

there can be no question that his heart lies in his hometown, and his commitment to the town's future will remain steadfast. Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to Dennis Mead in this manner, and I know that you join me and the rest of our colleagues in wishing Dennis the best of luck and Godspeed in all of his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF LEON N.  
WEINER & ASSOCIATES INC.

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today in honor of Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. (LNW&AI), a company that for almost 60 years now has been accomplishing great feats and doing outstanding work for the housing industry in Delaware and surrounding areas. Today, I wish to call attention to a neighborhood renewal project this group championed. It positively impacted our community to such a degree that the readers of Affordable Housing Finance Magazine named it the Nation's best affordable homeownership development.

Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. was presented with this prestigious award because they had the vision, drive, prowess and compassion to take an area in need of revitalization and transform it into a true community. Less than a decade ago the Wilmington, Delaware neighborhood now known as Eastlake was home to some of the highest per capita drug and crime rates in the nation. All of that has changed since LNW&AI came in with an innovative renewal plan to construct new homes at below-market rates for neighbors. While designing this community, LNW&AI was mindful of practicality, community, affordability, safety, and aesthetics—all of which help explain the program's great success. Through the work of LNW&AI and its project affiliates, the Village of Eastlake is now seeing an unprecedented influx of residents that are inspired and committed to bettering their community and future.

I have long been a supporter of Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. Leon Weiner, whom I had the distinct privilege of knowing and working with while he was alive, founded the company in 1949 and made it a success. He recognized that people from every walk of life, regardless of economic circumstances, share a common need and dream of having a place to call home. His hard work and dedication to such a cause helped put thousands of people of modest incomes in homes. Furthermore, he established a rich philanthropic legacy within LNW&AI. Through my personal experiences with Leon's successors: Kevin Kelly and David Curtis, as well as the rest of the LNW&AI staff, I can assuredly say that Leon's legacy not only lives on, but thrives in the company today.

Once again, I would like to recognize Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. Their work at the Eastlake community is remarkable and very deserving of Affordable Housing Finance Magazine's Reader's Choice Award. They are an invaluable asset to our community and I wish them all the best now and in the future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HON.  
RICHARD F. "RIC" WILLIAMSON

**HON. JOHN L. MICA**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a wonderful friend and a great leader in transportation, both in Texas and our Nation, the Hon. Richard F. ("Ric") Williamson. His sudden passing on December 30, 2007 was an incredible loss to his family, the State of Texas and our country.

It has been my honor to know and work with Ric during his service as Texas Commissioner of Transportation. From our first meeting, I knew I had a found a friend, a leader, and a key supporter of building our Nation's infrastructure. Rick's passing is a tremendous loss to all those who respected his leadership and brilliance in government's important work to build the national transportation system. I join the Texas Congressional Delegation and all who knew and worked with Ric in extending our sincere condolences to his wife and family.

As chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission, Ric crafted creative, major, and often controversial decisions about the future of the State's transportation system. He was a strong proponent of toll roads and public-private partnerships as a solution to meet the State's transportation needs and funding shortfalls.

Ric's policies and positions were always well thought-out and passionately defended. He always did what he thought would best serve the transportation needs of the State, and many believe that his support for public-private partnerships was instrumental in inspiring other States to consider similar deals as a way to finance new highway construction or to provide long-range, predictable State revenues.

Ric was a native of Abilene, Texas and graduated from University of Texas at Austin in 1974. In 1985, Ric was elected to the Texas Legislature, as a Democrat, and served 13 years until he left in 1998 as a Republican. Serving on the legislature's House Appropriations Committee, he was one of the "Pit Bulls," conservative lawmakers who questioned how the state spent its money. He believed that agencies should get money based on the goals they set and met, a concept known as performance-based budgeting, which is used today in the Texas budget process.

During his State House years, Ric was known as a maverick, and earned the nickname "Nitro" for his energy. He was an independent and aggressive leader who preferred making good policy over playing politics.

In 2001, Governor Perry appointed Ric to serve on the five-person Commission that oversees statewide activities of the Texas Department of Transportation. In 2004, he became the Commission's chairman. His tenure at the Commission was sometimes controversial, but, as my friend and colleague from the 26th district in Texas, Dr. Michael Burgess, said, Ric Williamson was "unafraid to challenge the status quo, and was a highly regarded leader bringing innovative ideas to provide safe, economic and reliable transportation to improve the daily lives of Texans."

