

In 1911, after decades of offshore, open water sealing by other nations decimated the herd, the North Pacific Fur Seal Treaty was signed—the first international treaty for wildlife conservation. The agreement gave NOAA's predecessor responsibility for protecting wildlife along the American coast and was the forerunner and inspiration for laws such as the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

After World War II, what would become NOAA joined the U.S. in another great leap forward when the technological, geographic, and social landscape of NOAA's two legacy agencies—the Survey of the Coast and the Weather Bureau—were merged and their resources combined to usher in a new era of weather observations from space with the launch of the first meteorological satellite.

And, NOAA grew yet again in response to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in 1989. The spill led to the passage of the Oil Pollution Control Act of 1990 which strengthened and enhanced NOAA's capacity to respond to and help reduce impacts from hazardous material spills.

For 200 years, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its predecessor agencies have served this great Nation by providing research to improve our understanding of the oceans and the atmosphere and has faithfully fulfilled its mandate as a steward of the environment. I am happy to add my voice to those of my colleagues as we honor today this important American institution.

TRIBUTE TO DUANE HAHN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Duane Hahn of Eldora, Iowa, on being named a runner-up in the 2007 Excellence in Education Award, given by the Iowa State Education Association.

The Excellence in Education Award is a special recognition that was created as a way to honor many of the excellent teachers across Iowa that go the extra mile to make a difference in students' lives. Duane was nominated for this honor by several of his students and colleagues.

For the past 40 years Duane has given his time and talents to the Eldora school district, reaching out to touch the lives of many students. During his time at South Hardin High School he has instructed students in chemistry, physics, and physical science, serving as a personal motivator that inspires students to excel in the classroom and beyond. He has helped many a student through a difficult time by saying, "I promise I won't give up on you, if you don't give up on me." Often mentoring fellow teachers as well, Duane is truly an outstanding role model that has earned great respect and admiration from all who know him.

I am honored to represent Duane in Congress, and I wish him the very best as he continues to serve as a mentor and role model to the students and teachers of South Hardin High School.

TRIBUTE TO HONOR R.C. HICKMAN

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I recognize the life and passing of R.C. Hickman of Oak Cliff, Texas. Mr. Hickman was a very prominent and well-respected photographer not only in the State of Texas, but also throughout the entire nation. As his family mourns their loss, I would like to pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of R.C. Hickman before this body of Congress and this nation.

Born in Mineola, Texas and raised in the Dallas, Hickman's exemplary photography career started during the World War II. After the war's end, he continued his professional career as a photographer at the Dallas Star Post and freelance photographer for Jet magazine.

His dreams led him to capture the likenesses of entertainers such as Sammy Davis Jr., activists Thurgood Marshall and Dr. King, and countless others whose work for civil rights. His professionalism and keen eye ignited his passion for recognizable images. Several of his photos are now housed at the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. Mr. Hickman later compiled many of his pictures in the book *Behold the People: R.C. Hickman's Photographs of Black Dallas, 1949–1961*.

Madam Speaker, it is in earnest respect that I recognize the memory of Mr. R.C. Hickman before this body of Congress and this nation for the irreplaceable contributions he made to the community of Dallas and the State of Texas. My sincere condolences go out to his nieces Patricia Tuck, Royetta Tuck Potts of Los Angeles and Nelwyn Vaughn of Mineola. While his loss will be deeply felt, the memory of his kindness and the recollection of his good deeds will transcend into future generations.

SUPPORT PARALYMPICS

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I would like to call your attention to H.R. 4255, the "United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Paralympic Program Act of 2007."

This legislation authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide grants to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to plan, develop, manage, and implement a Paralympic Program for disabled veterans and servicemembers.

Paralympics, sports for the physically disabled, traces its origins to World War II when the paralympic movement began to offer sports as a form of rehabilitation for the injured veterans of that era. Paralympic activity has a proven track record in terms of rehabilitation and improving the quality of life for the physically disabled. Paralympics also improves the mobility, vitality, physical, psychological, and social well-being of disabled veterans while reducing their incidence of secondary medical conditions.

It is particularly important that the thousands of injured military and veterans returning to the United States after service in Iraq and Afghanistan be afforded the chance to participate in such paralympic activities as part of their rehabilitation, both while on active duty and when, as veterans, they return to their home communities.

The United States Olympic Committee is particularly well-suited to plan and institute a Paralympic Program for our military and veterans. In 1998, Congress passed the "Olympic and Amateur Sports Act Amendments," which charged the USOC with the responsibility of encouraging and assisting amateur athletic programs and competitions for athletes with disabilities. Since that time, the USOC has led a resurgence in paralympic sports in the United States.

When our injured servicemembers began returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, the USOC began offering Paralympic Military Sports Camps at its training facilities, including at the USOC training facility in my district in Chula Vista, California. To date, over 1,200 injured veterans have been introduced to paralympic sports as a result of these training camps. The USOC has spent millions of dollars on this military and veteran Paralympics Program and will continue to support these efforts. However, with so many injured military and veterans, much more needs to be done.

The paralympic sports camps of the USOC last for a week at a time. The USOC is also beginning an effort to bring paralympic sports to various locations throughout the country. It is imperative that we expand these efforts so that once our injured military personnel graduate to veteran status, they will be able to participate year round in their own communities in paralympic activities as part of their continuing rehabilitation.

Under this program, the USOC will develop community-based Paralympic Programs that provide services and activities for disabled veterans and servicemembers. These activities will include instruction and competition in paralympic sports, training and technical assistance and other program-specific medical and personal care support activities necessary to create a network of community-based Paralympic Programs easily accessible to our injured veterans.

This legislation also requires the Secretary to conduct an outreach program to inform all disabled veterans about the existence of the Paralympic Program and to encourage their participation. Although non-veterans may participate in these community-based programs, the funds authorized by this legislation can only be used to support activities and services for disabled veterans and servicemembers.

The purpose of this program is to enhance the rehabilitation, readiness, and quality of life of severely injured servicemembers and veterans. There is great urgency to implement this expanded program as quickly as possible in order to motivate, teach, and inspire veterans at all stages of recovery and to return them to a lifestyle full of activity, accomplishment, and enjoyment in their own communities.

I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation. We owe it to those who have given their all for their country.