

## TRIBUTE TO MARGO WELS JESKE

**HON. JIM RAMSTAD**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay special tribute to Margo Wels Jeske, a great American who exemplifies all that is special about our Nation of hard-working, visionary business leaders. Margo has followed a path that all of us in this chamber should strive to emulate—she cares about people first.

Well before the age of computers, in 1966, when jet travel was still rare and gas was 35 cents per gallon, a young woman named Margo Wels from Nicollet, Minnesota, joined the North American Life and Casualty Company as a cashier in its New Ulm office.

Margo served North American Life and Casualty and its successor company, Allianz Life, for 42 outstanding years. She held a series of important positions, including Executive Assistant to the President and other key company officials. Margo retired in early February.

Today, we salute Margo Wels Jeske for her leadership and hard work in protecting people and families and helping our area keep and develop good jobs.

Madam Speaker, we all know from our experience in Congress the importance of people like Margo. They have tremendous institutional knowledge, mentor younger workers and help bring order to the lives of the people with whom they work.

Throughout her entire career at Allianz Life, Margo earned the deepest respect and affection of the thousands of people with whom she came in contact. Her humor, personal kindness and professionalism made her a crucial part of the company.

We live in a time when connections between people are not as strong as they were in the past. But when we examine the life of Margo, we recognize the real importance of those connections. We are worse off for the lack of the personal touch. To thrive, all institutions need committed people, and no one exemplifies this better than Margo Jeske.

Every season of life has its own unique pleasures and Margo has decided it is time to retire, travel and do other things that she enjoys.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend Margo for her successful career and extend my best wishes to her and Wayne and their son, Eric, for health and happiness in the years ahead. America salutes Margo and all our citizens like her who bring a caring and committed attitude to the job each and every day.

I hope that each of us in the U.S. Congress seek to serve our constituents with the same dedication shown by Margo Wels Jeske each and every day.

CONGRATULATING THIRD DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOL PATRIOTIC ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

**HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, this year marked the first-ever Third

District Middle School Patriotic Essay Contest. Students living in the Congressional "District wrote a patriotic essay on a topic of their choice. Over 275 students submitted essays for this first time endeavor. I must give special credit to Murphy Middle School's award-winning teacher Donna Jenkins. Her students authored the most essays and contributed greatly to this inaugural contest.

Today I'm proud to share the essays from the three winners. From here on out they'll be preserved for antiquity in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Someday, each winner will be able to share with children and grandchildren—"In middle school I wrote a patriotic essay and my work will always be recognized in the official CONGRESSIONAL RECORD."

1st Place: Kayla Hudgins, 8th Grade—Age 13, Murphy Middle School, Teacher: Donna Jenkins, Lives in Wylie.

2nd Place: Sai Pranathi Baddipudi, 8th Grade—Age 13, Staley Middle School, Teacher: Tammy Brightwell, Lives in Frisco.

3rd Place: Rebecca Beverly Kow, 6th Grade—Age 12, Faubion Middle School, Teacher: Debbie Bennett, Lives in McKinney.

I want to thank the 275+ students who participated in the contest. The outstanding level of participation shows great promise for the future. To the winners, you're the voices of the future and I salute you. God bless you and God bless America.

## 1ST PLACE WINNER

(By Kayla Hudgins, Grade 8, Murphy Middle School)

Veterans mean the courage to believe in something bigger than your own prosperity and to risk the ultimate sacrifice of your life. These brave soldiers fought for something that deserves our complete gratitude: our freedom. Veterans have a powerful love for their countrymen. But still, we do not seem to fully grasp the importance of their mission.

When the veterans left to war, they never knew if they were coming back alive or not. And still they went, for they believed in the freedoms that the founders of this country did. They went so that their families and friends could remain Americans. Veterans fought, not only for their freedom, but for others' freedom as well. They fought for future generations and the present generation. They suppressed their fears to bring peace to all of mankind.

This love, for country and fellow citizens, is the epitome of selflessness. Veterans are role models of self-sacrifice and brotherly love. Their love for our country and its beliefs lead some of them to give their lives for the sake of others. The veterans do not know if their efforts to bring peace will be in vain. They do not expect thanks for their sacrifices, and that makes them all the more heroes in my eyes.

And though these brave soldiers risk everything, I am not sure people fully grasp the importance of the existence of veterans. The rights and freedoms these women and men fight for are abused and taken for granted. We seem to forget that, if not for them, our lives would most likely be run by a corrupt communist government. But people continue to march off to war, to protect a nation that may very well never even know they were here, to keep us from invading evils.

