John Jordan ''Buck'' O'Neil was born the grandson of slaves in Carrabelle, Florida, on November 13, 1911. He acquired his love for baseball at a young age from his father, who played for the local team when he wasn't working as a foreman in the celery fields. As a teenager, Buck realized that he wanted to do something more with his life, but times were difficult throughout the country during the Great Depression, and he had received little formal education because the local high school was segregated.

When his father told him that, ''There is something better, but you can't get it here, you're gonna have to go someplace else,'' Buck made the decision to try his luck as a baseball player in the semi-professional barnstorming leagues that traveled the entire country. It didn't take him long to attract the attention of the Memphis Red Sox of the Negro American League, who signed him to his first professional contract in 1937. After a year of playing for the Red Sox, Mr. O'Neil's contract was purchased by the Kansas City Monarchs—the team with which he would spend the rest of his playing career.

The Monarchs were the most successful team in the history of the Negro Leagues, winning the most titles and producing the best players. While playing for Kansas City, Mr. O'Neil won batting titles in 1940 and 1946 and led his team to a convincing victory in the 1942 Negro World Series. He batted .353 as the Monarchs swept the Homestead Grays, 4–0. He was also selected to play in three Negro American League All-Star Games, and would likely have accomplished more during his playing career had it not been for World War II; Mr. O'Neil dutifully served his country for 2 years by completing a tour in the United States Navy from 1943–1945.

Buck stayed with the Monarchs through the end of the 1955 season, serving both as a player and as the team's manager for the final 8 years of his time in Kansas City, all the while facing the harshness of separation and discrimination in a country that was still segregated. Thanks in part to the significant accomplishments of his Monarchs teammate Jackie Robinson, who broke down racial barriers by joining the Brooklyn Dodgers of Major League Baseball in 1947, Buck too was able to join a rapidly-integrating MLB as a scout for the Chicago Cubs. In 1962, he became the first African American coach in the Majors. During his storied career with the Cubs, Mr. O'Neil was responsible for the development of many great major leaguers, like Joe Carter, and he also signed two future Hall of Fame players—Lou Brock and Ernie Banks. After 33 years with the Cubs, Buck returned home in 1988 to scout for the Kansas City Royals.

Despite his myriad accomplishments on the field as a player, manager, and coach, it is Buck O'Neil's accomplishments off the field that demonstrate his love for the game of baseball and his commitment to the essential role that the Negro Leagues played in the integration of both American sport and American society. In 1990, O'Neil was a leader in the effort to create the Negro League Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. The Museum, located in the historic 18th and Vine district of downtown Kansas City, has excelled for nearly a decade in its mission of educating all Americans about the rich and important history of the Negro Leagues. Buck served as the Board Chairman for the Museum and actively promoted its messages of understanding and triumph over adversity. In addition to his work with the Museum, Mr. O'Neil served as a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame Veterans Committee from 1981–2000, working hard to ensure that many of the Negro League players who had been denied entrance into the Major Leagues because of segregation were able to gain a deserved entrance into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

After devoting so many years of his life to promoting the accomplishments of others, many believed that the time for Buck's recognition had finally arrived in the spring of 2006, when he was on a special ballot for entry into the Hall of Fame. Shockingly, the Committee chose not to induct Mr. O'Neil, to the dismay of many—but not Buck. Unaffected by the Hall's decision, he took the high road and offered to speak at the induction ceremony on behalf of those selected, because many of them had passed on. On June 30, 2006, Buck selflessly honored all 17 individuals related to the Negro Leagues who were inducted, giving an inspiring speech and instructing all audience members to hold hands and join him in song. The ovation he received was the loudest and longest of the ceremony.

At the time of his death, Buck O'Neil's efforts were focused on the John ''Buck'' O'Neil Education and Research Center. Scheduled for completion in late 2007, the Center will be an expansion of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum devoted to teaching people of all ages many different aspects of the Negro leagues and baseball. The 45,000 square foot facility will house extensive archives and promises to devote much of its space and funding to state-of-the-art technology and programs that will teach many different things to many different people.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to honor the life of Buck O'Neil, because of his accomplishments while playing and managing in the Negro and Major Leagues, because of his work with the Negro League Baseball Museum, because of his devotion to those who shared in his struggle, valuing their legacies more than his own, and most of all, because of his immense contributions to the game of baseball and American society. When acclaimed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns made his film Baseball in 1994, he chose Buck O'Neil as the narrator, because no other individual better captures the history and legacy of our American pastime. He was truly the game's ambassador, and his spirit will be sorely missed.

