

TMR, 41 years ago. The organization is a public service speaker series that was created to provide an environment where people who were interested in political and civic issues could discuss their ideas and opinions. Lee's foresight in founding TMR as a forum for thoughtful study and exchange laid the groundwork for other civic involvement initiatives in our community, like FOCUS Greater Syracuse and Syracuse University's Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today, TNT.

Mr. Lee Smith passed on February 6 of this year at the age of 88, and his life will be celebrated at a memorial service on February 18. Lee's commitment and dedication to serving the community and educating others has been, and will continue to be, an important asset to our community. I thank his wife Alice and the entire Smith family for sharing Lee with our community all these years.

FREEDOM FOR RAMÓN
VELÁZQUEZ TORANZO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Ramón Velázquez Toranzo, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Velázquez is a pro-democracy activist and independent journalist for Libertad, a small independent news agency founded by José Luis García Paneque, a political prisoner jailed during the condemnable March 2003 "Black Spring" crackdown. His peaceful activities and truthful articles have helped expose the nightmarish reality that is the Castro regime. Unfortunately, for this very reason he has been targeted by the tyrant's machinery of repression, as part of its effort to silence the brave men and women of Cuba's pro-democracy movement.

On December 10, 2006, International Human Rights Day, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo, began a march for Cuban Dignity in Eastern Cuba at the shrine of Our Lady of Charity, Cuba's patron saint, demanding freedom for all Cuban political prisoners, respect for human rights, and the cessation of repression against peaceful pro-democracy activists. Mr. Velázquez Toranzo, who was marching with his wife, Barbara González Cruz, and his daughter, Rufina Velázquez González, intended to travel 950 kilometers by foot in hope of ending their march for freedom in Havana.

On their journey, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo, his family and other marchers were detained twice in Ciego de Ávila and Camaguey, Cuba, for peacefully advocating for the most basic freedoms for the Cuban people. Despite being detained, nearly being run over twice by State Security Thugs, and knowing full well the brutal consequences that await those who speak the truth under the nightmare that is the Castro tyranny, they continued their peaceful march for human rights and dignity.

On January 23, 2007, 18 days after beginning his peaceful march for dignity, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo and his family were arrested for a third time in the city of Ciego de Ávila. His wife and daughter were released but Mr. Velázquez Toranzo was held at a police station and then transferred to the "El Típico"

provincial prison. And there, after months of harassment by State Security thugs, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo was "sentenced" to suffer 3 years of horror in the squalor of a subhuman gulag for his supposed crime, "anti-social conduct."

Madam Speaker, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo is languishing in an infernal gulag just 90 miles from our shores. It is as inconceivable as it is unacceptable that, while the world stands by in silence and acquiescence, independent journalists who write the truth about totalitarianism are jailed and tortured simply for exposing truth. We must demand immediate freedom for Ramón Velázquez Toranzo and all political prisoners in totalitarian Cuba.

RECOGNIZING REV. RICHARD
DRANKWALTER ON THE OCCA-
SION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Rev. Richard Drankwalter, the outgoing Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Brooksville, Florida. For nearly 37 years, Pastor Drankwalter has served the Lutheran Church with honor and distinction, all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Born on July 4, 1944, in Queens, New York, Pastor Drankwalter has dedicated his life to serving the Church. Earning his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois in 1970, he spent an early part of his career as Pastor of the Peace Lutheran Church in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Pastor Drankwalter then moved on to serve the Church in Illinois and New York, eventually moving to Brooksville, Florida in 1986. Pastor Drankwalter has been a minister at Christ Lutheran in Brooksville for nearly 20 years.

Pastor Drankwalter joined Christ Lutheran following service as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Silver Creek, New York. At the time of his appointment there were 168 members of Christ Lutheran; today there are over 600. A sure sign of his family's commitment to the area, both his wife Paula and his daughter Jennifer have served as teachers in Hernando County. The Pastor himself ran for Hernando County School Board and that is where I first met him.

In addition to this service, Pastor Drankwalter and his wife Paula have been very involved in local church and civic organizations, including the Brooksville Ministerial Association, the Hernando County Youth Association, the Brooksville Kiwanis Club, and served on the Board of Directors of the Committee Against Assaults on Law Enforcement Officers.

