Johnson, Jr., and his selfless devotion to not only our country and the freedom we enjoy, but to a people who are but now in the infant stages of a new life, a new freedom in their own land.

We should also remember his wife, Melissa; his parents, Philip Johnson, Sr., and Barbara Johnson; and his two younger brothers, Matthew and Peter. May God give them the strength and courage that only He can provide to sustain them during the difficult days ahead.

It was Joseph Campbell who said, ''A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.'' Make no mistake, Philip A. Johnson, Jr., was not only a dedicated soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice serving in the uniform of his country; but he was also a true American hero.

THE REVEREND DR. RALPH SEXTON, SR.

HON. CHARLES H. TAYLOR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2004

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to rise and commend one of Western North Carolina's and Buncombe County's finest citizens, the late Dr. Ralph Sexton, Sr. With the death of the Rev. Sexton Sr., Asheville lost one of the most energetic and effective members of its religious community. Sexton, who founded Trinity Baptist Church, died from a brain tumor. He was 84.

Sexton began preaching when he was just a teenager after being drawn into a tent revival where he gave his heart to God. He was on his way to see a movie when he physically felt something pull on his coat. ''He said it really frightened him,'' said Jerry Payne, who served as Sexton's assistant pastor for 42 years. Sexton left the movie and ended up at the tent revival.

Not long afterwards, he began preaching. And what a preacher he was. In the early years, he preached in tents and front yards, in empty lots and driving down the street in a car outfitted with a loudspeaker. He even found himself in jail a few times when police arrested him for disturbing the peace. ''He was from that old mountain cut,'' Payne said. ''He preached in simple layman's terms.''

''He was just a powerful preacher,'' according to his longtime friend, J. Wendell Runion, president and director of International Baptist Outreach Missions based in Asheville. Audiences were ''spellbound'' by him, Runion said.

In time, Sexton found a more potent way to deliver his message about Christ. His Sunday morning television program ''Send the Light'' first went on the air in 1960. He also preached on radio and at tent revivals. Then in 1966, Sexton founded Trinity Baptist Church. He built an auditorium for 500 people even though he had a congregation of about only 125. Trinity has since grown into one of Asheville's largest churches, with programs that support missionaries around the world and provide assistance to the victims of poverty, natural disasters and famine. Trinity's programs today include a Spanish Church, Trinity Baptist Bible College and Hearts with Hands, a nondenominational nonprofit humanitarian relief organization. Sexton served as the church's pastor until 1988, when his son, Dr. Ralph Sexton Jr., who had served for 13 years as youth pastor and evangelist, became pastor. The senior Sexton remained pastor emeritus and stayed involved despite health problems.

Sexton, who was always true to his calling, will be remembered as ''a very straightforward, unashamed preacher of the Gospel,'' according to Asheville Citizen-Times columnist Bob Terrell, who wrote a book about him. ''He was a giant among the nation's old-time religionists,'' Terrell said. ''He helped change literally thousands of lives.''

Sexton was a man of God and of the mountains who will be missed by many. His family and others who loved him can take comfort in knowing that he left a legacy through which lives will continue to be changed and enriched.

IN HONOR OF SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2004

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, the Southern University football team gave Jaguar fans throughout Louisiana something to cheer about when they were recently recognized by the Sheridan poll as the 2004 Historically Black College National Champions. The football team certainly earned this distinction by completing an impressive 12–1 season that included victories in the Bayou Classic over instate rival Grambling State University and Alabama State University in the Southwestern Athletic Conference championship game. Congratulations are in order for Southern University Chancellor Edward Jackson, Coach Pete Richardson, the student-athletes, cheerleaders, members of the band and fans.

The Jaguar football team joins with a number of other Southern athletic teams that have had success. In 2002, Southern University was ranked by Sports Illustrated magazine as the 131st best Division I athletic program in the Nation, quite an accomplishment when thinking about all of the terrific athletic programs throughout the country. Seven teams, including baseball, women's basketball, bowling and softball, took SWAC titles. The university was the highest ranked Historically Black College on the Sports Illustrated list.

The Jaguars also boast one of the most dynamic marching bands in the country. A revered and cherished tradition, the band never ceases to amaze. Last year, led by Dr. Isaac Greggs, the band participated in a competition involving more than 20 other black colleges. Southern emerged victorious and took first place as well as a $10,000 award.

However, athletics and extracurricular activities are just some of the many exciting things going on at Southern. The university was named yet again as one of the top 50 colleges with the best environment for African American students; and only three other public black universities were ranked above Southern. This survey proves that Southern offers an excellent, well-rounded education at an affordable price.

Some of the achievements at Southern can be attributed to the rising operating budget and funds available for campus improvements. The university is currently operating with a $180 million budget, the largest in the school's 124 years. This money will be available to run the university's five campuses spread throughout Louisiana. A significant portion of the budget had been allocated for endowed professorships which now stand at 31, but are set to increase. The university is also preparing to make drastic changes to a number of its campuses. Construction is set to begin on residential housing developments on the Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport campuses as well as improvements to the athletic facilities and off-campus housing.

These accomplishments define Southern University as one of the preeminent Historically Black Colleges in the country and a source of tremendous pride for Louisiana. From its humble beginnings in 1880, Southern has grown into a vast university system with over 15,000 students. However, the school continues to produce outstanding graduates and loyal alumni. I know that the university will proceed with confidence as a respected force in education and athletics.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JUDGE JOHN F. BUTLER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2004

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise to pay tribute to the Honorable John F. Butler on the occasion of his retirement from the bench of the Mobile County Circuit Court. For the past 21 years, Judge Butler has served the families of the State of Alabama with compassion, dedication, and a tremendous level of commitment.

Beginning in 1971, with his appointment as referee for the juvenile court, Judge Butler has devoted his life to the well-being of young people in south Alabama. In addition to his three terms as circuit court judge, he has served 2 decades as the presiding juvenile court judge of Mobile County. Along with his duties on the bench, Judge Butler has also operated the Strickland Youth Center and was instrumental in the creation of area Boys and Girls Club programs, the Camp Martin Leadership Academy, the Girls Reaching Womanhood Thru Healing (GROWTH) program, and Pointe Academy for juvenile offenders. Without fail, Judge Butler has focused a tremendous level of energy and time on his efforts to help young men and women overcome the difficulties of their past and become focused and successful members of their community.

Along with his many professional responsibilities, Judge Butler has also served as a member of numerous statewide juvenile justice programs. This long list includes service as chairman of the Governor's Advisory Council on Youth, a term as president of the Alabama Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and 8 years as a trustee to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. His work in these areas, as well as his professional accomplishments, has also resulted in public recognition and many awards during his long years of public service.

Judge Butler is also one of America's proud veterans, having served for many years in the United States Army. Following his graduation