A TRIBUTE TO PAUL DE LA GARZA

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Paul de la Garza, a hard charging newspaper reporter for The St. Petersburg Times with a generous heart of gold who died on October 29, 2006.

Many of our colleagues worked with Paul as he reported on stories affecting our national security and the health care of our country's veterans. Paul was an outstanding investigative reporter who mined his many sources to effect necessary changes in the way in which we deliver medical care at our Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers. He also spent time earlier this summer in Iraq as he did extensive reporting on the war there and the role U.S. Central Command plays in managing our troops on the ground.

Paul was more than a reporter though. He was first and foremost an outstanding husband to his wife Georgia and a loving father to his two children Monica, 12, and Carlos, 11, both of whom he adopted from Mexico.

His is the story of the American dream, growing up poor in a small Texas town. He worked 40 hour weeks as a fourth grader to help out his family. Later he delivered newspapers and waited tables to put himself through college at the University of Texas. He was a reporter with the Associated Press and Chicago Tribune before becoming a regular on the front pages of The St. Petersburg Times as a reporter in the Washington and Tampa bureaus.

Following my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to include tributes to Paul from The St. Petersburg Times, The Tampa Tribune and The Chicago Tribune. They speak to Paul's success as a reporter but more importantly his compassion and love for his family, his friends, and for those most in need of help.

Mr. Speaker, I knew Paul de la Garza as a reporter, but I will forever miss him as a very special friend who always kept life's priorities in order. My prayers go out to Paul's family, especially to Georgia, Monica and Carlos, as they deal with the loss of a great man, a great husband and a great father.

[From the St. Petersburg Times, Oct. 30, 2006]

PASSIONATE REPORTER ''NEVER MET A STRANGER''

Paul de la Garza, a hard-driving St. Petersburg Times reporter whose passion for the big story was matched by love of family, died Sunday (Oct. 29, 2006) after an apparent heart attack.

Mr. de la Garza, 44, who had survived a heart attack 2 years ago, collapsed at his Davis Islands home about 10 a.m. after complaining of chest pains. He was taken by ambulance to Tampa General Hospital, where he died about 1 p.m.

As a journalist, Mr. de la Garza was widely respected for mining sources and breaking big stories, most recently about VA hospitals and the Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base.

''He was a driving investigative reporter. This is very shocking,'' said U.S. Rep. C.W. Bill Young, a frequent source for Mr. de la Garza, sometimes dinner companion and occasional target. ''He was very respected by the folks I know. They trusted him.''

Young's wife, Beverly, recalled tears running down de la Garza's face, as she led him through VA wards full of wounded soldiers.

''Paul is really compassionate. He really cares,'' she said Sunday. ''He's the most wonderful Democrat I ever knew. I can't believe this has happened to him and Georgia and the kids. This is wrong.''

TEXAS UPBRINGING

Mr. de la Garza was born in Port Isabel, Texas, near Brownsville, one of six children.

His father was a shrimper and his heritage was Mexican, though he sometimes pointed out that some ancestors lived in Texas before the United States annexed it. His given name was Jesus Pablo, but friends called him Jesus only when they wanted to annoy him.

By fourth grade, he was working 40 hours a week, collecting bait for fishermen, his wife, Georgia, said.

He waited tables and worked at the school newspaper to earn his way through the University of Texas. Then he worked his way up the ranks of the Associated Press, with stints in Chicago, Southern Illinois and Newark, N.J.

Mike Konrad, now Hernando Times editor, was managing editor of the Southern Illinoisan, in Carbondale, when Mr. de la Garza was posted there for the AP.

''This was a guy who could work sources like nobody I've ever seen in my life,'' Konrad recalled. ''Within weeks of getting there, he was getting stories our reporters were missing, just because he had met so many people. And there was nobody in the world who would not talk to Paul.''

Sometimes, boldness and charm was all it took. As the Chicago Tribune's Mexico City bureau chief, Mr. de la Garza interviewed Latin American presidents and rebel leaders alike. On assignment in Cuba, he ran into Milton Berle and asked him for a cigar-smoking lesson.

''I still have the cigar box that Milton Berle signed for him,'' said Georgia de la Garza. ''They smoked Cohibas together.''

Once, when Mr. de la Garza was vacationing in New Orleans, a limousine driver pointed out Fats Domino's house. Mr. de la Garza jumped out with a video camera and talked his way in, where Domino's band was practicing for a Jazz Fest performance. Fats, himself, stayed in back of the house.