For nearly 37 years, Pastor Drankwalter has tended to the needs of his congregation. As a part of his ministry, he has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help families seeking guidance and support. On one occasion the Pastor dropped everything and drove to an area hospital to pray with a family following their father's stroke, even though they were not members of his congregation. His career has been built on working for Christ, not blindly following denominations and labels.

Madam Speaker, Pastor Drankwalter's dedication to the Lord and to the Lutheran Church has served as an inspiration to thousands throughout Hernando County. His ministry has touched the hearts of many, and the Church has continued to grow under his leadership. Pastor Drankwalter is to be commended for his years of service, his commitment to the Lord, and for serving the men and women who rely on his counsel and wisdom. Pastor Drankwalter is a shining example of the good that serving Jesus Christ can bring to our friends and families, and he will be sorely missed by the entire community.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND
IDEALS OF WORLD WATER DAY

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day, along with Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, the Chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee Water Resources and the Environment.

Every 15 seconds, a child dies from lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation. This resolution is intended to help us raise awareness of this leading cause of preventable death.

For the last 15 years, March 22nd has been designated as World Water Day in order to draw attention to the global water crisis and inspire action to alleviate this unnecessary tragedy. While over the past 20 years, two billion people have gained access to safe drinking water, approximately one in six people in the world are still without this most basic building block of life.

Last Congress, the House and Senate both passed the "Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act," which made safe drinking water and sanitation key priorities in U.S. foreign assistance. However, much more needs to be done both at home and abroad to ensure safe, affordable, and sustainable access to water for people everywhere.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this important resolution.

HONORING JOSÉ ARREDONDO

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of José Arredondo. José has served as the Executive Director of the Spanish Speaking Citizen's Foundation (SSCF) in Oakland since 1986. Throughout his career, José has been known for his tireless work on behalf of the Latino community and the community at large. This year José celebrates his retirement after 20 years of unparalleled service to the SSCF, and many more to the entire Bay Area community.

José holds a B.A. in sociology and an M.S. in counseling from California State University,

East Bay. Over the years, José has served the residents of the 9th Congressional District in a number of different roles, and his professional expertise is supplemented by his deep commitment to building and maintaining the spirit of community.

José came to the Spanish Speaking Citizens' Foundation in 1985. Under his leadership, the SSCF evolved into an organization that facilitates inclusiveness by reducing barriers to economic opportunity, healthcare and education for Latinos in our community. José broadened the scope and vision of the SSCF to empower the individual and the community to improve the quality of life, while enriching the cultural heritage of Latinos. By working with other agencies, he has not only expanded the SSCF's network of contacts, but also worked to further the organization's services. José's leadership has been crucial here in Oakland, and has made education, social services and healthcare vastly more available and accessible to all members of our community.

In addition to his stellar work leading the SSCF, José has been and continues to be heavily involved in a number of other boards and organizations here in the Bay Area and elsewhere. He has served the community through his involvement with organizations such as the Oakland Community Organizations (OCO); Educational Coalition of Hispanic Organizations (ECHO); Latinos for Affirmative Action; and the Spanish Speaking Unity Council.

Furthermore, José has been recognized for his exceptional service with numerous awards, such as the Marcus Foster Alumni Award; a Personnel Administration Certificate from California State University, East Bay; and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Professional Community Service Award.

Today the friends, family and colleagues of José Arredondo have come together to celebrate not only his retirement, but also his legacy of service and his permanent and positive impact on our community. On this very special day, I join all of them in thanking and saluting José for his profound contributions to California's 9th Congressional District, our country and our world.

HONORING JEREMY RABINOVITZ

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my California district staff. They would like to honor Jeremy Rabinovitz as he prepares to go to the "dark side."

For the past 10 years Jeremy has led a variety of personalities with a variety of interests. He was able to take a group of passionate, idealistic former volunteers from a Congressional campaign, who in 1996 did what seemed like the impossible, won a Democratic seat in a district that had been held by a Republican for almost 50 years, and turned them into a functioning Congressional district staff.

Not all of the district staff has had the pleasure to be entertained by his top "10 things that a chief of staff doesn't want to hear from his Member of Congress." Not all of the district staff has had the opportunity to experience

one of his occasional visits to the district. Nor has the district staff had the opportunity, during the Special Election, to be serenaded at 5 a.m. on Election Day by his rendition of "Sunrise, Sunset." Neither have very many staff experienced the sight of Jeremy walking a predominately Spanish speaking precinct with a 3 x 5 card that said, "A votado hoy?"

