

a job with his international office. Over the last 24 years in Washington, DC, Rick has risen to the position of Legislative and Political Director of the IBEW.

When discussing a matter before Congress, one got an education from Rick Diegel. You knew you were listening to someone who came, as Rick has often said, "out of the tools." Having worked and gained experience at every level, Rick did not let the issues of Washington, DC affect his vision and mission of helping American laborers. For Rick, the only question was and remains: "Is this good for IBEW members?" And those members are electricians in the construction industry, they are utility workers, railroad workers, telecommunication workers, broadcast and government workers.

His easy manner and ready smile could break the tension in any room, but those who know him best never made the mistake of underestimating his passion and his commitment to the matter at hand. He has been on the front line for a very long time and he will be missed. I wish Rick a long and happy retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF CARMEN "THE
ONION PICKER" BASILIO

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize boxing Champion and Central New York native Carmen Basilio as he celebrates the 50th anniversary of his World Middleweight Championship.

Basilio was born on April 27, 1927 in Canastota, New York. The son of an onion farmer, he spent many hours of his childhood working with his father on their farm, which led to his boxing nickname "the onion picker". Carmen became a professional boxer in 1948, after being honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps.

Basilio became the New York State welterweight champion in 1953 and defended that title in 1954. On June 10, 1955 Carmen defeated Tony DeMarco in a 12 round bout to win the World Welterweight title. A rematch was held on November 30th of that same year, and Basilio defended his title, after breaking his left hand earlier in the match, by knocking out DeMarco in the 12th round. Basilio would hold the World Welterweight Title until March 14, 1956 when he lost to Johnny Saxton. Never one to give up, Basilio regained the title on September 12, 1956 by defeating Saxton in a rematch. He remained the World Welterweight Champion until he vacated the role to fight in the World Middleweight Championship on September 23, 1957.

Fifty years ago this month on September 23, 1957, Carmen Basilio challenged World Middleweight Champion Sugar Ray Robinson for the title. The fight, which took place at Yankee Stadium, is known as one of the most action packed fights of the decade. Even though he was smaller in size and reach, Basilio defeated Robinson in a 15 round decision to become the World Middleweight Champion. Basilio would relinquish his championship back to Robinson in a rematch six months later, and would twice unsuccessfully

try to regain it back. He won two more fights before hanging up his boxing gloves in 1961. Carmen was named fighter of the year in 1955 and 1957, and would finish his career with 56 wins, 17 losses, 7 draws, and 27 knockouts.

Although he left his fighting days behind him, Basilio still remained involved in athletics. He served as a physical education instructor at Le Moyne College and remained very involved in Central New York boxing.

In 1982 the citizens of Canastota wanted to pay tribute to their hometown fighter and did so by erecting a bronze statue of Basilio. The excitement of the statue led to the building of the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, which was completed in 1989. Basilio was inducted in 1990 and continues to be a frequent visitor and volunteer at the Hall of Fame.

Carmen Basilio was a boxer, but perhaps even more, he was a fighter. Even in losses Basilio never gave up. He always fought with perseverance, passion, and heart which earned him great respect beyond wins and losses. I am proud to stand up and honor this man—who has served as an inspiration to so many from Central New York—on the 50th anniversary of his Middleweight Championship. As his International Boxing Hall of Fame biography says, "his tough gritty style not only won him world titles, but it was the heart and desire he displayed in the ring that won him a place in the hearts of 1950's boxing fans."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I missed recorded votes due to official business in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted the following: "yea" on H. Res. 257, supporting the goals and ideals of Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, rollcall No. 865; "yea" on H. Res. 643, the resolution commemorating September 11, rollcall No. 866.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HBCU
WEEK

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate National Historically Black Colleges and Universities week, which took place the second week of September. It is a pleasure to recognize HBCUs because, had it not been for a historically Black college, I would not be here today. Not only have HBCUs made a positive impact on and provided a rich heritage to me and my family's lives, they lay a foundation for many men and women of color.

At the age of 16, I left home to attend what was then Arkansas A&M College at Pine Bluff, later named the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Following in my footsteps were six of my siblings, three nephews, one niece, and a half dozen first cousins. As an HBCU alumnus, I

share a history with many notable and honored leaders within our country. W.E.B. Du Bois, who is considered the father of sociology due to his thesis called "Study of the Philadelphia Negro," attended Fisk University in Nashville, TN. The education and training that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., received at Morehouse College, located in Atlanta, GA, surely worked together with his experiences in the Black church to develop his incredible eloquence and keen analysis of social problems. Thurgood Marshall, the first Black Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, attended Lincoln University in Chester, PA, which is known as the first historically Black college founded in 1854.

As an HBCU graduate, I know firsthand the needs and values of these institutions. This is why I am especially proud that during this HBCU week, Congress can say it provided \$170 million in grants for HBCUs over the next 5 years via the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. All 99 HBCUs that currently receive Federal funds will benefit from these new resources to strengthen their capacity to continue the tradition of developing Black talent into leadership. Indeed, I benefit from the leaders produced by these institutions given that at least four members of my staff had the privilege of attending an HBCU.

HBCUs are not only necessary for individuals who come from certain economic backgrounds, they contain a great deal of history and culture. The College Cost Reduction Act will enhance our ability to keep these institutions alive and vibrant. I am pleased that we can celebrate these new resources during this recent HBCU week.

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS
MONTGOMERY

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 17, 2007

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, it is with pride that I rise today to recognize the Curtis Montgomery Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2575 on its 75th anniversary and its great service to the veterans of New Mexico.

The Curtis Montgomery VFW Post #2575 was chartered in 1932 as a Congressionally chartered post. Over the last 75 years this post has been serving the veterans in the communities of Roswell, Artesia, Hondo, and surrounding areas. The post has more than 200 members, which include 100 life members. The post will soon be merging with Post #11384 in Roswell and pick up an additional 100 members.

Post #2575 celebrated its 75th anniversary on September 1, 2007 with a ceremony. The program honored dignitaries of the City who have assisted veterans in the past. Special guests included members of Task Force Cobra from the area and veterans from all over New Mexico. Michael A. Trujillo, a Chaves County Commissioner and member of Task Force Cobra, honored the Post by presenting a flag flown over Iraq during Task Force Cobra's Iraq deployment to Post Commander Mike Point. Veterans from previous conflicts including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and later conflicts displayed memorabilia, shared memories, and reflected on their shared service to our nation.