

Services Procurement Subcommittee, he helped President Reagan rebuild our military, and, through the policy of peace through strength, win the Cold War. As President Reagan headed back to California in 1989, Representative Badham chose to leave one of the most secure Congressional seats in the nation and to return to California as well. Needless to say, the career of our colleague, Duncan Hunter, and my own, were both advanced by Bob's decision that a quarter century in elected office was enough.

The people of southern California are fortunate that giving up elected office has not meant giving up public service to Bob Badham. Since his return to California, Bob has remained an active leader in Orange County. He and his wife, Anne, remain two of Orange County's most active and energetic citizens. They are among the kindest and most interesting people anyone will ever know.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join the people of Orange County, all of Bob's colleagues in the House of Representatives, and all of those who are fortunate to call Bob Badham a friend, in wishing him the happiest of birthdays on this, his 75th!

IN MEMORY OF LESLIE REIF

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 2004

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my colleagues, Mr. STARK and Ms. LEE, and myself, to offer tribute to Leslie Reif, who died on February 7, 2004. Leslie Reif devoted himself in exceptional ways to service in the communities in which he lived and worked. He served the Oakland community by choosing a career in public education, and bringing his exceptional talents to first and fourth grade students at the Jefferson Elementary School in Oakland. Mr. Reif served the San Francisco community by demonstrating an abiding concern for others in his neighborhood of Bernal Heights, and at his faith community at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco on Franklin Street.

At the Jefferson Elementary School, Leslie Reif wore many hats. He was a fourth grade classroom teacher, responsible for mathematics, English, writing, geography and other subjects. Beyond his classroom, Mr. Reif was the school coordinator for the Martin Luther King Oratorical Fest held each year in February. During the fest, classes perform poems, plays and music to honor the memory of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to advance his goal of equality for all persons. For the last 2 years, Mr. Reifs class placed first at the Jefferson Elementary Fest and then went on to place second and win a medal at the regional competition encompassing all schools in Oakland.

Leslie Reif could always be counted on to help other teachers hang photographs and educational exhibits in their classrooms, be a sounding board for advice or just to lend a sympathetic ear when someone was having a bad day. Mr. Reif was also the Fourth Grade teacher representative on the Faculty Council, a group that handles issues that affect working conditions at the school.

Mostly, those who knew him described him as a caring individual and a tireless teacher. Mr. Reif typically arrived at school at 7:15 in the morning and often stayed late into the afternoon correcting papers, setting up the classroom for the next day, working on his lesson plan, directing extra-curricular activities or assisting other teachers with their own classroom projects.

There is perhaps no better testament to his contribution to the students at Jefferson Elementary than in their own words and those of other teachers who were his colleagues there. On the Monday morning following his death, the school placed a giant banner in the central corridor for students to express their feelings. That banner, large as it was (ten feet long and four feet tall), turned out to be too small. Within hours, it was filled with messages of sadness, loss, love and grief. Another banner was added. When that one filled up, yet a third was put out. By the next day, that one had been filled as well.

The messages are poignant and speak volumes about the respect and love that his students felt for him. Many of the messages were surrounded by hearts. For example, one elaborately decorated, bleeding heart contained the Spanish words for "Rest in Peace"—"Que en Paz descanse, Maestro, Reif" A few others: "I remember your kindness. I will miss you bunches." "I'm sad but have happy memories." "Dear Mr. Reif, I hope your family will never forget you." "You were a wonderful teacher. I miss you. I love you." "The school will be your home." "I miss you very much. You were my best teacher."

A Kindergarten class that barely knew Mr. Reif put up his picture and surrounded it with lighted candles in tribute. The students in his current class also wrote touching letters to Mr. Reifs family. Several referred to Mr. Reifs concern that his students not be the victims of violence, a real concern of his after he was held up at gunpoint one morning while parking near the school. Said one student, "He was helpful by telling us not to open the door because someone could come in and shoot us . . . that it would be better if someone shoots him than someone shoots us." Another student wrote to Mr. Reifs son, Daniel, "He was a really nice man. I bet he was a very good father." Many referred to the academic achievements they made under his direction, such as the ability to write properly composed letters, and to his efforts to teach them good manners.

Similarly, fellow teachers at the school are honoring Mr. Reifs achievements and contributions by having a plaque made up in his honor and memory, which will be placed on the lectern in the auditorium which is used at all school assemblies and the Martin Luther King Oratorical Fest. In addition, a scholarship fund has been established in his name by the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute in co-sponsorship with the Oakland Education Association.

Mr. Speaker, Leslie Reif was the kind of teacher students remember 10 and 20 and even 40 years later, because he made a real difference in their young lives. He began each morning by having his students recite "The Happiness Formula," a statement written by a former colleague that promotes non-violence, high self-esteem and kindness to others. They

will remember him for his tireless dedication to excellence, his infectious optimism, and his deep caring for them and their achievements. He will be remembered as a man who loved working with children.

That public education became his vocation is not terribly surprising. When he was only 16, he was already teaching younger children to play chess, a particular talent of his, and tutoring public school students in New York City, where he grew up. He was, in fact, born in New York City, educated at Bowdoin College and Princeton University, from which he received his B.A. Cum Laude, and Columbia University's School of Journalism, from which he received a Masters Degree.

He moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1987, and had been a resident of San Francisco's Bernal Heights neighborhood since 1989. His was a friendly and familiar face to neighborhood residents, shopkeepers and others. He always had a warm greeting on the street or in a store and became involved in community events and activities. For example, when Mr. Reifs son, Daniel Reif, started attending kindergarten at the Paul Revere Elementary School 6 years ago, Mr. Reif volunteered extensively in school activities. He met and was mentored and inspired by the Principal of Paul Revere at the time, Randy Haves.

Not one to allow the inspiration of a great educator to go to waste, Mr. Reif had, within a year, obtained emergency teaching credentials to be a first grade classroom teacher at Jefferson Elementary in Oakland across the bay, and had gone back to school to gain his full teaching credentials. It was only the first step in his involvement at Jefferson Elementary.

Leslie Reif was a member of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, where a memorial service was held for him on February 11. More than 150 people attended, including several of his students and their parents. He is remembered by church members for his involvement in the Forums Committee and the children's Religious Education program.

Mr. Reif died of complications from an epileptic seizure. In the last decade, Mr. Reif had helped educate others about epilepsy, including working as a health educator for the former Epilepsy League of the East Bay, now the Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California. His death helps to illustrate how much more needs to be done to learn more about, to treat and ultimately to find a cure for this neurological disorder.

Finally, last but certainly not least, Leslie Reif was a loving husband to his wife, Millie Phillips, a devoted father to his son Daniel Reif, and an attentive and supporting stepfather to Ms. Phillips' son, Jeffrey Morgan. Mr. Reif was born to an Irish Catholic mother and a Czech Jewish father, who emigrated to the United States in 1940. It is not surprising that the term used most often by his friends to describe him is the Yiddish term "mensch." He was a kind, modest man who downplayed most of his own accomplishments, while working hard to encourage the success of others. That is the lasting legacy he leaves to his family, his school, our communities and our country.