Ric is survived by his wife Mary Ann Williamson and three daughters, Melissa Meyer, Katherine Strange, and Sara Williamson, as well as two grandchildren.

In closing, I will quote another friend of Ric's, the Administrator of the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. "Texas has lost a proud son, as has the nation's transportation community." Ric Williamson was a visionary leader and a straight talker. He will be sorely missed.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JOHN  
MICHAEL GRANVILLE, AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of Buffalo and Western New York, John Michael Granville, an American diplomat who devoted his adult life to promoting peace through his foreign aid and humanitarian work in Africa.

John Granville, who worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development (US AID) in Sudan, was fatally shot after attending a party at the British Embassy in Khartoum. His sudden passing is a great shock to us all and my thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends at this very difficult time. In this senseless tragedy, we lost a man of peace and purpose, a man who had dedicated himself to making the world a better place for others.

John Granville was a thoughtful and honorable man who was deeply loved by his family, friends and the community. Born and raised in my hometown of Buffalo, NY, John Granville was an outstanding young man. We are proud to salute John and honor him for his lasting service to our nation and to countries abroad and for the important humanitarian work he was doing in Africa.

John was a graduate of Canisius High School, Fordham University and held a Master's degree in International Development from Clark University. The John M. Granville '93 Memorial Scholarship has been established at his high school alma mater in his memory as family, friends and classmates want to make sure he will never be forgotten.

Before joining USAID, John served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon, where he helped build the first school in a rural village. His love for Africa and the people of Africa was realized during his years of service there. John's most recent work involved distributing radios to people in the southern part of Sudan to maximize the effect of the agency's broadcasting initiatives in Sudan's southern region, which is recovering from a 21-year civil war. The goal was to prepare southern Sudan for elections in 2009, and a possible referendum in 2011 on independence.

We know John will be missed beyond measure by his loving mother, Jane, his beloved sister Katie and brother-in law Sean, his loving nieces Caroline, Julia, Hanna and Molly and nephew Matthew, his extended family and dear friends. Everyone who knew or was influenced by John will mourn his loss in their own way. I will do my part to honor John's memory

by calling upon the Administration to strengthen its efforts to protect American diplomats serving overseas and to bring stability to Sudan and the surrounding region.

We must pray for the Granville, O'Connell and McCabe Families and for John Granville, with a tremendous sense of appreciation for the great sacrifice that he made as he worked to promote peace in Africa. I take the liberty of honoring John's life and legacy by including the statement issued by his family, "John's life was a celebration of love, hope and peace. He will be missed by many people throughout the world whose lives were touched and made better because of his care."

HONORING FIRE CHIEF TIMOTHY REYNOLDS

**HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Timothy Reynolds, Fire Chief of the Wayne Fire Department, upon his retirement from a distinguished twenty-five-year career in public service.

For over two decades, since joining the Wayne Fire Department on June 24, 1982, Fire Chief Reynolds has served the citizens of Wayne, Michigan with distinction. Throughout his career with the department, Timothy served in numerous capacities having been promoted to Lieutenant in December 1994, Captain in 1997, and Fire Chief in 2003 where he served until December 14, 2007.

Timothy Reynolds worked tirelessly to further his education and sharpen his abilities in order to better serve the citizens of Wayne. Fire Chief Reynolds holds numerous degrees and certifications, including a degree in Fire Science Technology from Henry Ford Community College, a State of Michigan certified Paramedic license, and a Fire Inspector certification with the Michigan State Fire Marshal Office. Fire Chief Reynolds has served as the Emergency Program Manager for the City of Wayne and is an active member of the International Association of Arson Investigators, the Michigan Fire Chiefs Association, and the Southeastern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association. Among his many accomplishments, Fire Chief Reynolds remains most proud of his family, which includes his wife of twenty-nine years, Shannon, and their three children, Jennifer, Neil, and Maureen.

Madam Speaker, for twenty-five years Fire Chief Reynolds has faithfully served the citizen of Michigan. As he enters the next phase of his life, he leaves behind a legacy of dedication, honor, and courage. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Fire Chief Timothy Reynolds upon his retirement and recognizing his years of loyal service to our community and country.

2007 UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE MEN'S LACROSSE TEAM

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute

to the 2007 University of Delaware Men's Lacrosse team. In 2007 the Blue Hens' record was 13–6 in intercollegiate play, posting its finest season in school history and advancing all the way to the NCAA national semifinals.

