

Key working groups organized for the Prague Conference will focus on property restitution in countries like Poland that still have no applicable laws, looted art and Judaica, and Jewish cultural property. There will also be a special session on "Caring for Victims of Nazism and Their Legacy," which will examine the pressing humanitarian and social needs survivors face.

Those who survived the Holocaust and overcame horrific trauma to rebuild their shattered lives deserve to live their final years with dignity. We cannot talk about remembrance and restitution without addressing survivor destitution. I am hopeful that the Prague forum will answer this urgent call to action.

CONGRATULATING THE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL LADY PANTHERS

**HON. JOE DONNELLY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Madam Speaker, today I wish to extend my congratulations to the South Bend Washington High School Lady Panthers, 2009 State Runners-Up in the 4A girls basketball division.

During their remarkable season, the Lady Panthers won 26 games on their way to finishing second in national rankings by ESPN. In a state championship game that will be remembered as one of the best in Indiana high school basketball history, South Bend Washington lost 71-69 to Ben Davis High School of Indianapolis, the nationally top-ranked squad, on a last second shot. Through their determination, effort, and outstanding achievements, the Lady Panthers can be proud of all that they have done for girls basketball in the state of Indiana.

The South Bend Washington team consisted of 12 young ladies, including: Seniors Skylar Diggins, Alandrea Pfeifer-Nailon, Karis Phillips, Rakeesha Lane, Takoia Larry, Jasmine Watson, and Jazmine Watson; Junior Avante Newsome-Gunn; Sophomores Porscha Hill and Terran Scott; and Freshmen Brytney Bennett and Shareita Patton.

Head Coach Maurice Scott was assisted by Don Coddens. In addition to the Washington High School student body, alumni, and parents, officials such as Mayor Steve Lueke, School Superintendent James Kapsa, Washington Principal George McCullough, Jr., and Athletic Director Marilyn Coddens lent support and encouragement throughout the season.

After averaging 29 points per game, South Bend Washington senior guard Skylar Diggins was named the 2009 Gatorade and Naismith National High School Player of the Year, and was also the winner of the 2009 Indiana Miss Basketball award.

The city of South Bend and the surrounding area rallied behind the Lady Panthers. For the fourth consecutive year, thousands of fans traveled to Indianapolis, where they made the State Championship game feel like a home contest.

Again, I offer my hearty congratulations to the members of the South Bend Washington High School girls basketball team on their Semi-State title, their extraordinary effort in the State Championship game, and for all of their accomplishments this season.

HONORING DONALD NORCROSS UPON HIS RECEIPT OF THE FIRST CIVIC LEADERSHIP AWARD FROM CAMDEN COUNTY COLLEGE

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Donald Norcross, who was the recipient of the inaugural Camden County Civic Leadership and Responsibility Award on April 2, 2009. Mr. Norcross received this award in recognition of his tireless efforts championing the causes of local laborers and their families, ensuring that the needs of local social service organizations and their clients are met, and spearheading efforts toward the renewal of the City of Camden.

While a student at Camden County College, Mr. Norcross began his career as an apprentice electrician. Today he is the president of the Southern New Jersey AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, vice president of the Southern New Jersey Building Trades Council, and assistant business manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 351.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Norcross has also worked to make his community better through his civic endeavors. For more than ten years he has served as a member of the executive board of the United Way of Camden County. He founded the Home Port Alliance, a group of South Jersey veterans, activists and elected officials. This group successfully worked to bring the retired USS *New Jersey*, the most decorated battleship in United States history, to the Camden waterfront. This proud ship now serves as a monument to the brave sailors who served on her during her long and distinguished career as well as an exciting attraction that contributes to the economic development of Southern New Jersey. In light of these considerable achievements, it is fitting that Mr. Norcross was honored with the inaugural Camden County Civic Leadership and Responsibility Award. He is an excellent example for all Camden County College graduates and students. I congratulate Mr. Norcross for receiving the award and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

**HON. ED WHITFIELD**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the talented Murray State University Symphonic Wind Ensemble from Kentucky's First Congressional District. Tonight, the wind ensemble has been invited to perform at the world renowned John F. Kennedy Center. I have no doubt that these gifted students will represent western Kentucky well in our nation's Capital.

Under the direction of Mr. Dennis L. Johnson, the Murray State University Symphonic Wind Ensemble has gained a reputation for excellence both here in the United States and

abroad. This reputation has allowed them to perform in some of the most prestigious venues and events in the world. In 2000 and 2005, they were invited for special performances at Carnegie Hall. In 2001 they were the only ensemble from the United States selected to perform at the International Wind Band Conference in Manchester, England. This year they appeared in a special concert at the state Kentucky Music Educators Association Conference in Louisville. The ensemble has also been selected by competitive audition to perform at the prestigious College Band Director's National Association Conferences.

