

staff to help lead the Committee's investigation into the autism epidemic sweeping our country. As a valued legal advisor/investigator for the Committee, Liz helped us to elevate the level of public debate about this disease, as well as educate policymakers at all levels of government about the evolving science concerning the toxic effects of thimerosal—a mercury-based preservative commonly used in vaccines.

Like many of us who have been involved in this debate over the years, when Liz first heard about the connection between autism and thimerosal, she was skeptical. But she read everything she could find, requested government documents and studies, and in the end became convinced that thimerosal was in fact the cause of her son Matthew's autism. Armed with this knowledge, Liz helped to co-write the groundbreaking congressional staff report, "Mercury in Medicine—Taking Unnecessary Risks," published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in 2003, which challenged the conventional thinking of the Federal Government, the public health systems, the medical communities, and the pharmaceutical companies on the subject of thimerosal and autism-spectrum disorders.

In addition to her government service, Liz served the autism community through her leadership in many nonprofit organizations. As the co-founder of the "Coalition for SafeMinds" (Sensible Action for Ending Mercury-induced Neurological Disorders), founder of Medical Interventions for Autism, founding board member of the National Autism Association, and co-creator of the Extreme Sports Camp in Aspen, Colorado, Liz brought joy, hope, and inspiration to many autistic children and their parents. In addition, Liz was one of the founding members of the autism community's first political action organization, A-CHAMP (Advocates for Children's Health Affected by Mercury Poisoning). Liz was especially proud of this venture; and in a short period of time A-CHAMP has become one of the driving forces behind the growing and highly successful movement to ban mercury at the State level.

I believe, as Liz did, that strong evidence points to the mercury unnecessarily used in vaccines as part of the autism problem, and that thimerosal played a key role in my grandson developing autism. The science is undeniable: mercury is a base element—and it remains a base element even when mixed with other materials—and the most toxic substance known to man outside of radioactive materials.

The fact is that no one has ever identified a positive health benefit to mercury in the human body, and as more science accumulates and more people learn about the dangers of mercury, more time runs out for those who continue to advocate that mercury in vaccines and other medical devices is safe. Eventually, even they will have to admit that it flies in the face of logic to suggest, much less believe, that a substance so dangerously toxic outside the body is harmless once injected into the human body.

Until that day comes, I know that I, and others like Liz who believe as I do, will not be silent about this issue or give up in our fight to make our world a safer and healthier place. And when that day does come, we will all owe a debt of gratitude to Liz Birt for leading the way and becoming a leader in a fight she would rather not have been fighting.

Liz will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved her. I respectfully ask my colleagues to join me in sending their deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers to Liz's family. May God bless them.

HONORING DAVE WOOD, E. FLOYD FORBES AWARD RECIPIENT

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 15, 2006*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Mr. Dave Wood for his achievement in receiving the distinguished E. Floyd Forbes Award. This prestigious tribute is awarded to those who have proven exemplary service to the National Meat Association (NMA) and the meat and poultry industry.

Mr. Wood currently serves as the chairman of the Beef Division for Harris Ranch, Inc., a notable company who praises and recognizes his service, dedication and loyalty.

Upon graduation from California State University Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in 1970, Mr. Wood relocated to the San Joaquin Valley and accepted a position with Harris Ranch, Inc. With the inception of his career, Mr. Wood embarked on a campaign to expand the company's feeding division, successfully doubling cattle productivity. Mr. Wood's unwavering demeanor and strong work ethic led him to assume more responsibilities within the company; opening the floodgates for his ingenious creativity to take form. Mr. Wood's contributions to Harris Ranch, Inc., include the establishment of the Partnership for Quality (PQ) program—a marketing technique that increased Harris Ranch, Inc.'s reputation by providing consumers with consistent, high quality beef. He also developed a line of fully-cooked premium heat and serve entrees as well as a number of fresh seasoned products to meet diversified consumer demand.

Mr. Wood's expertise goes beyond his role at Harris Ranch, Inc., with the ownership and management of Dave Wood Ranches and Wood Livestock, a cow-calf operation that is part of the Harris Ranch Partnership for Quality program. He is also co-owner of the historic Dressler Ranch near Bridgeport, California, a cattle and stocker cattle operation and he serves as a partner in Wood & Devine Cattle Co., Devine & Wood Farming, Inc., and Double D Farms.

In addition to those commitments, Mr. Wood has assumed leadership roles in several industry organizations including a member of the board of directors of Cattle-Fax, chairman of the Beef Committee and chairman of the National Meat Association's predecessor, the Western States Meat Association. He has sought other leadership opportunities including, serving as: Chairman of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, chairman of the California Beef Council, executive committees of the California Cattleman Association and United States Export Federation.

Mr. Wood's legacy of good stewardship and constant regard for upholding the industry's high standards has led him to receive several awards that recognize those efforts, including the Cattle Business of the Century Award from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association En-

vironmental Stewardship Award. Mr. Wood was also the recipient of the 2003 Vision Award from the National Cattlemen's Foundation, a prestigious award given to individuals whose creativity and imagination inspire others and improve the world around them.

On a personal level, he is a caring and loving father of David, who works with his father on the cattle ranch and is his pride and joy. Dave Wood is a gentleman who cares about his Country, his work and most importantly the friendships of life. Every day he tries to make a difference.

It is with great pride and honor that I join Mr. Wood's family, friends and colleagues in commending his hard work and applaud his recognition as the recipient of the E. Floyd Forbes Award. Mr. Wood's passion and commitment make him a most deserving recipient of this award and a true pillar of this industry.

HONORING AXEL CARL HANSEN, M.D., DHL

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 15, 2006*

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, to be young, gifted, and Black during the first quarter of the 20th century presented unique and overwhelming challenges that not many African Americans could transcend. Among those who did was the distinguished physician, Dr. Axel Carl Hansen.

He has been a recognized researcher, scholar and expert in the field of ophthalmology for over 50 years. The combination of his unique commitment to human egalitarianism and equal educational opportunities for African Americans interested in ophthalmology has been a perennial beacon of light to those entering and those within the profession.

Dr. Hansen was born in my district, on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, on March 4, 1919, and received his elementary education in the private schools of the island. His college-preparatory training was obtained at the Charlotte Amalie High School in St. Thomas, from where he graduated in June 1937. His leadership and scholastic skill were evident early in life. In his senior year in high school, he was president of his class, editor of the school's weekly newspaper, *The Reflector*, and editor of his class yearbook, *The Last Carib*. A member of the Quill and Scroll Journalist Society, he received the national society's "honorable mention" for a news article he wrote and published in *The Reflector* and won first prize from the Virgin Islands Daily News for an essay, "Nature's Masterpiece", which appeared in the initial issue of *The Virgin Islands Magazine*. He was one of two members of his graduating class to receive the honor society's Forum Award for outstanding accomplishments.

In the fall of 1937, Axel Hansen left the Virgin Islands to attend Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he graduated with a baccalaureate degree. He received his M.D. degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville in March 1944 and pursued internship and 1 year residency at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis in ophthalmology and otolaryngology.