

GREAT AFRICAN AMERICAN  
LEADER IN AGRICULTURE

**HON. JOHN LEWIS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 26, 2004*

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pearlie S. Reed, a native of Heth, Arkansas, attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry in 1970. He then attended graduate school at American University in Washington, D.C., where he earned a degree in Public Administration-Finance in 1980.

Mr. Reed began his career with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service in a temporary appointment in June 1968 as a Soil Conservationist Student Trainee. Thirty years later, in March 1998, he became the chief executive officer for USDA's Private Lands Conservation agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly the Soil Conservation Service. He served NRCS in various positions and locations including District Conservationist, Budget and Accounting Officer, Administrative Officer for NRCS National Headquarters, Deputy State Conservationist in Wisconsin, State Conservationist in Maryland and California, Regional Conservationist, and the Associate Chief for the agency. Under the Clinton administration, Mr. Reed served as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration that led the most powerful USDA Civil Rights Action Team that developed the most comprehensive report ever written to document the status of Civil Rights in USDA.

As the Acting Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Administration, Mr. Reed provided leadership for USDA-wide offices and functions, such as the Office of Civil Rights, the Office of Human Resources Management, procurement, contracting, and facilities and property management, the Office of Small Business Utilization, the National Office of Outreach, the Board of Contract Appeals, the Office of Administrative Law Judges, and the Office of the Judicial Officer.

As the Team Leader for the Secretary's Civil Rights Action Team, Mr. Reed provided the leadership for recommendations to address civil rights problems in programs delivery and employment, and actions to ensure accountability and follow-through. The Secretary accepted the findings from that project, and committed to act on all 92 recommendations. The work of the Civil Rights Action Team is recognized as setting the direction for civil rights policy at USDA that semantically reformed a movement within USDA.

As the Chief of NRCS, Mr. Reed served as the executive officer for USDA's private lands conservation agency serving communities in all 50 states, the Pacific Basin, and the Caribbean area. He led a conservation partnership consisting of over 12,000 federal employees, 15,000 conservation district officials, 7,000 conservation district employees, 20,000 Earth Team volunteers, and 350 Resource Conservation and Development Councils. Mr. Reed served as a leader of several USDA-wide activities, such as the chair of the USDA/1990 Task Force, chair of the USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force, chair of the USDA National Food and Agriculture Council,

and the USDA representative on the United States Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

As Associate Chief, Mr. Reed served as the chief operating official for NRCS. Under his leadership, NRCS initiated a workforce planning process that was recognized by the National Academy of Public Administration as a model for other agencies. He led the development and implementation of the most comprehensive reorganization of the agency in its 60-year history. With a strong commitment to customer service and conservation partnerships, he initiated the American Indian outreach effort for NRCS to work directly with tribes. He also provided leadership in the development and implementation of the Conservation Title of the 1996 Farm Bill.

Mark Rey, USDA Under Secretary for the Natural Resources and Environment said of Mr. Reed, "I believe that if you look up the term 'public service' in the dictionary, you'd likely see a picture of Pearlie Reed there next to it."

Mr. Reed has had a distinguished career, with 35 years of service which also included international conservation experience and service outside the continental United States. His contributions in South Africa, Australia, and with the International Soil Conservation Organization, exemplify his span of influence as a strong leader, visionary, and unquestionable natural resources conservation ethic.

Mr. Reed received numerous awards for outstanding sustained performance, including the Distinguished Presidential Rank Award—the highest award that can be bestowed upon a Career Senior Executive Service member. Another significant award included is the USDA Secretary's Honor Award for equal opportunity and civil rights that recognizes his vision and leadership in the most comprehensive reorganization in the history of NRCS.

Other recognitions he has received include the Professional Service Award from the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Soil and Water Conservation Society Award, the George Washington Carver Public Service Hall of Fame Award, and the Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff. Another tribute to Mr. Reed was the naming of several campus buildings, including the Pearlie S. Reed/Robert Cole Smith Farm Outreach-Wetland Water Management Center by the University of Arkansas System's Board of Trustees.

Mr. Reed is a soft spoken man of few words; a visionary who is marked by foresight, and a person who has distinguished himself by making contributions to conservation in America that will never be forgotten. He is a dedicated man that has never wavered from his work ethic: "Each day I come to work, I think about what is important and how the NRCS can get more conservation on the ground."

TRIBUTE TO JESSE OWENS

**HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 26, 2004*

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special person, athlete, and role model in African-American

history: Jesse Owens. Born "James Cleveland," Jesse Owens was the son of a sharecropper and the grandson of a slave. He was born into a modest household in Alabama, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, with his family at the age of nine in hopes of finding better employment for his father. During his first day of school in Cleveland, his teacher mistook his name to be "Jesse"; and that nickname stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Jesse went on to attend East Technical High School in Cleveland, where his natural talent for running was immediately recognized by the school's track coach. Jesse was unable to attend after-school track practices because of the numerous jobs he held on the side, including delivering groceries, loading freight cars, and working in a shoe repair shop. Realizing Jesse's abilities, the track coach agreed to meet with Jesse before school. With the refining of his natural talent, Jesse was able to set world records in high school for the 100-yard dash, 220-yard dash, and broad jump.

After being aggressively recruited by top universities, Jesse chose to attend the Ohio State University to continue his athletic and academic career. As Ohio State did not give out track scholarships at this time, Jesse continued to work several part-time jobs to provide for his education, himself, and his wife, Ruth. He juggled his employment with his studies and an intense practice and competition schedule. Jesse continued to excel in track and field, despite the discrimination and segregation he faced on a daily basis. He was forced to live off-campus in housing designated for African-American athletes, and he was not allowed to eat with the rest of his teammates when they were on the road and ate at "whites only" restaurants.

Overcoming all of these obstacles, Jesse continued his record-setting career in his first year in college, as he set world records for the 220-yard dash, the 220-yard low hurdles, and the broad jump and tied the world record for the 100-yard dash. Prior to his record-breaking broad jump, Jesse boldly tied a handkerchief at the height of the previous world record and then confidently jumped an entire six inches above it.

Wanting to take his competitive skills to the next level, Jesse entered the 1936 Olympics, which were to be held in Berlin, Germany during the reign Adolf Hitler. Jesse was used to the discrimination he felt at home and was determined to show Hitler's Germany, and the world, that there was no such thing as a "dominant race." He did just that. Jesse swept the competition by winning the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and the broad jump. He was also a member of the gold medal-winning 400-meter relay team and set three world records during the competition. His performance placed him permanently in the history books as the first American to win four track and field gold medals in a single Olympics. Perhaps more importantly, Jesse's unprecedented performance caused many people around the world to reconsider their notions of race and capabilities.

Unfortunately, when Jesse arrived home to the United States, the racial barriers that he left were still in place. "I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the President, either," he said. Showing his grace and class, Jesse did not turn bitter, but rather