

Robert Von Roch's final assignment was in Africa where he became ill and was transported to Vienna for treatment. He was later sent home to recuperate fully, but unfortunately Robert never recovered. Mr. Von Roch passed away September 3, 2005. His family misses him greatly.

HONORING MRS. HELEN CAIRO
MCCARTHY OF ST. LOUIS DE
MONTFORT SCHOOL

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Helen Cairo McCarthy as she retires from an exceptional career in education.

Mrs. Cairo-McCarthy has devoted twenty-six years to the Catholic education of students in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Just over twenty-one years of her profession were spent as a teacher at St. Louis de Montfort School in Oak Lawn, Illinois.

St. Louis de Montfort School is located in the heart of Oak Lawn Illinois. Since its foundation in 1963 the small, progressive Catholic school has been committed to excellence in education and Catholic values. A dedicated faculty and staff work diligently to serve students in the offered classes, preschool through eighth grade.

Since 1984 Mrs. Cairo-McCarthy has touched countless lives with her gentle, caring manner at St. Louis de Montfort. She has taught students spanning from grades fourth through eighth, has served as a Eucharistic Minister, has been a Minister of Care for the Homebound, has been a facilitator of the Rainbows for All God's Children program. Mrs. Cairo-McCarthy has truly been a tremendous role model for the children as well as the faculty, family and friends of St. Louis de Montfort School.

It is my honor to recognize Mrs. Helen Cairo-McCarthy of St. Louis de Montfort School for her many achievements both within and outside of the classroom, fostering the growth of a community as well as helping solidify a foundation for our future. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending many wonderful wishes for Mrs. Cairo-McCarthy as she enters into retirement. While she may not be in the classroom each day, I am sure she will continue to influence many lives throughout her new endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD P. HOWE

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richard P. Howe for his 40 years of public service to the City of Lowell. Richard P. Howe is a community leader, political activist, and dear friend.

The story of the city of Lowell is a cycle of rise and decline, a constant struggle to revive

and then maintain the local economy and to always improve the quality of life of its residents. During the past decade, Lowell has been in the ascent. The fully occupied Cross Point office towers, a rejuvenated downtown symbolized by the Bon Marche building, a newly constructed ballpark and arena, and 10 new schools are the symbols of Lowell's resurgence. Many people contributed to the success of these projects. There is one person, however, whose leadership was critical to each of these projects and that is City Councilor Richard P. Howe.

First elected in 1965, Howe's electoral accomplishments alone would identify him as having great impact on the revitalization of the city of Lowell. Tonight marks the end of a 40-year career on the Lowell City council. He has been mayor 4 times (8 years) and a city councilor for longer than anyone else in the city's history.

During the first half of his career, Howe's campaign slogan was "Keep a strong voice in city government." On that note, he never let his constituents down. While his critics—not coincidentally the targets of his pointed questions and critical comments—called him an obstructionist, the voters saw it differently, re-electing him repeatedly by comfortable margins. The time of Howe's fiercest political battles was also the time of his greatest electoral success, topping the ticket on four occasions.

Finishing first once again in the 1987 elections, Howe was unanimously elected mayor in January 1988. In a January 9, 1988 Sun article entitled "Richard Howe: From political outcast to elder statesman" Terry Williams called the veteran councilor's election as mayor "perhaps the most remarkable turn-about in recent Lowell history." Williams, however, ended with a question:

But will Howe, who made a career as a critic, be "comfortable" in his new role? And more importantly, will he be as effective as a leader as he was a dissident? The answer is critical to Lowell's future.

Events of the past 17 years have answered that question in the affirmative.

The first test of Howe's leadership abilities came within days, when the new mayor attended a hearing in the United States District Court in Boston. Judge Robert Keeton was about to place the city's schools under Federal control in response to a suit brought by the parents of minority students who alleged segregation and unequal treatment in Lowell's schools. Acceding to Howe's plea that, having just taken office, he needed some time to address the problem, the judge delayed the takeover. After numerous meetings, a city team led by Howe negotiated a settlement of the suit that prevented the Federal takeover. As a result of this desegregation settlement the city was able to secure funding for 10 new schools, making the physical plant of its school system the envy of every community in the State.

The city council ratified Howe's leadership by again electing him mayor in 1990, the first time in Lowell's history that a mayor served consecutive terms.

School desegregation was not the only problem that made this period a turbulent one. The influx of 30,000 Southeast Asian immigrants strained the city's resources to the breaking point. During this period, Howe made

frequent trips to Washington where he persuaded Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY to secure additional funds for the city to ease the strain. More importantly, Howe's principled and practical approach to Lowell's newest immigrants set the example for the rest of the city. The relatively smooth and rapid integration of an enormous population of new comers into Lowell's fabric is a remarkable and under appreciated story.

Economic difficulty returned, however. Banks were seized by the FDIC, foreclosures abounded, and Wang filed for bankruptcy. City government faced a \$14 million deficit. The city council of 1992-93 seemed powerless—or unwilling—to respond. That all changed with the election of November 1993 when the voters elected 6 new city councilors. They, in turn, elected Richard Howe mayor.

Mayor Howe played a major role in putting together the city council votes necessary to construct the Paul E. Tsongas Arena and Edward LeLacheur Field. No one played a greater role in securing an arena for Lowell than Paul Tsongas. But Tsongas, whose first vote on the Lowell City Council in January 1970 was to elect Richard Howe mayor, realized that unless you get a majority vote of the city council, no project would succeed. He also realized that Richard Howe, through the strength of his personality and the wisdom of his experience, had an unsurpassed ability to put those votes together.

While votes on the arena and baseball park are better known, Howe's leadership proved critical to the success of two other and equally important projects during this term. The city and the region were shocked when the Wang Towers were sold at auction for only \$525,000. Renaming the complex Cross Point, the new owners needed the city's help—in the form of a \$4 million letter of credit—to land Nynex as its anchor tenant. Viewed in light of Cross Point's subsequent sale in 1998 for \$110 million, the vote on the letter of credit could be viewed as a "no brainer." Nothing could be farther from the truth, however, because the vote to extend the letter of credit faced substantial opposition and succeeded only because of Howe's decisive leadership on the floor of the city council.

This scenario was replayed with the Bon Marche renovations. That building, long the anchor of downtown, had stood vacant and decaying for years until two local residents proposed its redevelopment. The finances would not work without city government providing a major tenant. In spite of strong opposition by some members of the school committee, Howe persuaded a majority of that board to lease two floors of the building for the school department headquarters, and convinced the city council to pay a portion of the rent. Bon Marche was a success, winning an award for historic preservation; it has resumed its former prominence in downtown Lowell.

In Lowell, during the past 40 years, Richard P. Howe has been a strong and independent voice in city government. Cross Point, the Bon Marche building, the Tsongas Arena, LeLacheur Field, and 10 new schools are monuments to his leadership.