Veterans, to me, are the last remaining people who truly understand what it means to be an American. They are the remnant souls of the soldiers of the Revolution. They are everything America was built upon, and they fight to keep it alive. Veterans stand

for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They do not exist to go to war but to protect thousands from its consequences. The world may never know their names or stories, but they are the only thing that has kept this nation where it is. What drives them, we may never fully understand, but I am thankful for their determination and neighborly love that has no bounds. Maybe one day, the world will fully comprehend how sorrowful and devastating everything would have been without them; hopefully for now they will be satisfied by the innocent smile on their child's face when they return. Veterans are more than heroes; veterans are America.

## 2ND PLACE WINNER

(By Sai Pranathi Baddipudi, Grade 8, Staley Middle School)

Herbert Hoover, our 31st president, once said, "Older men declare war, but it is youth that must fight and die. And it is youth who must inherit the tribulation, the sorrow, and the triumphs that are the aftermath of war." Those words ring as clearly in my head as the liberty Bell rang for this very nation many years ago. Everything I treasure: my family, my friends, my life, wouldn't be the same if it hadn't been for the veterans who jeopardized their lives in the name of autonomy.

That ultimate sacrifice made by those courageous young men and women who fought not just for the well being of the world, or our nation, but for each and every person that resides in this country, are commemorated till this very day.

Like many other people living in the U.S.A., I too took freedom for granted. But my perspective on the matter changed one Veteran's Day when my class talked about the Vietnam War, the war in Iraq, and saw pictures of the shocking conditions these soldiers had to endure. We also read letters that were written by those soldiers, talking about the adversities they were facing, and how much they missed their families, of how eager they are to see their newborn baby boy or girl. Through their words, I realized the true value of freedom and how much people in this world were willing to give up for it; I was also able to build great respect for the heroes who put their lives at stake for our liberty.

Ever since, I cherish freedom as a gift. Every day that I am presented with a decision to make, I am thankful that I possess the choice to make that decision. Some of the choices that I have made, and that I will make in the near future will alter my life tremendously. But, I am obliged that I live in a country where it is a right granted to the people to make the decisions that will shape their own lives. I am forever in debt and thankful to those who risked their lives, and to those who lost someone dear to them just so that I could make the decisions that I now make freely on a daily basis.

This nation would not be near as great as it is now if it hadn't been for those noble young men and women who risked their lives for it. So, each day that I'm alive, I prize that gift of freedom, and in remembrance of the American heroes; our veterans, I offer my thanks and gratitude.

## 3RD PLACE WINNER

(By Rebecca Beverly Kow, Grade 6, Faubion Middle School)

## "PATRIOT"

Patriot: a word that gets jumbled in the Vocabulary Vat of our brains. Most of us don't realize that it's the blood, sweat, and tears sacrificed by the person to make our lives easy.

*March 10th*

Dad has a new job. I wasn't paying attention at dinner, I was busy forking my peas

around, trying to make them disappear, I finally had forced one into my mouth, when Dad made the announcement. I almost choked. He's going to join the military. He'd deployed on April 30th. He said he's wanted to do this for a long time; he's always wanted to fight for our country, but I don't want him to leave. I hope I'm not being selfish, but I just don't think I can watch my daddy leave with no guarantee he'll be back.

*April 29th*

Tomorrow Dad leaves. Today was family day, I didn't find it fun. We just spent the day together, fretting about everything. Now I'm trying to sleep, but when I close my eyes, I see horrible images.

*April 30th*

Dad's Gone. I was kind of in a daze as we drove to the airport. Before he left I gave him my necklace; it has a little angel on it. He put it on and said he won't take it off until he comes home. I'm trying to write through tears, but it's hard because my vision's blurring. I don't know why it didn't hit me until right after Dad walked away, that I might not see him again.

*August 4th*

HE'S!! MISSING!! We got a phone call. They said he never came back. Mom promises he's fine, I try to believe her. It's okay, I tell myself, but tears keep coming.

*September 13th*

My birthday. A day to never forget. I opened the mailbox praying there would be something from Dad. And . . . there kinda was. It was a teeny-tiny envelope with my name on it. It looked like it was holding something, a secret waiting to be told, so big it was about to burst at the seams. I opened it and my necklace fell out. My mind turned to mush, he said he'd wear it until he was home, but why was it mailed, what if he was home . . . just in spirit. OH NO! Thoughts swirled around in my head like a blender, and I sat down on the curb and cried. Later, there was a knock on the door, I slowly opened it. On the other side was something unbelievable; Dad. There he was standing there, home. He had a cast on his leg and bandages everywhere, but he smiled as if he'd won the lottery. That's when he became my hero.

A patriot is a person that loves and defends their country. It means so much to me, these people, risking their lives for us. These people do things that I wouldn't have the courage to do, and I would like to say something to them; thank you.

IN HONOR OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DODGERS IN LOS ANGELES

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, it is with utmost pleasure and privilege that I rise today to congratulate the Dodgers for calling the City of Los Angeles its home for the last 50 years. I'm honored to be participating in the kick off event at the Los Angeles City Hall on March 28 for what will be a year-long "Golden Anniversary" celebration.

