grounds, including the front garden which has been recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. The Church also is a member in good standing of the Unitarian Universalist Association [UUA], the international umbrella group of UU congregations and has been certified as a Welcoming Congregation by UUA.

Madam Speaker, the members of the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church are celebrating the past and present successes of their church community and are planning for the future of their church community. I am pleased to join with, Johnson County, the City of Overland Park and with men and women of goodwill throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area in recognizing and congratulating the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church upon its 40th anniversary as a vibrant member of the metropolitan area's interfaith communities.

IN MEMORY OF DR. GURCHARAN SINGH, HUMANITARIAN AND FREEDOM ACTIVIST

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I was distressed to learn that Dr. Gurcharan Singh, a Sikh scholar from Long Island, was killed March 31 in a hit-and-run traffic accident. Professor Singh was on his way to the Gurdwara (the Sikh place of worship) at the time. The driver has not yet been found.

Professor Singh was a professor at Marymount Manhattan College and a leader In the Sikh community in New York. He was a father and grandfather. According to WNBC–TV, he was "a counselor to New York's Sikh community and a philanthropist devoted to bringing people of different faiths and nationalities together." He was also an activist in support of Sikh freedom, serving as an advisor to the Council of Khalistan, which leads the effort to free the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. In that capacity, he would accompany the Council's President, Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, when he would go to the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Prior to teaching at Marymount, Dr. Singh had been a professor at Columbia University. He taught political science and international studies.

The Council of Khalistan issued a press release about Dr. Singh's passing. It was also reported on WNBC Channel 4 in New York, on Yahoo News, on several Sikh and South Asian news outlets, and around the Internet.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I wish to extend the sympathies of the U.S. Congress to Dr. Singh's family, friends, and students. I'm sure that everyone joins me in this. I know that he will leave a void that will be very difficult to fill.

Madam Speaker, the best tribute we could pay to Dr. Singh is to continue his work, as Dr. Aulakh points out. This Congress can help by stopping aid to India and trade with that country until all people there enjoy human rights and by going on record in support of self-determination for Dr. Singh's Sikh Nation and for the Nagas, Kashmiris, and all the people seeking freedom in India. Self-determination is the essence of democracy.

PLAINVIEW SCHOLAR, LEADER MOURNED AFTER HIT-AND-RUN DEATH

GURCHARAN SINGH, 77, TAUGHT AT COLUMBIA, MARYMOUNT MANHATTAN COLLEGE

PLAINVIEW, N.Y.—A family and a community were mourning Saturday night the death of beloved professor and role model killed by a hit-and-run driver on Long Island, NewsChannel 4's Aimee Nuzzo reported.

Gurcharan Singh, 77, a scholar and a professor, was also a counselor to New York's Sikh community and a philanthropist devoted to bringing people of different faiths and nationalities together, according to family and friends.

"He is the gem of our community," said friend Paul Kandhari. "If there was a family problem, he'll be there. If the father and son have a problem, he'll be there."

The Plainview father of three and grandfather was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver while walking from his home to church Friday night.

Dr. Singh was crossing Old Country Road in Plainview just after 8 p.m. headed for the Sikh temple, when a red or maroon car traveling westbound ran a red light, struck him and kept going, police told Nuzzo.

Singh was airlifted to Nassau University Medical Center with multiple fractures and head trauma, but he did not survive.

"My father was a very selfless man who served his community and society with all his heart, and we'd really love any assistance in finding the individual who did this," said Surinder Singh, the victim's son.

Anyone with information about the mishap was asked to call Nassau County Crime Stoppers at 1–800–244–TIPS.

Once a professor at Columbia University, Singh taught political science and international studies at Marymount Manhattan College for more than three decades and continued to teach part-time, Nuzzo said.

A statement from Marymount Manhattan College said the "community is deeply saddened by the news of Professor Singh's death. He served as a devoted teacher at the college for many years, and his loss will be felt by all of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. Our thoughts are with his family during this difficult time." Dr. Singh's friends said they have no doubt the selfless humanitarian would have forgiven the hit-and-run driver who took his life. They said they hoped that would help whoever is responsible to come forward.

[Council of Khalistan Press Release]

DR. GURCHARAN SINGH, ADVISOR TO COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN, KILLED IN HIT-AND-RUN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

LEADING SIKH SCHOLAR, TEACHER, HUMANITARIAN

WASHINGTON, DC, Apr. 4, 2007—Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, today expressed "deepest sympathies" to the family and friends of Professor Gurcharan Singh, a leading Sikh scholar and a teacher at Marymount Manhattan College. Professor Gurcharan Singh was killed by a hit-and-run driver about 8:00 p.m. on the evening of March 31 as he was heading to the Gurdwara.

"Professor Gurcharan Singh leaves a vacuum that will be hard to fill, not only within the Sikh community and Nassau County, but for his family, friends, students, and the many whose lives he touched," said Dr. Aulakh, "He will be greatly missed. I am proud that he was my friend."

"Only God gives life and takes life. As human beings, we are helpless. 'Ghale Aawe Nanka Sadhe Uthin Jai.' We can only mourn his loss but the best tribute to Dr. Gurcharan Singh will be to continue his mission which he worked for, that is serving humanity and working hard to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation. Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh religion flourish and the Sikh Nation prosper."

Professor Gurcharan Singh was well known as a humanitarian on Long Island. "My father was a very selfless man who served his community and society with all his heart," said his son Surinder Singh, He served as a counselor to the New York Sikh community and was a philanthropist.

Professor Gurcharan Singh was also a strong supporter of Khalistan, the independent Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. In that effort, he served as an advisor to the President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the peaceful, democratic, nonviolent effort to liberate Khalistan. He accompanied Dr. Aulakh whenever he went to talk to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

His death was reported on WNBC–TV New York and on its website; on Indo-Asian News Service; on Sikh media outlets; on a variety of websites; and on other media outlets.

"Professor Gurcharan Singh's passing is a loss to the Sikh Nation, to the people of Long Island and America, to his family and friends, and to friends of freedom," said Dr. Aulakh. "May God bless this departed soul."

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR RESEARCH IN ASTRONOMY

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, this month marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy AURA. In 1957, seven universities banded together to form a new type of consortium that would establish a national astronomical observatory available to all astronomers on a merit basis. This new consortium, AURA, sought access to the clearest skies and best observing sites available. They established their headquarters in Tucson, AZ, and over the ensuing years built the Kitt Peak National Observatory and a sister observatory in Chile known as the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory.

The establishment of AURA took place in an environment in which the National Science Foundation was only 5 years old and the establishment of a space agency was still to come. AURA saw the need for the astronomical community to organize itself, to work toward common goals, and to create scientific opportunities for all. AURA and other public observatories helped advance the field of U.S. astronomy.

From these beginnings, AURA has extended our view of the universe and ourselves with its visionary planning for what is now the Hubble Space Telescope, which AURA operates from its Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. It also paved the way for the giant ground based telescopes known as the International Gemini Observatory, in Hawaii and Chile.

AURA has helped astronomy move to a central position in national and international scientific research with increasingly strong ties to many other areas of the physical sciences and the fundamental questions that they address.