

Governor Roy Romer and former City of Denver Mayor Wellington Webb. He helped found the Center for New Politics and Policy at the University of Denver. He has served as the center's executive director since its founding, in addition to working as an attorney in private practice, college lecturer, and satellite radio talk show host. Peter Groff was first elected to the House in 2000 and later was appointed and reelected to the Colorado Senate. He is the highest-ranking African-American elected official in Colorado history and has been called the "Conscience of the Senate."

In a year when America inaugurated its first African-American President, the ascension of Speaker Carroll and President Groff is also a significant tribute to the innumerable individuals who have come before us who strived and sacrificed for civil rights, equal opportunity, and equality for all. It gives me great pleasure as the Senior Member of the Colorado Congressional Delegation to congratulate these two men and recognize their accomplishments, not only in the context of Colorado's history, but the nation's as a whole.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF MERVIN WILLIAMS

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and acknowledge the life of Mervin Williams upon his passing on February 7, 2009.

A highly decorated veteran of World War II, Mervin served in the 10th Mountain Division's 85th regiment alongside Senator Robert Dole. For his selfless service to America, Mervin received a Bronze Star for his heroism and two Purple Hearts.

After Mr. Williams' return to the United States to recover from shrapnel wounds he received defending our nation, he dedicated himself to improving the lives of his fellow veterans and our entire community. Mervin became engaged in many significant organizations including Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Eagles, the Moose Lodge, and The Knights of Columbus.

Madam Speaker, Mervin Williams is remembered as an American hero who loved and served our country and community in war and peace. Today, as we bid him farewell, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning his passing and honoring his life. In league with his comrades who wore America's colors, Mervin Williams was a good man who did great things for the cause of human freedom. We are all diminished by his loss; and inspired by his life.

ACTION IN COMMUNITY THROUGH
SERVICE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mary Ta, a student at Lake Braddock Secondary School in

Burke, VA and recipient of the In Hope Freedom Rings Foundation Scholarship. Mary sets a strong example as a leader among her peers, and is committed to making the most of her gifts and passions.

Mary exhibits a maturity beyond her years. Her father passed away when she was eight years old, forcing her family to relocate. Later, as her older siblings left home, she assumed responsibility for her younger sister. She has learned the flexibility and presence of mind needed to excel under demanding circumstances, coupled with a natural compassion and intellectual curiosity.

Mary has distinguished herself as a leader in the school community, in large part through her commitment to public service. She is the past Secretary and Vice-President of the Lake Braddock Key Club and a member of Key Club International. She serves in the Key Club as the Capital District's Lieutenant Governor, working on a board of trustees from all over the Washington Metro Area and Delaware. Her responsibilities include overseeing 15 high schools in the Capital District and acting as liaison between them.

In addition, Mary has organized and coordinated various service projects with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the American Red Cross, Women's Domestic Shelter, United Nations Children's Fund, and many more.

Mary's strong orientation towards volunteerism has helped make her a leader in the student community. In 2005 she co-founded and is the current Vice-President of the Bruin ESOL Tutoring Association, a tutoring program for middle school students with English as their second language. In addition she has been an officer of the National Honor Society and the Student Government Association, and last year she attended Girls State at Longwood University and was elected to serve as a state Delegate.

Balancing her work in the greater community with more artistic activities, Mary is a serious musician, having played the violin for nine years. She has been a member of the Lake Braddock Orchestra since 2003, and is also a member of the Symphonic Orchestra and Tri-M music Honor Society.

Mary intends to continue challenging herself on many levels. Following college, she hopes to join the Peace Corps and ultimately to become a professor of history.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending Mary Ta for her commitment to service and for the vital role she continues to play in her student community.

IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY
MONTH

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, in his Inaugural Address, President John F. Kennedy asked the people to ask not what their country could do for them but what they could do for their country.

Last month, as I again stood witness to history, President Barack Obama spoke a similar message, asking the people he had been elected to serve to remember the legacy that

came before and with which many of us are intimately familiar: hard work, faith, and understanding in the face of economic insecurity, international conflict and personal differences.

No one understands this legacy better than African Americans, and it is with that in mind that we come together again this February to celebrate Black History Month.

The theme of Black History Month this year is "The Quest for Black Citizenship in the Americas." It is a theme we in West Virginia understand to our core. Making our homes in a state born out of the Civil War, we are intimately familiar with the struggle for equality.

It is no surprise that we've seen significant moments in history celebrated right here in our hills and hollows. Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black History" hailed from Huntington, a son of slaves who worked in the coal mines to earn money for an education at West Virginia State College and then Howard University in Washington, DC.

Booker T. Washington, perhaps our most famous African American, walked from Virginia to Kanawha County, 'free at last,' to have a better life for his family. He also worked hard to obtain the education he felt in his heart was his right to pursue, working in the coal mines until he was 16. He walked 200 miles on foot to study at the Hampton Institute in Virginia and then came right back to West Virginia to teach the children of Appalachia.

Minnie Buckingham Harper of Keystone, the first African American woman to become a member of a legislative body in the United States, broke ground for countless women in 1928 when she was appointed to fill the term of her late husband.

Leon Sullivan, born in Charleston, was brought up in a dirty alley in one of the city's most poverty-stricken sections, worked in a steel mill to pay his tuition at West Virginia State College, and rose from poverty to found the Opportunity Industrialization Center, a job-training organization with branches around the world.

Helen Dobson was from Raleigh County, well-known throughout West Virginia for her beautiful voice, performed at the inauguration of two of West Virginia's governors and served as public school teacher for many years. Her spirit is still strong in southern West Virginia and it was with Ms. Dobson in mind that I signed on as a cosponsor of a bill that designates the African American spiritual as a national treasure. This bill passed the House of Representatives earlier this month.

Countless men and women have worked long hours for less pay to provide for a better future for their children. They have fought, and continue to fight, for our liberties in the armed forces. Through their compassion and quiet strength, these men and women are role models by which we all can live.

With change and the spirit of unity sweeping the Nation, we have come together again to celebrate Black History month. I can think of no more fitting honorees this month than the African American men and women of West Virginia who have done so much to serve our Nation.

Today, southern West Virginians remain deeply indebted to our African American educators who work hard to make sure the children of the Mountain State are ready to take part in an ever more challenging and modern economy. Folks like Bluefield State President