

REMEMBERING KENT SILLS

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2006

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, all of Mississippi recently lost a musical legacy who impacted thousands of high school and college students over a 40-year career in education. Dr. Kent Sills—"Doc"—passed away on May 3 in Starkville, Mississippi. His obituary in the Starkville Daily News recounts his achievements:

Dr. Sills began his teaching career as band director at Lumberton High School in 1956 before accepting a similar position at Clarksdale High School in 1961. He joined the faculty at Mississippi State University in 1967 as assistant director of bands and in 1983 was appointed as only the sixth director in the band's 100-year storied history. He served as director of bands and professor of music education at Mississippi State until his retirement in 1999.

While at Mississippi State, he founded the MSU Stage Band (1967), established the MSU Jazz Band Festival, the MSU Junior High Band Festival, and directed the "Famous Maroon Band" at MSU football and basketball games.

Dr. Sills also served as the manager and director of the Mississippi Lions All-State High School Band from 1983 until 1997. Under his leadership the Lions Band won seven international championships and never finished lower than second place in any competition, performing in Asia, Australia and across North America.

A graduate of Kosciusko High School, Dr. Sills held a bachelor of music education degree (1956) and master of education degree (1959) from the University of Southern Mississippi. He also held a master of music degree (1967) and doctor of arts degree (1977) from the University of Mississippi.

In 1996, he was awarded as "Outstanding Contributor to Bands to the State of Mississippi" by Phi Beta Mu, and in 2000 was selected for the Mississippi Bandmasters Hall of Fame.

From 1954 through 1960, Dr. Sills traveled throughout the country performing with his popular swing band "Kent Sills and His Southernaires." He also was a veteran of the U.S. Army and performed with the U.S. Army Reserve Band. Throughout his career, he served as an adjudicator and conductor at numerous band festivals and clinics.

The Daily News' editor Brian Hawkins shared some of his personal experiences with Doc.

If you ask any band alumnus to share memories of Doc, the floodgates open. There are just THAT many stories to share, and so many of them leave us in stitches every time.

In fact, one year in the early 1990s, a T-shirt with a top 10 list of "Doc-isms" was developed by some individual members and was sold to many in the band. Here are just a few:

"It's not ya-ya time"—This meant that we needed to quit messing around and get down to business in rehearsal.

"You know, somebody somewhere loves that child"—This was heard frequently when Doc had to correct someone individually in rehearsal. It often broke any tension that may have arisen from the mistake.

"Don't be dumb, cause when you're dumb, you're showing me, the band and the whole world that you just don't care"—In other words, get your head in the game and pay attention to what you're doing.

"You play when we all play"—This was meant to discourage any showboating or individual playing when the full band or a designated section was not playing.

There are countless "Doc-isms," some a bit more colorful than others.

One thing was certain, though, Doc had a wicked sense of humor. Not a rehearsal went by where the entire band didn't have at least one good laugh.

But that was Doc. He loved life, he loved music and he loved his students.

Hawkins continued:

I know without a doubt that God has a special place for him in heaven and that he's already there as I write this.

Even now, I can imagine the majestic music of the hosts on high filling the expanse anew under the baton of heaven's newest bandleader. And what glorious music it is.

Mr. Speaker, so many prayers are with Kent's family: his wife, Nora; his son Allen; and his grandchildren Hannah and Tyler. Their family is a pillar of the Starkville community where Nora is the organist at their church. Dr. Kent Sills is a music icon in Mississippi, at Mississippi State University, and in Starkville. I hope Congress joins me today in saluting and remembering this amazing and talented life and person.

IN TRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF ANA PEIERA

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 10, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of the life and work of Ana Peiera. Ana Peiera championed the cause of the poor and disadvantaged of New York City. She courageously led the cause of housing for the neediest and most vulnerable and dedicated her life to virtues that are admirable and noble. She certainly exemplified Jesus' admonition stated in Matthew 25:40 to devote one's life to serve "the least of these." She indeed has left an indelible print on the landscape of New York City.

Her advocacy work led her to found the Heritage Health & Housing and Community Services organization which serviced many of New York City's poor. She was loved in a variety of circles, especially within social action and social service professional networks. Jorge Abreui, the acting executive director of the Heritage Health & Housing, stated "She was a multifaceted social worker, who greatly influenced the construction of a safety net to care for this City's neediest—especially in the Harlem, Washington Heights and South Bronx districts of New York."

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for all of the hard work Ana engaged in during her life in my Congressional district. However, her legacy stretches beyond borders to the hearts of those persons who need homes and who are challenged by the likes of poverty, mental illness, Aids and drug addiction. Ana became a voice for the voiceless in New York City; those who live at the margins of society had a platform through Ana to voice their needs.

She implemented and fought for comprehensive programs to adequately address the needs of the underserved. She was never known to dodge even the most difficult cases

and prided in the opportunity to conquer the giants of poverty and homelessness. She believed that her life could reach even the most destitute who found themselves in the grips of calamity and deprivation. Through 24-hour/7 days a week comprehensive programs she managed to wrestle those individuals away from the strong grips of poverty and lack.

Before starting Heritage Housing she worked in New York City Housing authority. From 1972 to 1978 she was the District Supervisor for Community Services. From 1969 to 1972, she was Director of the Senior Advocacy Services in the Bronx. She provided leadership in a host of other capacities that all centered on addressing the needs of the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article titled, "Memorial Tribute to Ana Peiera" featured in CARIBNEWS on May 2, 2006, highlighting the achievements of Ana Peiera.

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO ANA PEREIRA

TIRELESS FOUNDER DEDICATED LIFE WORK TO
NEW YORK CITY'S NEEDIEST

On Thursday, April 27, 2006, elected officials; health, housing and social service professionals; family and friends will join Heritage Health and Housing to celebrate the life of one of its founders, Ana Pereira. The former Executive Director, who championed housing for New York City's neediest, will be memorialized at a special ceremony at Aaron Davis Hall from 4 p.m.-6 p.m. The ceremony, hosted by WHCR-FM radio personality, Jeanne Parnell Habersham, will conclude with a special reception.

"Ana Pereira was a beloved figure in New York City's social action circles", stated Jorge Abreui, Heritage Health & Housing acting Executive Director. "She was a multifaceted social worker, who greatly influenced the construction of a safety net to care for this City's neediest—especially in the Harlem, Washington Heights and South Bronx districts of New York. Her legacy lies in the care of persons who needed homes, and suffered from mental illness, addiction, AIDS, poverty, and the accompanying deprivation typically evident in the lives of many of her consumers of service. I knew her for 21 years, and worked with her for 18 of those years, crafting programs, fighting for, and winning services for the underserved."

Under Ms. Pereira's supervision, Heritage Housing and Community Services developed a reputation as an agency willing to take on the most difficult cases and help individuals transform their lives through programs providing a full continuum of care, from 24-hour/7-days-a-week supervision to semi-independent living. Working with the mentally ill, substance abusers, individuals with HIV/AIDS, the homeless and ex-offenders, the Agency, through Ms. Pereira's strong, personal leadership, helped its clients achieve independence and become contributing members of their communities.

Prior to starting Heritage Housing and Community Services, Ms. Pereira worked in various capacities for the New York City Housing Authority.

From 1972 to 1978, she was a District Supervisor for Community Services and managed a District office responsible for community services in 35 different housing developments. At the time, she was responsible for agency budgets totaling \$25 million. From 1969 to 1972, she was Director of the Senior Advocacy Services in the Bronx, responsible for training and supervising case workers who provided services for homebound elderly.

In effort to keep her legacy alive, the Board of Directors and staff of Heritage