The Los Angeles Dodgers played their first home game on April 18, 1958, defeating the San Francisco Giants 6-5 before 78,672 fans at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Since arriving in Los Angeles 50 years ago, the

Dodgers have had its share of baseball firsts, major league moments, shattered records and invaluable players—making baseball history and achieving golden moments over and over again.

The Dodgers led the geographic expansion of baseball to the west and managed to preserve the New York City cross-town rivalry by convincing the Giants to move to California as well. The historic and heated competition between the Dodgers and the Giants is more than a century old, and is the longest rivalry in baseball history. In 1959 the Dodgers, then playing their second season in Los Angeles, played the defending World Champion New York Yankees in an exhibition game in Roy Campanella's honor at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The attendance was 93,103—still the largest crowd ever to attend a Major League Baseball game. The Dodgers are set to make history again when they play the defending World Champion Boston Red Sox in an exhibition game on March 29, 2008, at the Coliseum. The game is expected to draw the largest baseball crowd since the Dodgers played that historic 1959 game at the same venue.

The Los Angeles Dodgers earned its reputation for success with five World Championships, nine National League pennants, 15 playoff appearances, eight Cy Young Award winners, four MVPs, an incredible 12 Rookie of the Year recipients (five of which were handed out in five consecutive years—an unmatched feat), and numerous other Major League Baseball honors. And in addition to these impressive records and awards are other "golden moments" that stand out in the minds of Dodgers fans.

The 1981 Opening Day starting pitcher was a 20-year-old rookie from Mexico. Fernando Valenzuela pitched a shutout that day and proceeded to win his first eight decisions with five shutouts. Later that year Fernando helped the Dodgers win its first World Series title since 1965. "Fernandomania" swept through the baseball world, a culture-crossing phenomenon that took Los Angeles and the world by storm when Valenzuela won both the National League Rookie of the Year and Cy Young awards, becoming the first player to win both in the same year.

And all true blue Dodgers fans can close their eyes and picture the footage of Kirk Gibson hobbling around the bases on both hurt legs, and pumping his fist as he rounds second base, during his pinch-hit home run in game one of the 1988 "Fall Classic." The Dodgers would go on to win a World Series upset that year, and Gibson's "golden moment," his single swing, is considered the ninth most memorable moment in Major League Baseball history.

In all likelihood only one or two fans even remember one of my personal favorite Dodgers "golden moments," and I must admit it was not the bottom of the ninth inning, with two outs, and the bases loaded. But once upon a time, a certain local congressman was invited to throw the first pitch of a ball game—and it was a perfect strike! Such are the heart pounding thrills that the Dodgers deliver time and again.

Madam Speaker, after 50 years of time honored tradition in Los Angeles, the Dodgers truly are a community institution. An institution I'm proud calls Dodger Stadium in my 31 st Congressional District of California home.

Whether you are "thinking blue," "bleeding Dodger blue" or "praying to the big Dodger in the sky," many Angelenos share an intense loyalty and kinship with their "Boys in Blue." I look forward to many more decades of the Los Angeles Dodgers' community involvement and history-making baseball accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF MICHAEL McDOWELL

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Michael McDowell, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Ireland, as we welcome him to Cleveland, Ohio, on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2008.

For almost 30 years, Tim Collins and Thomas Scanlon have organized the St. Patrick's Day Party and Parade, a festive event that brings people together in the heart of Cleveland. On this exceptional day, Cleveland's streets are a sea of green, full with the lively sounds of traditional Irish music, laughter and the spirit of all those joining together to celebrate rich Irish culture.

Born in Dublin, Ireland in May 1951, Michael McDowell followed in the footsteps of his grandfather by dedicating his life to public service and leadership. Mr. McDowell has a decorated political history as a founding member of the Progressive Democrats Political Party, in which he served as President from 2002-2006. While leading the Progressive Democrats Party, he also held the distinguished post of Tanaiste. He was one of 14 Progressive Democrat Teachta Dála's elected to Dáil Éireann in the 1987 general election, the first election after the party was founded. In this position, he represented Dublin's South East constituency from 1987-1989, 1992-1997 and 2002-2007. In 2002, he began his 5-year tenure as Ireland's Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and served as Attorney General from 1999 to 2002.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of former Irish politician, Michael McDowell, for joining us as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Cleveland. Please also join me in recognition of Tim Collins and Thomas Scanlon for their efforts in organizing this marvelous St. Patrick's Day Party this year, as they have for almost 30-years.

HONORING CAROLINE WRIGHT

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 14, 2008*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Caroline Wright of Blue Springs, Missouri. Caroline is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Caroline has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award,