

Newark. In 1958, the 119th Fighter Squadron moved to the former Navy facility in Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey, and was re-designated the 119th Tactical Fighter Squadron. In 1962 the unit became the 177th Tactical Fighter Group, the 177th Fighter Interceptor Group in 1972, 177th Fighter Group in 1992, and finally became the 177th Fighter Wing in 1995. The 177th has been activated twice to federal service since World War Two. In 1961, the unit was called up for the "Berlin Crisis" and in 1968 for the "Pueblo Crisis," which sent unit members to all corners of the globe including Vietnam. Years later, 70 unit members were activated in support of "Desert Storm." As the events of September 11th unfolded the 177th, through years of preparation, training and commitment launched to our nation's emergency and desperate call for help. These Air Guard warriors brought with them the character and core values of generations of heroic citizen soldiers and airmen. Since October 2001, the Wing has had an active involvement in Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Southern Watch, Operation Northern Watch, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 177th's stated mission is "to be America's premier fighter unit, comprised of proud citizen airmen, recognized as superbly skilled and motivated, committed to unwavering service to Community, State, and Nation." In South Jersey, we know that the 177th superbly executes its mission every day. Their recognition as one of the best in the Air Force serves to confirm their excellence to the rest of the country. I am personally grateful to the 177th for its outstanding service to South Jersey, the state of New Jersey and the United States. I congratulate them on this well deserved honor.

FLORIDA: THE STATE OF
EDUCATION

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the problems affecting public schools are all too familiar: poor academic achievement, community conflict over the curriculum, ineffective instructive methods, financial mismanagement and a growing inability to meet the needs of families. Less well known is the fact that these ills are shared by state school systems all over the world. In spite of countless reform efforts stretching back over decades, schools have yet to crack the code on educational success. Despite agreement that the system is a failure, possible solutions are a source of great controversy. In developing a strategy for change, it would be helpful to look to a model that is enjoying great success in my home state of Florida.

Florida leads the nation not only in providing education choices for children but also in innovative education opportunities for low-income families and children with disabilities. The state provides A+ scholarships for students in failing schools, McKay Scholarships for students with disabilities, tax credits for donations to scholarship organizations, and over 200 charter schools. Eligible high school students may take college courses for high school and

postsecondary credit. These scholarships redirect the flow of education funding, channeling it directly to individual families rather than to school districts allowing families to select the public or private schools of their choice and have all or part of the tuition paid. Scholarships are advocated on the grounds that parental choice and competition between public and private schools will improve education for all children.

School Vouchers known as the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) in Florida was created under Governor Bush's A+ Plan, reflects Florida's commitment to higher standards in education for Florida's students. OSP allows parents whose children are assigned to a failing school to choose between sending their child to a higher performing public school or to apply state generated funding toward private school tuition. For the purpose of OSP, a school is considered failing if it has received a failing grade in the previous year as well as one other failing grade in the three previous years.

When a parent has been notified that his or her child is eligible for the Opportunity Scholarship Program, a parent may choose one of three options. They may:

Transfer his/her child to a higher performing public school;

Enroll his/her child in a participating private school;

Retain his/her child in the low performing school.

The McKay Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities makes a school voucher available to any special education student in Florida public schools. This program is the second largest school voucher program in the country, and with approximately 375,000 eligible special education students it is likely to become the largest soon. Currently, over 9,000 students use McKay vouchers.

In 2001, lawmakers approved the John M. McKay Scholarships for Children with Disabilities. These scholarships are available to all Florida school children who have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and have spent at least 7 months attending special classes in the public school system.

The law allows public school children with any type of IEP disability designation (physical, emotional, mental or general learning disability), whose parents are dissatisfied with their progress in the public school, to receive a scholarship from the state. Their parents are then able to choose a school they consider to be better suited for the child. This scholarship is meant to supplement the cost of private schooling for children with disabilities, not to cover the total amount. These scholarships are not income based and follow the student through high school.

Efforts to promote educational choice are in no way a condemnation or indictment of the public school system or its teachers. The goal is simply to provide educational alternatives to a group of people who, because of financial circumstances alone, have none. Insuring quality education for all of Florida's children will help to assure a bright future for Florida. These scholarship programs are designed to liberate parents who are limited by financial circumstance, to choose the school best suited for their child's unique academic needs.

The success of school choice programs in Florida should be a lesson to us on the national level. It is only when parents are in-

involved in their child's educational life that children respond and flourish.

TRIBUTE TO SALLY KANTER

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, last month I was truly saddened when I learned of the loss of one of South Florida's truly great political leaders and activists, a mentor to many including myself and a woman who helped shape politics in her community for the past several decades, Sally Kanter.

