ever with the guidance and leadership of Reverend Waterman.

Mr. Speaker, in a short time, Rev. Robert M. Waterman has already made a positive difference in the lives of the Antioch Baptist Church congregation and the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. As such, he is more than worthy of receiving our recognition. I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in honoring this truly remarkable individual.

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW FISH FOR ACHIEVING THE AWARD OF GOLD MEDAL OF ACHIEVEMENT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Matthew Fish, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Royal Rangers of Northern Missouri and in earning the most prestigious award, the Gold Medal of Achievement.

Matthew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the 10 years Matthew has been involved with the Rangers, he has held numerous leadership positions, serving as Patrol Guide and Senior Patrol Guide. He also was involved in Frontiersmen Camping Fellowship, Fine Arts Youth Department, and elected as National Scout.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Matthew Fish for his accomplishments with the Royal Rangers and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Gold Medal of Achievement.

HONORING THOMAS J. SERRA ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join in paying tribute to one of Connecticut's finest school administrators and community activists. People like Thomas Serra are what make our communities strong. From his important work educating the young people of Middletown for the past 30 years to his involvement in many other settings, he has dedicated his life to public service.

I often speak of our Nation's need for talented, creative, enthusiastic teachers who are ready to help our children learn and grow. Tom Serra is just that kind of educator. Throughout his career, he has touched the lives of thousands of children—ensuring that they had the skills and tools necessary to be successful in their adult lives. Tom began as an English instructor at Vinal Technical High School where he would later take on the role of athletic coordinator. Fourteen years ago, Tom moved into administration becoming the school's assistant director and for the last six years, he has been leading Vinal as the Director.

Public education is the cornerstone of the American dream, leveling the playing field and providing every child with the opportunity to make the most of his or her talents. It is talented professionals like Tom who truly shape the leaders of tomorrow. He is dedicated to the positive development of not only our children's intellect, but their character development as well. In speaking to Tom, his remarkable commitment and dedication to his students and Vinal is undeniable and I am sure his presence will be missed.

As a lifelong resident of Middletown, Tom is deeply involved in the life of his community. In serving one term as Mayor, actively participating on the Democratic Town Committee, the City Council, the Police Commission, as well as a myriad of other municipal committees and local service organizations, he has become one of Middletown's most respected and highly-regarded leaders. I am confident that even in his retirement he will remain a strong and vocal advocate for Middletown and its residents.

Today, as Tom celebrates his retirement, I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation for his tireless efforts on behalf of the City of Middletown. He is a leader who is second to none, and his talent and commitment have enriched our lives. It is with great pleasure that I join his wife, Maryann; his children, Jason and Christopher; as well as the many family, friends, and community members who have gathered this evening to wish Tom many more years of health and happiness.

HONORING ST. BARNABUS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of St. Barnabas Episcopal School in Deland, Florida for the accomplishment of being chosen as a ''National No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.'' St. Barnabas has been an exceptional example of how the ''No Child Left Behind'' program ensures that every child learns, and that no child will ever be forgotten.

Since its conception in 1982, by the United States Secretary of Education under President Reagan, the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence has identified public and private schools throughout the country that exhibit extraordinary teaching and learning techniques. The Blue Ribbon award is given to a school in recognition of exemplary performance in the fields of both education and community service. This year, the United States Department of Education recognized 176 public and 47 private schools as Blue Ribbon Schools. St. Barnabas was the only Episcopal School to be recognized for this award this year. In order to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, an intense, research-based list of criteria must be met. A Blue Ribbon School must excel in all areas of academic leadership, teaching, faculty and parent involvement, student achievement levels, as well as safety and discipline levels. With standardized test scores constantly in the top 10 percent of the nation, St. Barnabas qualified by submitting their application for the National Blue Ribbon.

Founded in 1971, St. Barnabas is also accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools. The school has an enrollment of 344 students ranging from Pre-Kindergarten to 8th Grade. What makes St. Barnabas excellent is the school's drive for excellence both in and out of the classroom by stressing the growth of the student's character as well as intellect. The school focuses on academic excellence, as well as sound moral values and high self esteem. As an Episcopal School, St. Barnabas also stresses a strong relationship with God and the community in order to build well-rounded students and citizens.

On a more personal note, my grandmother, Nora Walker, was a principal, so education runs in my family. I understand the difficulties of teaching and raising young children, especially in today's society. That is why I firmly believe in the President's ''No Child Left Behind'' plan for education and believe it is the best course of action for our nation's schools. I am very pleased to see St. Barnabas Episcopal School following the President's plan in becoming a ''No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.''

Mr. Speaker, St. Barnabas should be an inspiration to us all and I am honored to recognize them today in front of the entire Congress as pillars of the community as well as leaders in the field of education.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, on roll-call no. 570, Basic Pilot Extension Act of 2003, had I been present, I would have voted ''nay.''

A TRIBUTE TO DR WALDABA H. STEWART, JR., PH.D

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. for his commitment to public service and active involvement in New York's civic affairs for more than 40 years.

While Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. is a native of Panama, he has been a vital asset to the Brooklyn community for more than four decades. Starting with the Unity Democratic Club in 1960, he worked as an Election District Captain and Campaign Manager for the late Thomas R. Fortune, Executive Member. Dr. Stewart was a diligent member of the Unity Democratic Club advising and supporting in all political elections.

In 1968, he began his own political career as a successful candidate for State Senate, where he served for four years. From 1968–1969, he served as Statewide Chairman of the NAACP Political Action and Voter Registration Committee. He was also one of the founding members of the Board of Directors of the Commerce, Labor, and County of Kings Corporation that converted the Brooklyn Navy