personal awards and decorations. In addition to the Silver Star and Purple Heart, Admiral Natter's personal decorations include three awards of the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, five awards of the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, two awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V, and the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V. He was also a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, and he earned Masters Degrees in Business Management and International Relations. And, he was honored as the fifth recipient of the Naval War College's annual Distinguished Graduate Leadership Award.

His career clearly speaks for itself. Admiral Natter personifies the Navy's core values: Honor, Courage, and Commitment. But, what his bio doesn't tell you is that through it all, Bob was, above all, a family man. He is a loving husband to his beautiful wife Claudia, and a dedicated father to his three children Kelly, Courtney and Kendall. Anyone that knows Bob, knows that he lives for his family and his children are truly the "glimmer in Dad's eye."

Admiral Natter is a family man, a patriot, a hero, and a superb naval officer who, throughout his naval career, led with courage and integrity. His leadership and performance in peacetime and war were instrumental in the success of the Navy and outstanding support for naval forces throughout the world. Thanks to his inspirational leadership and selfless dedication to duty, our Navy has remained second to none.

So, as Admiral Natter moves into retirement with Claudia, our Nation and Navy owe him a debt of gratitude for his superb service. I wish him fair winds and following seas as he concludes his distinguished career.

TRIBUTE TO ARCATA ASSOCIATES FOR RECOGNITION AS NASA'S MINORITY SUBCONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding company, Arcata Associates, Inc., for being named the 2003 NASA Minority Subcontractor of the Year. Arcata, which employs a number of people in my Northern Alabama congressional district, provides important services used at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and across all of NASA.

Arcata CEO and President Tim Wong accepted this award on behalf of all the Arcata employees for their outstanding subcontracted work providing interactive, multimedia services, imaging services, and audio/visual communications under the Program Information Systems Mission Services Contract, and video/voice teleconferencing support under the Consolidated Space Operations Contract.

Under the leadership of Tim Wong, and with strong guidance from Mark Emery, the Huntsville site has helped Arcata Associates become a model for small businesses in North Alabama and across our Nation. The first-rate services that they provide to Marshall and all of NASA play a vital role in the success of our Nation's space and aeronautics programs.

Mr. Speaker, today I wanted to take this opportunity on behalf of the people of North Alabama, to congratulate Tim Wong, Mark Emery, and all the employees of Arcata Associates, Inc. on a job well done and for being named the 2003 NASA Minority Subcontractor of the Year.

FREE LEONARDO MIGUEL BRUZON AVILA

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of a political prisoner in Cuba. Today I ask Congress to remember the name Leonardo Miguel Bruzon Avila.

Mr. Bruzon Avila is currently incarcerated without trial in Castro's inhumane prison system because he desires freedom. Mr. Bruzon Avila is the president of the 24th of February Movement, named for both the commencement of the glorious Cuban War of Independence in 1895, and the day in 1996 when two civilian aircraft carrying four members of the Brothers to the Rescue movement were shot down over international waters by the Cuban dictatorship's fighter jets. The 24th of February movement desires and struggles for freedom in Cuba.

Mr. Bruzon Avila was jailed on February 22, 2002, two days before he was set to peacefully commemorate the day when Castro's regime murdered four innocent human beings in 1996. Mr. Bruzon Avila has yet to be taken to trial.

Mr. Bruzon Avila began his first hunger strike on March 15, 2002 to protest the fact

that he had not yet been charged with any crime. On August 27, 2002 Mr. Bruzon Avila and 26 others began a second hunger strike to demand they be informed of the charges against them or released at once.

Mr. Bruzon Avila's health has been rapidly deteriorating. According to reports, Mr. Bruzon Avila is suffering from vitamin deficiency, he is losing his vision, and he can no longer move his right arm. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bruzon Avila is dying in Castro's gulag.

Mr. Speaker, Leonardo Miguel Bruzon Avila is in a dungeon because he desires freedom for Cuba. If Mr. Bruzon Avila continues to deteriorate, he will die for his love for a free Cuba.

My colleagues, we must cry out for the immediate release of Leonardo Bruzon Avila and all prisoners of conscience in the totalitarian Cuban gulag.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT OF 2003

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Coin Act of 2003." This legislation will direct the Secretary of the Treasury to produce a limited edition silver coin to honor the many achievements of Ben Franklin and celebrate the anniversary of his 300th birthday in January 2006.

Ben Franklin was one of the most remarkable of our founding fathers; he made historic contributions to our nation in a number of fields: government, business, science, communications, and the arts. Mr. Speaker, as I stand before you in the great halls of Congress, it is notable to recognize that Franklin was the only Founding Father to sign all of our nation's organizational documents.

It is fitting to honor Franklin with a commemorative coin, as his role in the early years of currency cannot be overlooked. During the American Revolution, Franklin designed the first American coin, the "Continental" penny. He also played a major role in the design of the Great Seal of the United States, which appears on the one dollar bill. Franklin was the printer of official currency for the colonies of my great state, Delaware, as well as Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. Furthermore, the official United States half dollar from 1948 to 1963 bore Franklin's portrait. Until 1979, Benjamin Franklin was the only non-president of the United States whose image graced circulating coin and paper currency.

In 2002, the United States Congress passed the "Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Act" to create a panel of distinguished Americans to commemorate Franklin's 300th birthday in 2006. I am proud to serve as a member of the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission which was created to honor a true American statesman. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and look forward to working with the Financial Services Committee to bring this bill to the House Floor.