''Paul never met a stranger,'' recalled Times colleague Tom Scherberger, who witnessed the scene. ''He introduces himself and we are hanging out with Fats Domino's band. Finally, one of the band politely says that Fats won't come out until we leave. Only later, did we discover that Paul had pushed the button wrong on the camera and we never got any video.''

Mr. de la Garza first worked at the Times from 1992 through 1994, where he covered Tampa police news, wrote a column, and helped edit the Tampa section.

Then he worked for the Chicago Tribune for six years, both in Mexico City and in Chicago, where he was a reporter and assignments editor.

He returned to the Times in 2000, in part, because he and his wife wanted a more stable environment for two orphans they had adopted in Mexico City—Monica, now 12, and Carlos, 11.

''The two things he cared the most about were his family and his work,'' said John Dunn, longtime friend and Tampa General spokesman. ''Just about every conversation we had sitting over pints were about Georgia and the kids.

''No matter how bad a day he had, that put him in good spirits.''

It wasn't just the children. The de la Garza house often was opened to extended family. When Georgia's brother died, they took in her niece. When Paul's father had a stroke, they took in his parents.

During his second stint at the Times, Mr. de la Garza covered the Pentagon, the military and veterans affairs. Last summer, he wrote a detailed, insider's look at Army Gen. John Abizaid, head of U.S. Central Command, as he toured Afghanistan and Iraq.

''This is a heartbreaking loss. He really went after stories because they would make a difference in the lives of goodhearted folks,'' said Paul Tash, Times editor, chairman and CEO. ''He had so much to offer both as a father and husband and also as a reporter.''

CANCER SURVIVOR

In 2001, Mr. de la Garza was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease and underwent extensive cancer treatments. After 2 years with no recurrence, he and his wife rented a B&B in his beloved New Orleans and celebrated with about 40 friends from around the country. One photograph shows him in a colorful hat, a Jazz Fest scarf around his neck and sunglasses.

''Paul the journalist was very different than Paul, the regular guy,'' recalled Sandra Gadsden, the Neighborhood Times editor.

''The journalist was a stickler for detail. He would hang on every sentence. Paul the man was just a fun-loving laid-back guy.''

Mr. de la Garza is survived by his wife; daughter Monica and son Carlos: mother, Jesusa de la Garza and sister Via Camacho, both of Austin, Texas, and brothers Eduardo of Houston and Alberto of Galveston, Texas.

Funeral services have not been set.

[From the Tampa Tribune, Oct. 30, 2006]

TIMES' MILITARY REPORTER DIES

(By Mark Holan)

TAMPA.—Paul de la Garza, military and veterans affairs reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, died Sunday of an apparent heart attack. He was 44.

A cancer survivor, de la Garza was described by his friend and editor, Pat Farnan, as a strong reporter who enjoyed spending time with his family.

He is survived by his wife, Georgia, and two children, Carlos and Monica.

For a September profile of Army Gen. John Abizaid, de la Garza spent five days traveling in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq.

''Paul was definitely among the more assertive, if not industrious, journalists who had the military beat,'' said Lt. Col. Mike Escudie, media affairs officer for Central Command. He said the Abizaid profile got good reviews from the military.

''It was a testament to his professionalism,'' Escudie said.

''He had tremendous passion for his work,'' said Farnan, the Times' interim metro editor who supervised de la Garza in recent years.

De la Garza joined the Times' Tampa bureau in 1992 after eight years of reporting for The Associated Press. He left to work as a Mexico City correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, then rejoined the Times in August 2000 in Washington, DC, as the national security and foreign affairs reporter. He later returned to Tampa and lived on Davis Islands.

De la Garza earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas in Austin.

In June 2002, de la Garza was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer. Soon he was physically and mentally worn out by his chemo treatments.

A five-minute meeting at the White House that September with cancer survivor and Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, a fellow Texan, led the reporter to an unexpected inspiration for his recovery.

''I don't have to turn to the rich and famous, to the heroes of the sports world, to get me through the anxiety, the depression, the fear of the what-ifs,'' de la Garza wrote in the Times. ''My heroes are right in front of me, ordinary folks who every day make my life better.''

[From the Chicago Tribune, Oct. 30, 2006]

JOURNALIST KNOWN FOR EMPATHY

(By Flynn McRoberts and Tonya Maxwell)

Paul de la Garza, the son of a shrimper who rose from the poverty of south Texas to become a columnist and foreign correspondent for some of America's top news organizations, died of a heart attack Sunday in his Tampa home.

Mr. de la Garza, 44, drew on his modest circumstances to bring an empathy to his stories for the Chicago Tribune, the St. Petersburg Times of Florida and the Associated Press. Whether it was revealing computer-system fiasco at the Department of Veterans Affairs or chronicling the ragged life of a street vendor on Chicago's West Side, Mr. de la Garza cared intensely about the people he wrote about, said his wife, Georgia.