The Blue Hens opened up the season with five straight wins, but began to struggle and by mid season they were just 6–5. In mid-April the Blue Hens rallied in the final quarter to defeat Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) foe Villanova 19–18, thus igniting the Blue Hens into winning seven straight games before the national semifinal loss.

Upon entering the tournament, the Blue Hens defeated the defending National Champions and the No. 2 ranked University of Virginia. Delaware then defeated the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) in the national quarterfinals at Navy to earn a spot in the Final Four.

The Blue Hens are coached by Bob Shillinglaw who has coached at Delaware for more than 30 years and is one of the Nation's most respected and successful coaches. This past year Coach Shillinglaw's team was led by a strong senior class, which included 2 All-Americans, Alex Smith and Jordan Hall and All-CAA selections Adam Zuder-Havens, Dan Deckelbaum, and Rob Smith.

I congratulate Coach Bob Shillinglaw and the 2007 University of Delaware Men's Lacrosse team for their success, and the pride they have shown as representatives of the University of Delaware and the First State.

FREEDOM FOR CARLOS JESUS MENENDEZ CERVERA

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Carlos Jesus Menendez Cervera, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Menendez Cervera is a member of the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation (CCDHRN), Executive Secretary of the Social Democratic Party and an interim director of the Independent Libraries Project. He is a peaceful pro-democracy activist who believes that Cuba must be free, that all Cubans must be free to learn, free to worship, and free to enjoy human rights and the Rule of Law. Accordingly, Mr. Menendez Cervera has been targeted by the totalitarian regime.

Because of his steadfast belief in freedom and democracy, Mr. Menendez Cervera has been harassed and detained numerous times. In February 2007 Mr. Menendez Cervera was detained and thrown into a police vehicle after he was seen exiting the U.S. Interests Section's Center for Information Services. He was locked inside the vehicle and interrogated for nearly an hour before being driven to a nearby police station. At the station, where a member of the Cuban political police further interrogated him, his short wave radio and a photocopy of a Miami Herald article he carried were confiscated. Regime thugs attempted to incriminate Mr. Menendez Cervera but he was eventually released.

According to the CCDHRN, plainclothes members of the regime's secret police ar-

rested Mr. Menendez Cervera on November 15, 2007. The CCDHRN said that Mr. Menendez Cervera was arrested when he entered the home of a well-known former prisoner of conscience, Mr. Hector Palacio, one of the "Group of 75" arrested as part of the Cuban dictatorship's heinous island-wide crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy activists in March 2003. Mr. Palacio, who was serving a 25-year sentence, was released from prison due to health concerns.

Mr. Menendez Cervera represents the best of the Cuban nation, a nation that, though oppressed for 49 years by a totalitarian tyranny, has never stopped fighting for its freedom and for the Rule of Law.

Madam Speaker, we must speak out and act against these arbitrary harassments and arrests, and the abominable disregard for human rights, human dignity, and human freedom just 90 miles from our shores. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Carlos Jesus Menendez Cervera and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

TRIBUTE TO THE CELINA BOBCATS

**HON. RALPH M. HALL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 15, 2008*

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 2007 Celina Bobcat football team.

On December 22nd, 2007, the Celina Bobcats defeated the China Spring Cougars by a score of 21 to 14 to win the Class 3 AAA Division II State Championship at Texas Stadium. Under the leadership of Coach Butch Ford, the Bobcats finished the 2007 season with a perfect 16–0 record to claim a new state record 8th State Championship. This is a remarkable accomplishment that merits recognition.

With a record eight state titles and wins in two out of the last three championship games, the Bobcats have a heritage of excellence in football. This tradition of winning is proven by their historical rankings with more wins in the last 10, 20 and 40 years than any other team in Texas.

By halftime the Bobcats found themselves in their first halftime tie of the season with a close 7–7 game, and by the end of the third quarter it was still tied at 14–14. However, by the end of the fourth there was no doubt which team was champion. In a close game where every play counted, the Bobcats pulled ahead at the end to win by 7 points. This State Championship win marks another tremendous milestone in the continued excellence of Bobcat football, and I am proud of their accomplishment.

Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the Bobcat players as well as their coaches, trainer, cheerleaders, the Las Gatitas dance squad, band members, teachers, school administration, and other community supporters for their success in both championship and regular season play. I ask each of my colleagues to join me in honoring Celina High School in their record-breaking 8th State Championship.