Not only did JR lead a variety of personalities, he was quite adept at impersonating a lot of leaders—religious leaders. He had an uncanny ability to invoke the Lutheran minister, the African American preacher and the Jewish rabbi. Had he stayed around a few more years, he no doubt would have mastered the Muslim imam, or become an enlightened Buddhist. Jeremy has indeed enlightened us in many ways.

There are far too many comments that staff wanted to include in this honorable document. The one sentiment, not to be confused with sediment, both of which this district has much of, was that every district staff member appreciated the confidence he had in them.

Madam Speaker, the time has come for all of us, the Capps Family of the past and present, to send our good wishes and our indescribable affection, for this remarkable man who was our "Chief of Staff." Shalom and mazel tov!

CELEBRATING THE NATURALIZATION OF BERENDINA R.H. (DIET) EMAN

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Ms. Berendina R.H. (Diet) Eman, who this morning became one of the newest citizens of our United States of America.

Ms. Eman is a native of The Netherlands, but has been a lawful, permanent resident of the United States in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for more than 4 decades. Ms. Eman deserves special recognition because during World War II, she was a member of the Dutch Underground Resistance to the Nazi occupiers of The Netherlands. As a young woman, Diet bravely and courageously saved the lives of countless Jewish Dutch citizens, helped numerous Allied soldiers escape from Axis forces and ultimately was imprisoned in the Vught concentration camp for her activities.

For these many acts of bravery, Ms. Eman was recognized immediately after the war by Gen. Dwight David Eisenhower, then the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. She received a certificate signed by General Eisenhower expressing "the gratitude and appreciation of the American people for gallant service in assisting the escape of Allied soldiers from the enemy."

Years later, Diet was recognized by the Government of The Netherlands for her acts and also received a letter of commendation from President Ronald Reagan in 1982. In that letter, President Reagan noted that she "helped write one of the great chapters in the annals of bravery," adding, "In risking your safety to adhere to a higher law of decency and morality, you have set a high and fearless standard for all those who oppose totalitarianism."

She is now nearly 87 years old, and I am humbled by her excitement to become a U.S. Citizen after first coming to our country on December 31, 1960. This morning at 10 a.m., she was sworn in as a citizen by the Hon. Robert Holmes Bell in a private oath ceremony in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Although I was unable to attend the ceremony due to our duties here in Washington, I hope the members of this House of Representatives will join me in thanking Ms. Eman for her incredible acts of bravery and congratulating her upon becoming a citizen of our country.

HONORING CHET AND SYLVIA MORGAN

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Chet and Sylvia Morgan, of Vernon, Connecticut. The Morgans recently celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at the Rockville Elks Carriage House in Rockville, Connecticut.

On January 26th, 1957, Chet and Sylvia married at St. Bridget Church in Manchester, Connecticut. Fifty years later, Chet and Sylvia are still happily married, recently renewing their wedding vows at St. Joseph Church in Rockville.

Chet and Sylvia are the proud parents of three, grandparents of eight, and great-grandparents of four. One of their grandsons, Kody, is a Connecticut National Guardsman currently serving in Iraq. I know that Chet and Sylvia are especially proud of his service to our country.

On behalf of my hometown of Vernon and Connecticut's Second Congressional District, I congratulate the Morgans and wish them all the best in the years to come.

VIOLA DELEON MUNOZ

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, it is with deep affection that I tribute to the life of Viola DeLeon Munoz, long time San Bernardino community political leader and dear friend, better known by those who loved her as Vi.

Vi passed away in her Yucaipa home amongst the comfort of her family at the age of 75 on February 6, 2007.

She was born on June 22, 1931 in Houston, Texas, but called the Inland Empire home for most of her life.

Vi was a dedicated public servant. She devoted herself to advancing her community, fighting injustice, and engaging herself politically by supporting Democratic and Latino candidates.

I still remember meeting with her, the day her and her husband Jess developed the Latino Chicano Democratic Club.

Vi's involvement with Democratic clubs, voter registration and her passion for improving the lives of Latinos in the Inland Empire are just a few areas in which she inspired those of us who know her.