

ranks. Beginning in 1977, when he became executive director of the NAACP, he began issuing formal opinions on topics as diverse as the lack of Black executives in Hollywood, the role of the Black middle class on the improvement of life in the low-income areas, and the 1991 nomination and confirmation of Judge Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Benjamin L. Hooks was born in Memphis, TN in 1925, the fifth of seven children of Robert B. and Bessie Hooks. Although his family was comfortable by so-called Black standards, Hooks would recall wearing hand-me-down clothes and watching his mother stretch the groceries so everyone had enough to eat. Hooks's parents were both hard-working Americans, and his grandmother was the second Black woman in the United States to graduate from college—Berea College in Kentucky.

During the Second World War, Benjamin L. Hooks found himself in the humiliating position of guarding Italian prisoners of war who were allowed to eat in restaurants that were off limits to him because he was not White. The experience helped to deepen his resolve to fight against all forms of discrimination in the United States. After his wartime service—he was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant—he would later head north to Chicago to study law at DePaul University. Even after putting his life on the line for his country, no law school in his native Tennessee would admit him simply because he was not White.

Hooks earned his J.D. degree in 1948 and promptly returned to Memphis, vowing to help break down segregation. He passed the Tennessee Bar examination and opened up his own law practice, confronting prejudice at every turn. By the late 1960s Hooks worked as a judge, a businessman, a lawyer, and a minister. Twice a month he flew to Detroit and preached at the Greater New Mount Moriah Baptist Church. Always dedicated to the civil rights struggle, he constantly made himself available to the NAACP as needed for civil rights protests and marches.

On November 6, 1976, the 64-member board of directors of the NAACP elected Hooks executive director of the prominent civil rights organization. Dr. Hooks and his wife handled the NAACP's business and helped to plan for its future for more than 15 years. He told the *New York Times* that a "sense of duty and responsibility" to the NAACP compelled him to stay in office through the 1990s. In February of 1992, at the age of 67, he announced his resignation from the post after many years of faithful and dedicated service. The service of this great leader will never go forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor the life, legacy, and leadership of Benjamin L. Hooks.

HONORING JEANNE SANITATE ON
HER ACHIEVEMENTS AT THE
VETERANS ANNUAL WHEEL-
CHAIR GAMES

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jeanne Sanitate, a disabled Air Force

veteran from Medford, New Jersey on her three gold medals and one bronze medal in the 26th Annual Veterans Wheelchair Games in Alaska.

The 26th Annual Wheelchair Games took place July 3–8, 2006 and is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. This event is committed to improving the quality of life for veterans with disabilities and fostering better health through sports competition. Jeanne Sanitate joined more than 500 people, both novices and experienced athletes, for a week of competition in more than 15 events. Jeanne Sanitate won her gold medals in bowling, Air-Gun Para, and table tennis. She also collected a bronze in softball. This was her first time competing in the games, and she competed as a Class IV in the novice division.

Mr. Speaker, I celebrate the accomplishments of Jeanne Sanitate at the 26th Annual Veterans Wheelchair Games. I applaud her past service to this country as a veteran and her remarkable athletic abilities and personal achievements.

RECOGNIZING SEAN ALEXANDER
BURNS-SPRUNG FOR ACHIEVING
THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Sean Alexander Burns-Sprung a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Sean has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Sean has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Sean Alexander Burns-Sprung for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CARIBBEAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE
MONTH

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Caribbean American community in honor of the first-ever National Caribbean American Heritage Month.

On June 27, 2005, the House unanimously adopted H. Con. Res. 71, my resolution to declare June National Caribbean American Heritage Month. On February 14, 2006, the Senate followed suit, thanks to the work of Senator SCHUMER of New York and Arielle Goren on his staff.

And let me begin by recognizing the many people who helped realize this 2-year bipartisan, bicameral effort, because this was quite

a feat. First, I want to recognize our colleague, a great leader on so many issues and especially on health care, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the Caribbean, who has been tremendous in terms of bringing us together to address the issues of health disparities throughout our country and throughout the world.

Also, I would like to thank the Institute of Caribbean Studies, especially Dr. Claire Nelson and her team, for joining us in this effort from the very beginning.

And we must recognize our friends from the Caribbean diplomatic corps, who worked so hard to spread the word about this effort both at home in the Caribbean and in their embassies and consulates across the country.

There are many Members of Congress who supported this effort. In addition to early support from my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and Friends of the Caribbean Task Force, the former chair of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Representative Cass Ballenger, was the first Republican to endorse this bill, and his successor, Chairman DAN BURTON, was one of the first to help urge the President to issue an official proclamation.

This was truly a bipartisan effort, with, of course, our chairman Mr. HYDE of the International Relations Committee and our ranking member Mr. LANTOS, who lent their very strong support.

And, of course, we never would have done any of this without our staff. First, let me commend and thank my staff person Jamila Thompson for her leadership and for her commitment to not only this issue and this bill, but for so many of the efforts that she mounts. She has roots in the Bahamas, and she understands the importance of recognizing Caribbean Americans and their proper role and proper recognition in our country.

Also, we had many other House staff members—Ted Brennan, Jack Scharfen, Paul Oostburg, Dan Getz, Mark Walker, and Michael Layman—who worked in a bipartisan way to make this a reality and really to realize this dream for many, many people.

The Government Reform Committee, Chairman TOM DAVIS, and our Ranking Member HENRY WAXMAN applauded the passage of this resolution last year and were instrumental in its passage.

And, of course, in the final weeks before the proclamation was issued by the White House, a coalition was formed that was very instrumental in urging the White House to officially declare June National Caribbean-American Heritage Month. This coalition included Senator MEL MARTINEZ from Florida, Ambassador Tom Shannon, State Department's Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, and Brian Nichols of his staff.

And the Caribbean American community was very active around this effort. It could not have been done without them. From Glenn Joseph and John Felix in Florida; to Jean Alexander, Horace Morancie, and Anthony Carter in New York; to Shorron Levy in California and so many others across the country, this became, quite frankly, an international grassroots effort.

So I am pleased that on June 5, the President responded by officially declaring June National Caribbean American Heritage Month.

We have some phenomenal spokespersons Sheryl Lee Ralph and basketball legend Rick Fox, who are traveling throughout the country.