Mr. de la Garza spent more than two decades in journalism, working as a police reporter, a wire-service editor, a columnist and a foreign correspondent. Most recently, he was a reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, where his stories about the VA's troubled computer system resulted in the massive project being shut down.

''He always wanted to get to the truth. He was very passionate about it,'' his wife said. Of his VA coverage, he had recently told her: ''I know I've made a lot of headway, but there's so much more to do—so much more to do.''

Last month, the St. Petersburg Times published Mr. de la Garza's account of visiting Qatar in July with Army Gen. John P. Abizaid, Commander of U.S. Central Command. Mr. de la Garza had been trying to accompany the general for years, said Mike Konrad, an editor at the St. Petersburg Times and friend since 1986, when the men met as journalists in Carbondale, IL. ''It was one of his coups,'' Konrad said. ''He told me when he came back how the general told his staff to give him access to everything on the trip.''

As a journalist, Mr. de la Garza was a master at cultivating sources and connecting with people, be they office workers, political figures or top generals, Konrad said.

''He'd been writing a lot about problems at the VA, it was so symbolic of the type of work he did. He really believed in the mission of journalism. When he saw wrongs, he really wanted to make them right. He wanted to expose wrongdoing.''

Mr. de la Garza was born in Port Isabel, Texas, where his father was a shrimper and his mother worked as a hotel maid.

He began working in the 4th grade, selling bait to shrimpers along the Gulf of Mexico waters off South Texas. One of six children, Mr. de la Garza, known as Chuy to friends and family, first considered writing as a career in junior high school.

Intending to study political science at the University of Texas at Austin, Mr. de la Garza took a journalism class and loved it. He worked as a reporter and editor at the student paper and then was offered a job in the Chicago bureau of the Associated Press.

''He had a nickel in his pocket when the AP offered him a job,'' his wife said. ''His mom bought him a suit at Sears, and his brother gave him the money to fly to Chicago. When he first got there, he slept on his trench coat until he got his first paycheck. And some colleagues at the bureau gave him furniture.''

Mr. de la Garza met his wife, a chef and artist, while he was working in southern Illinois for the Associated Press. She said she fell in love with him on their first date, Valentine's Day, when he serenaded her at a restaurant. In 1994, Mr. de la Garza came to the Chicago Tribune as a metro reporter, and later became a foreign correspondent in the Mexico City bureau, an assignment he relished, said George de Lama, then the associate managing editor for foreign and national news.

''Paul was someone who was always willing to do any story no matter where it took him. He was one of the first Latinos on our staff to be a foreign correspondent,'' said de Lama, now deputy managing editor, news. ''Paul loved being a foreign correspondent, where the assignment is more of a life than it is a job. I think he was happiest when he was living that life on the road looking for stories.'' While serving as the Tribune's Mexico City bureau chief, Mr. de la Garza and his

wife adopted two children in 2000—Monica, now 12, and Carlos, 11.

He left the Tribune in 2000 and moved to Washington, DC, to return to work for the St. Petersburg Times before moving to the newspaper's Tampa bureau.

A jazz music fan, Mr. de la Garza made an annual pilgrimage to the New Orleans jazz fest with a group of acquaintances. One of those festivals stood out for friends and family: the 2003 version, when loved ones converged from around the country to celebrate Mr. de la Garza's having beaten Hodgkin's lymphoma.

In addition to his wife and children, Mr. de la Garza is survived by his mother, Jesusa, two brothers and a sister. Services are pending.

TRIBUTE TO TANYA RAND

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Tanya Rand, a distinguished citizen of Brooklyn, New York. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding woman and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing her impressive service.

Born to Natalie and Caesar Campbell in Brooklyn, New York, Tanya Rand remains a part of the Clinton Hill community today. Ms. Rand is a product of the New York public school system and currently attends New York Technical College where she is working towards a Bachelor's degree in Technology.

In 1992, Ms. Rand joined the Health and Hospital Corporation as a part-time receptionist/clerk at one of Cumberland Diagnostic and Treatment Center's off sites. While with the Health and Hospital Corporation, Ms. Rand has enjoyed numerous promotions. She has worked in the Cumberland Diagnostic and Treatment Center Chemical Dependency Department, the Office of the Director of Community Affairs, and the North Brooklyn Health Network Community. Ms. Rand's many talents did not go unnoticed. In 2004, Tanya was asked to manage the Community Affairs Office and became the liaison to both the Community Advisory Board and Auxiliary Board for Cumberland Diagnostic and Treatment Center.