It is an honor and privilege to have known Sally as a long-time friend and as a staunch political activist for more than 15 years. There was no one more dedicated than Sally to the struggle of upholding democratic ideals of uplifting the less fortunate, providing for a quality education for all children, protecting the environment and a woman's right to choose and fighting for the rights of Seniors. If there was a cause to champion, Sally was the first to join the fight and the last to give up no matter what the circumstance.

It is not an exaggeration to say that a generation of democratic political leaders from West Palm Beach to Tallahassee to Washington would not be where they are today without Sally's guidance, support and political acumen. I can recall numerous times when I sought out Sally's advice on difficult issues or during troubling times. Sally was always there to provide poignant words of wisdom—her advice was readily available, honest and always to the point.

As the President of the Golden Lakes Democratic Club, Sally was an inspiration to the entire community. Small of stature but big of heart, Sally was the quintessential leader—leading by example with unrivaled passion and resoluteness. I marveled at Sally's tenacity and determination to secure everyone from Presidential candidates, Governors, Senators and Members of Congress to appear before her club. She was fervent in her beliefs, stubborn in her resolve and established a remarkable legacy of improving the lives of others. In a day and age when people make too many promises, Sally's word was as good as gold—it was always "what can I do for you" and "when do you need it done."

To Sally's family, please know I mourn with you in your loss—a loss felt throughout South Florida. Today, I wish to remember Sally for her dedication to the extraordinary tradition of *tikkun olam*—betterment of the world—through her steadfast commitment to the community at large. While she is no longer with us, her life's example forever remains.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. JOSEPH
KORN

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of a man whose professional life has been dedicated to finding a cause—and a

cure—for a devastating disease many of us know little about: scleroderma. Dr. Joseph Korn, Chief of the Rheumatology Section at the Boston University School of Medicine and a Professor at the Boston University School of Medicine, has spent much of his career delving into the mysteries of scleroderma.

Dr. Korn's research into scleroderma has led him to serve on the Medical Advisory Board and the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Scleroderma Foundation, which serves to educate and support scleroderma patients and their families throughout the country, as well as conduct ongoing research into scleroderma. On November 22, 2003, at their inaugural national gala, the Scleroderma Foundation will honor Dr. Korn for his commitment and dedication to scleroderma research and the patients afflicted with the disease.

As a member of the Massachusetts State Legislature, I first became aware of Dr. Korn's incredible work when a cluster of 30 scleroderma patients was discovered near my home in South Boston. Dr. Korn became one of the leaders of a study of this cluster of patients conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Health, for which I had worked to secure state funding. Dr. Korn's dedication to his research and compassion towards those with scleroderma is truly remarkable. It is my distinct honor to join in this celebration recognizing Dr. Korn's important contributions to scleroderma.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Scleroderma Foundation in thanking Dr. Korn for his dedication to research into scleroderma. I hope my colleagues will join me in celebrating Dr. Korn's distinguished career and future endeavors on behalf of those with scleroderma.

REGARDING A TRIP TO ISRAEL

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I recently returned from my first trip to Israel, as part of a Congressional delegation led by Minority Whip STENY HOYER that traveled through this remarkable country in August. There are simply not enough superlatives to describe all of my experiences and emotions or to convey all that I learned.

Although a small and still relatively young nation, Israel stands at the fulcrum of three major religions and its land is holy to all. Resolutions of the various conflicts in that region would go a long way toward resolving many of the issues we all face today.

One of the most moving—and interesting—lessons of my trip was to further observe how our two nations, the United States and Israel, deal with the problem of terrorism. Both pause to express their sorrow and mourn those who have been killed or wounded, but then both of our great nations also seek ways to move on and work toward conflict resolutions.

Shortly after the Congressional delegation left Israel, a remarkable concert took place in Jerusalem on September 12, 2003. Amid tributes to the memories of those who died in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington, as well as those who have perished in attacks in Israel, the Je-

rusalem Symphony Orchestra played a special concert in the Rothberg Amphitheater on the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The concert, Antonin Dvorak's Requiem, Opus 89, marked the debut of the Jerusalem Symphony's new music director, Dr. Leon Botstein. The concert, billed as "A Concert of Remembrance and Hope," was performed under the auspices of the orchestra and the Hebrew University and included the Philharmonia Singers and vocal soloists. It was made possible through the generosity of the American Friends of the Jerusalem Symphony and Anne and Marty Peretz. Botstein, in addition to his new role with the Jerusalem Symphony, is also the music director of the American Symphony Orchestra in New York and is president of Bard College in New York.

