

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

AMBASSADOR RICHARD SKLAR

**HON. NANCY PELOSI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2009*

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, on January 20, 2009, just hours after President Obama took the oath of office, our nation lost a tremendous American: Richard Sklar.

My friend Richard Sklar was a master builder: of family, of ideas, of infrastructure, of peace, of the future.

My husband, Paul, and I first met Richard and his beautiful wife Barbara in the 1970s. I remember the day the Sklars moved into the neighborhood. My daughters Christine and Nancy met them first, running home to exclaim to me, "A new family has moved in. They have children our age. Their mother is beautiful, and their father sings show tunes. And did I tell you, they're Democrats?"

My five children became fast friends with the Sklar children: Karen, Eric, Marc, and Pamela. We all quickly came to cherish Richard's larger-than-life personality, sense of humor, and love of life and family.

Richard was like the pied piper when it came to children. When one of my kids wasn't home, there was a good chance that the Sklars were hosting a basketball game, movie, meal, or party. Over 20 years ago, the kids saw the Smurf movie and bestowed Richard with the nickname "Papa Smurf." They—and he—used it ever since.

With a zest for the organic and the exotic, Richard and Barbara were "foodies" long before the term was officially invented. You could count on expanding your palate at the Sklar tables in San Francisco and Napa. He was proud of his homegrown grapes and figs, and enjoyed the small celebrations—weekends in the country, birthdays, and family dinners—as much as the big holidays. Though Jewish and proud of his heritage, Richard put up the biggest Christmas tree anyone had ever seen.

Richard was a master builder of ideas. A brilliant engineer, businessman, diplomat and mediator, Richard brought his passion, talents and determination to every challenge he faced. As pragmatic as he could be in business, Richard was at heart a dreamer—always pursuing big ideas, big ideals, and big innovations.

Richard loved people—earning the respect of all, from the people on the street to the President of the United States. His confidence in their possibilities inspired greatness in return.

But Richard wasn't afraid to use tough love as well, because he was passionate, mission-driven and fearless in all his endeavors. In one such tough love work moment, he said "I didn't come here to be uncritically loved; I get that from my grandkids." He certainly had his priorities in order.

Richard had an opinion about everything and was never shy about expressing his views—whether about family, movies, books,

or politics. Richard wanted the last word in any conversation—and usually he got it.

Richard and I shared a birthplace—Baltimore, Maryland—and a love for progressive values and Democratic politics. Richard and Barbara were long involved in local and national politics from McGovern to Obama. They participated in every election cycle, building coalitions and urging participatory democracy. They opened their home for candidates for office at all levels of service. If you showed up at the Sklar house during TEDDY KENNEDY's 1980 campaign, any number of KENNEDY family and friends might be there for breakfast or dinner.

And more often than not, you would see that great Sklar and KENNEDY friend, ANNA ESHOO. Richard delighted in ANNA's success as a Member of Congress over the years.

Richard and Barbara taught their children to be active in civic life and have always taken great pride in their children's public service.

Throughout the years, Richard's role as master builder of ideas manifested itself in his work to preserve our planet for future generations. A force of nature himself, he never stopped thinking about new ways to save the planet, promote energy independence, and create innovative solutions by sheer force of will and intellect.

San Francisco will always bear the mark of Richard the master builder of infrastructure. In his lifetime, Richard oversaw construction of the Moscone Convention Center, kick-started Muni, and supervised the reconstruction of San Francisco's historic cable car system.

When you attend a conference at the Moscone Center, commute on an electric bus, or catch a cable car ride, you are among millions of people benefiting from the city that Richard helped rebuild.

The Balkans bear the touch of Richard the master builder of peace. In the 1990s, President Clinton asked him to help rebuild war-torn Bosnia, where he coordinated programs with the European Union, World Bank and International Monetary Fund to bring economic reconstruction and strategic reform to eight Balkan countries. He was responsible for restoring basic electricity and water services, reopening the Sarajevo airport and strengthening mine removal efforts. He would return to the area a few years later to help with Montenegrin independence for which he received the highest non-citizen medal of honor.

Richard also served with distinction as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and will be long remembered for his work to reform management, budgetary financing and personnel practices there.

Richard said that when he was an ambassador in Sarajevo, he made a point of writing out personal notes to the White House on the fax cover sheets that he knew the Bosnian staffers would surreptitiously read—and discuss—as they sent his weekly reports back to Washington. He wanted the Bosnians to know that President Clinton never thought about Bosnia without considering "what does Richard Sklar think?" and that Richard Sklar never

thought about Bosnia without knowing "this is what President Clinton thinks."

While Richard bore the title of ambassador, it is Barbara, with her grace and grit, who is the true family diplomat, negotiating strong personalities and countless adventures in parenting: from Eric's pierced ear to Marc's high school parties. Of course, according to Richard, Karen and Pamela were perfect.

As they traveled the world, Barbara provided the sense of home, keeping their network of family and friends together even while she developed her own networks in civics and philanthropy. Barbara's artistry captured on canvas their life from California to New York to Italy to the Balkans.

For their entire relationship, Richard called her, "Beautiful Barbara." She was always the most beautiful person that he knew.

Like all great visionaries, Richard knew he was building a future he would not see.

Even when he became ill, Richard never stopped his work for the next generation. He continued his work on the local Public Utilities Commission, mentored political figures, and fought for a cure for cancer—if not for him, then for others. Richard taught us how to fight: never giving up, never losing hope, ever confident that the struggle was worth it for every extra minute it gave him with Barbara, his four children, and his eight grandchildren.

He also used the time to come up with new ideas about how to rebuild our country. How we will miss those phone calls and detailed voice messages—mine always contained strategic advice for the House Democrats.

My last message from Richard came after he heard President Obama's inaugural address. He thought it was wonderful, and characteristically had some thoughts to share about it. Later that same day, Richard left us.

Knowing Richard's interest in show business, the movie that I think best describes his journey is, "It's a Wonderful Life". With Richard Sklar in it, it was indeed a wonderful life.

IN HONOR OF LAUREL BRENNAN  
AND THE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2009*

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Laurel Brennan, Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO and the Women in Leadership Development (WILD) program. As a devoted mentor, Ms. Brennan has been generous with her time in helping hundreds of women. Through her tireless efforts to help women advance in their professional endeavors, many have reached new heights in the labor movement and other fields.

In 1997, Ms. Brennan became the first woman to hold the position of Secretary-Treasurer of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO.

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