Ms. Rand is the proud mother of two children, Lindsey Marie, age 17, and Jassiem Jahi, age 13. Although Ms. Rand was busy with her job and raising two children, she also found time to be active in her children's education and her community. She was PTA President for the District 13 PTA Council and was recognized as a "Parent on the Move". The Board of Education changed and her children moved on to different schools, but Ms. Rand still found time to help parents that were in need of support. She also helps in the political arena. Most Brooklyn elected officials know they can count on Ms. Rand whenever they call on her.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the work of Tanya Rand. Her deep commitment to her family and community makes her most worthy of our recognition today.

TRIBUTE TO HECTOR B. FERNANDEZ

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Hector B. Fernandez, an accomplished professional and model citizen of New York. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding man and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing his impressive service.

Hector B. Fernandez was born in the Dominican Republic to Mercedes and Benjamin Fernandez. At the age of 7, his family immigrated to the United States and settled in the borough of Manhattan, New York. He was reared in a traditional Latino home where hard work and education is valued and rigorously enforced.

Mr. Fernandez received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Metropolitan College of New York and has over 25 years of professional experience with the New York City Health and Hospital Corporation and local not-for-profit organizations. He has dedicated the past 20 years of his life to serving individuals and their families afflicted with the illness of addiction. His strong convictions and compassionate nature serves him well in supporting those individuals that are less fortunate.

As the Addiction Program Administrator for Chemical Dependency Services in the Department of Psychiatry at the North Brooklyn Health Network, Mr. Fernandez is responsible for planning, creating and delivering innovative programs and initiatives. He is driven by the affirmations of the successes and accomplishments of those he serves. One of his strongest attributes is his ability to build and sustain relationships with key stakeholders to increase the quality of services and resources at Woodhull Medical Center. His determination to succeed is supported by his team of staff as they collectively develop ideas and strategies for the clients and the community at large.

Mr. Fernandez is a certified New York State Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor, and he has been recognized for his exemplary work ethic by the North Brooklyn Health Network Department of Social Work. His success is built on a strong family nucleus consisting of his wife Nancy, and three children of whom he is very proud: Jeremy, Natalie and Xavier.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the work of Hector B. Fernandez. His deep commitment to family and community makes him most worthy of our recognition today.

TRIBUTE TO HENRY BOLUS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Henry Bolus, a model citizen of Brooklyn, New York. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding American and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing his impressive service.

Henry Bolus voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. Army, proudly serving our country during the Korean Conflict as a Paratrooper with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. He is a product of the New York City public school system and later enrolled at New York City's Kingsborough Community College for undergraduate studies. His success at Kingsborough Community College earned him Presidential level membership in the National Society of Leadership and Success, Sigma Alpha Phi.

Mr. Bolus recently reached a personal milestone by becoming the president of Brooklyn's renowned Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club. He was also elected delegate to the New York State Judicial Convention. Mr. Bolus is an honorary life member of the Knights of Columbus. He is also an active member of Canarsie's Shrine Church of St. Jude, where he serves as an usher and member of the finance committee.

Mr. Bolus has been the loving husband of Josephine Bolus since 1954 and is the proud father of Sabrina Jo Bolus and Michael Henry Bolus.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the work of Henry Bolus. His deep commitment to his family and community makes him most worthy of our recognition today.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK WILLIAMS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Patricia Williams, a community leader and entrepreneur. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding woman and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing her impressive service.

Born to the Honorable Kathryn Williams and the late James Williams, Patricia Williams credits living and growing up in evolving neighborhoods like Harlem, Bedford Stuyvesant and East New York as an inspiration to work for social and economical change.

Ms. Williams knows hard work is an investment. She currently is the President/CEO of Ecotech Enterprises, Inc., a firm she established to provide consultant services to government agencies, private sector corporations, and small, minority-owned business enterprises. In the past, Ms. Williams provided community outreach and event planning for the Brooklyn Museum of Art Construction Project. She has delivered bottom line services such as marketing and sales to well known small businesses and she provides fundraising and workshop development assistance to several non-profits. Ms. Williams has been called upon as a panelist and guest speaker on numerous occasions and is considered an authority on business development.

Prior to starting her own consulting firm, Ms. Williams was executive Director of the Minority Business Opportunity Center under the U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency where she provided business services to more than 70,000 minority/women-owned and small businesses. As senior Administrator of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity for Morse Diesel International, she successfully implemented policies to ensure 100 million dollars of contracting opportunities for minority-owned and