In remarks preceding the concert, American Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer said, "We will never forget the 3,000 citizens of the U.S. and 90 other countries who lost their lives on September 11. We, Israelis and Americans, also mourn the lives of the 36 American citizens who have lost their lives [in terrorist attacks] in Israel. [. . .] Tonight, the process of remembering and recovery continues."

Hebrew University President Prof. Menachem Magidor said that the evening's concert was an expression of "profound and deep identification with the people of the United States." The president noted that the "dark forces" which perpetrated the attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States are the same which are attacking Israel. "September 11 was a declaration of war not just on the United States, but on the entire free world," said Magidor. But, he said, that evil effort would not succeed.

Botstein, in his brief remarks, echoed the president's words, stating that the terrorist attacks were "an effort to destroy civilization." He said too that the evening's concert was dedicated to the memory not only of those who lost their lives in the United States in those attacks but also to those who have perished in terrorist acts in Israel.

As a symbol of the special ties between Israel and the U.S. expressed by the event, the national anthems of Israel and the U.S. were played prior to the performance of Dvorak's work.

Mr. Speaker, along with my statement, I would like to enter into the RECORD the remarks of Hebrew University President Menachem Magidor and American Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer which were delivered prior to this concert:

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT THE JSO CONCERT MARKING TWO YEARS SINCE THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2003

Good evening and welcome to the Mount Scopus Campus of the Hebrew University.

The concert tonight is far from the usual opening concert of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra.

First, as we all know, the fact that the Orchestra continues to perform and is opening a new concert season was a few months ago far from being a certainty. The Orchestra is of vital importance to the cultural fabric of Jerusalem. The opening today is a clear declaration that Jerusalem will not allow such an important part of its cultural life to disappear from the scene.

We also welcome tonight the new musical director of the orchestra, Leon Botstein, and we all hope that under his direction the orchestra will grow and flourish.

The start of this cooperative venture with the Hebrew University is also a new and important beginning. I have no doubt that this will enrich both institutions as well as the cultural life of Jerusalem.

This concert is taking place in a uniquely special setting. Every time I find myself in this amphitheater, I am filled with awe at the power of this place. No less deeply moving are Mount Scopus's historical and cultural connections—a place overflowing with symbolism and significance. On April 1, 1925, on this exact spot where I am standing now, Weizmann, Balfour, Bialik and Rabbi Kook attended the opening ceremony of our University.

But most important of all is the subject to which this evening is dedicated. This is an evening of solidarity, of remembrance, of soul-searching, on the second anniversary of the events of September 11. And it is impossible, as citizens of Israel and of this city, not to connect with the same memories, with the same pain, the same soul-searching of the victims of terror attacks that we have been exposed to during the past three years. The past few days have not made things any easier.

The criminal attack of September 11 was a declaration of war. But it was not a declaration of war on the United States of America alone, it was a declaration of war on the most basic principles of the free world: on the unique value of the individual, on the right of a person to try to attain happiness in their own way, on freedom of speech, on tolerance, on the fact that a humane society can be composed of people of various affinities and different beliefs, and still be a responsible society with a sense of direction. And the victims of September 11 fell not because they were American, but more because they were a random segment of a society for whom these principles are paramount.

I don't accept the claim that this is a war between the Islamic culture and the West. This is a war between enlightenment and darkness, between openness, tolerance, rationality—and ignorance and blind religious extremism; and the battle lines cut right across cultures, and not between them.

We, too, are on the front lines of this war. Clearly there are also concrete political issues in this war taking place here at home, but it is impossible to ignore that, beyond the desire to obtain political goals of one kind or another, blind terror and hatred of free and tolerant discourse is nourished by blind extremism. And I have no doubt that the sinister flame which lit the September 11 attack also lights the terror attacks here at home. We cannot forget the attack here on our Campus a year ago, which took place just a few hundred meters from here. We were targeted not just because we are an Israeli or Jewish institution, but also because we are openminded, tolerant, and follow the paths of peace.

This war between an open society and its enemies is not a simple one. It is not simple because its enemies are hidden. And it is not simple because there is a serious danger to the open society. The danger is that, not by force but through its own volition, the enemies of freedom will compel this open society to give up its principles.

The enemies of freedom will have won if we cease to believe in tolerance and human rights; and they will have won if we fail to see where are the limits to the use of force, even when there is reason to use it; and they will have won if we cease to believe, here in Israel, that at the end of this bloodletting, there is the possibility of a life at peace with our neighbors.

This memorial concert which is taking place on the Mount Scopus Campus of the Hebrew University is a declaration that we,