

Among his many civic activities, Lou is an active member of the Vallejo Elks Club having served as Exalted Ruler, a National Officer, and as the Elks National Ritual Judge, has served as Foreman of the Solano Grand Jury and is one of the founders of the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum.

Lou has received a Public Service Medal from the Navy's Chief of Naval Operations, the prestigious "Others" designation from the Salvation Army, and the Man of the Year award presented by the Vallejo Chamber of Commerce.

And it pleases me to report that Lou Bergelin is still active in the community. He serves on the Vallejo Council of the Navy League, he's Secretary of the Tobacco Fund Advisory Board for Solano County, Treasurer for the Salvation Army, volunteers at St. Vincent's Church, Past Big SIR and Chaplain for Branch 88 and he is National Legislative Chair for Vallejo NARFE. Lou has been happily married to Betty Greenwell Bergelin for almost 69 years. They have three children, three grandchildren and five great-grand children.

Madam Speaker, recognition of Mr. Bergelin's devotion to his family, his community, and his country, it is my honor to recognize him today.

TRIBUTE TO RACHEL BASSETTE
NOEL

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker. I rise to honor the extraordinary life and exceptional accomplishments of Rachel Bassette Noel. This remarkable public servant merits our recognition and esteem as her leadership, service and lifelong devotion to civil liberty and equal opportunity has done much to advance the lives of our people.

Rachel Noel has been celebrated as "a pioneer for equity," "a woman of valor," and "a magnificent rebel." She demanded the dignity due to all people. She sought to unfetter the great potential of our children and she did her part, in no small measure, to tear down the walls of segregation and remove the barriers to equal education. Although many individuals have made notable contributions to our community and state, few have left a legacy of progress as has Rachel Noel.

Rachel Noel was born 1918 in Hampton, Virginia—in the segregated South. Her father, A.W.E. Bassette, was a lawyer and her mother was a teacher. They instilled in her the value and importance of a good education and Rachel Noel went on to graduate with a bachelor's degree from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and earned a master's degree in sociology from Fisk University. After World War II, she and her husband, Dr. Edmond F. Noel, moved west and settled in Denver in 1950. As in the segregated South, they encountered discrimination and racial bias in Denver. Dr. Noel practiced medicine in the Five Points community and was the first African American surgeon in Colorado, yet he was denied operating room privileges in every city hospital except the Jewish hospital, General Rose (now Rose Medical Center). Rachel Noel also encountered many closed doors in

Denver before taking a job with the Denver Human Rights Commission.

The couple persevered and by the time Rachel Noel won election to the Board of the Denver Public Schools (DPS) in 1965, she was already recognized for her work on behalf of children. She became the first African American to serve on the DPS Board and the first African American woman elected to public office in Colorado. Three years into her term, she introduced the famous Noel Resolution which called for the superintendent to develop a plan to integrate the Denver Public Schools. The resolution was precipitated by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rachel Noel noted that "when King died, rhetoric no longer seemed adequate." Her resolution brought death threats and after much community opposition, it passed in 1970. The United States Supreme Court eventually affirmed the intent of her resolution in its landmark decision of 1973, *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1*, calling for mandatory desegregation of Denver's public schools, including busing for racial balance. The Denver Post noted that "the citizenry at large would debate the best means for achieving equality and opportunity for all its students—but that goal itself would never again be called into question." I would simply add that Rachel Noel's endeavors raised the bar. She moved the public policy debate in our community and this country from simply opening segregated schools to achieving a new balance—a new equity—in public education that did not previously exist. But extending the benefits of equal education to those who had been denied it was more than just enforcing laws. It was about redeeming lost futures and creating opportunity so that all young people could make the most of their lives and share in our prosperity.

Rachel Noel joined the faculty of Metropolitan State College in 1969. She taught sociology and African American studies and served as chair of the African American Studies Department from 1971 to 1980. In 1976, Governor Richard Lamm appointed Rachel Noel to serve on the University of Colorado Board of Regents and she was subsequently elected statewide in 1978 to become the first African American elected to the Board of Regents and serve as chair of the board. She also chaired Mayor Federico Pena's Black Advisory Council; served as a Commissioner of Denver Housing Authority; served on the Advisory Board of the United States Civil Rights Commission; served on Mayor Wellington Webb's Black Advisory Committee; and served as a member of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Health Sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Denver. She was also an active member of Shorter Community African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Links and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

In 1981, Rachel Noel was honored with the establishment of the Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Professorship to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at Metropolitan State College. She was the recipient of numerous accolades and awards including: the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award in 1990; induction into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame in 1996; the Wiley A. Branton Award from the National Bar Association in 2001; the Anti-Defamation League's Civil Rights Award in 2004; and the Honorary Doctor of Public Service degree

from the University of Denver. In 2002, the Denver Public Schools named a middle school in Northeast Denver in her honor, the Rachel B. Noel Middle School.

Rachel Noel was an unrelenting advocate for the causes that elevate the human condition and she served all of us with eminent distinction. She saw great opportunity for progress and seized it. She had the courage to tell us that we were not keeping faith with our nation's ideals and that we needed to move forward. Moreover, she knew that we as Americans have an enormous capacity to do better and that we have a moral obligation to do so. Truly, we are all diminished by the passing of this remarkable person.

Rachel Noel lived a life that is rich in consequence and we are better and stronger due to her labors on our behalf. Our thoughts and prayers are with her daughter Angie, her son Buddy and her entire family. Please join me in paying tribute to the life of Rachel B. Noel, a distinguished public servant and advocate for civil liberty.

CONGRATULATING FIRE CHIEF
JOE FLORENTINO OF LITTLE
ELM, TEXAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Little Elm, Texas Fire Chief Joe Florentino. Chief Florentino was recently appointed to the position as the first-ever State Coordinator of the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System.

Chief Florentino was unanimously selected to fill the post for his work-related qualifications and his leadership abilities by representatives from fourteen fire-related statewide agencies. He originally applied to be one of the 24 regional coordinators, and was surprised by his appointment to State Coordinator. Although he recognizes the challenges that go hand in hand with being the first individual to hold this position, Chief Florentino is optimistic about the road that lies ahead.

The Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System, as an annex to Texas' emergency management plan, sets guidelines for responding to fire-related catastrophes that require more assistance than an area can provide. Chief Florentino will serve as the point of contact between those areas in need of support and the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System. Advocates of the program recognize the fact that Texas is on the forefront of this type of intrastate aid system, and hope that its successful implementation will lead to a similar nationwide system in the future.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to Chief Florentino on this appointment and commend his dedication and desire to help his community and state. It is an honor to represent such a service-oriented citizen in the 26th District of Texas, and I know his commitment will serve as an example to others.