The Symphonic Wind Ensemble is one of the premiere performing organizations for the highly respected Murray State University Department of Music. Each year the wind ensemble presents a series of concerts featuring international performing artists-conductors and premieres compositions by composers from throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, these students and musicians have shown an unwavering commitment to both their studies and their music. Their performance this evening at the Kennedy Center is a true testament to their dedication to training and practice. The achievements of Murray State University's Wind Ensemble are noteworthy, and I ask the entire United States Congress to join me in congratulating them for receiving the great honor of being asked to perform at the Kennedy Center. I would also like to commend Murray State University as a whole for their commitment to excellence over the past 87 years. The wind ensemble is a shining example of the many incredible programs the university offers.

HONORING VINCI RICCHIUTI

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Vinci Ricchiuti upon being named one of the "2009 Common Threads Honorees" by California State University, Fresno. Mrs. Ricchiuti will be honored at the 13th Annual Common Threads Luncheon to be held on Friday, April 3, 2009.

The Common Threads Award recognizes women who have made a remarkable and visible contribution to the enhancement of their communities. Vinci Ricchiuti was born and raised in Fresno, California, and spent her childhood on and around her family's farm. Her grandparents farmed tree fruit and almonds. She married Patrick Ricchiuti in 1981 and became a member of another farming family; she quickly became an ambassador for fresh fruit and nuts. Even with her role as a businesswoman and mother, she continues to make time for community involvement.

Mrs. Ricchiuti has volunteered for 10 different committees with California State University; including Foundation Board of Governors, Budget Committee Chair, Ambassador for Higher Education Committee, Comprehensive Campaign Leadership Committee and Alumni Board Past Director. She is also a Foundation board member for Community Regional Medical Center, an advisory board member for the Nazareth House and a past president for Fort Washington Elementary School. Between Mrs.

Ricchiuti's volunteerism and her philanthropic spirit, the time and produce that she has donated has benefited multiple organizations in the Fresno area including numerous schools within the Clovis Unified School District, the Fresno Art Museum, Fresno Metropolitan Museum, Junior League of Fresno and Assistance League of Fresno. She has made donations to various California State University organizations and the not-for-profit hospitals in the region.

For Mrs. Ricchiuti's commitment and dedication to her community, she has been recognized as the "California State University, Fresno Alumni of the Year" from the School of Arts and Humanities, the "Arthur Safstrom Award for Outstanding Service to Fresno State." She has also been named the California State University, Fresno Alumni Association "Top Dog," the Association of Fundraising Professionals "Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year," and the Foundation for Clovis Schools "Guardian of the Year."

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Vinci Ricchiuti upon being named a "2009 Common Threads Honoree" by California State University, Fresno. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mrs. Ricchiuti many years of continued success.

HONORING DOCTOR CHARLES JOHNSON

**HON. JIM McDERMOTT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of the honoring of his lifetime achievement by one of Seattle's historic organizations and keeper of the arts, the Rainier Club, the people of the State of Washington hold up as a national inspiration the work of one of the world's most distinguished authors, Seattle's own Dr. Charles Johnson.

Dr. Johnson made the journey to Seattle from Long Island in 1976 to teach at the University of Washington. He noted in Smithsonian Magazine in 2008 that Seattle is "an ideal environment for nurturing innovation, individualism and the creative spirit." It is in this setting that Dr. Johnson has made a uniquely rich array of contributions to the arts and letters, and became one of his generation's most distinguished African American authors.

While his works are too numerous to list, Madam Speaker, Dr. Johnson counts among his literary gems four novels, Faith and the Good Thing, Oxherding Tale, Middle Passage, and Dreamer; as well as short stories, screenplays, aesthetics, comic art, and King: The Photobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr. His awards and honors are as abundant as they are approbative.

Dr. Johnson noted in Seattle's Post-Intelligencer on April 27, 2007 that American society is threatened by a "diminished literary culture," the cure for which is "the experience of complex, well-wrought, visionary books that challenge our assumptions, our intellectual laziness, and transform as well as deepen our perceptions of the world and ourselves." While he probably intended otherwise, this describes Dr. Johnson's own pivotal role in our literary ethos, as his works consistently have challenged readers' assumptions and intellectual

laziness while transforming and deepening our world view and our self-knowledge.

Dr. Johnson's influence is international, but it is our honor that his presence is local to Washington State's 7th Congressional District.

IN HONOR OF THE PERFORMING ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY (PAWS)

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the 25th anniversary of the founding of The Performing Animal Welfare Society, PAWS, which continues to valiantly lead efforts to protect all animals and to ensure proper humane sanctuary for wildlife who have experienced the inhumanity of the exotic and performing animal trades.

In 1984, Pat Derby and Ed Stewart founded PAWS, sharing their commitment to develop a pristine sanctuary for abused, neglected and retired wildlife. Throughout the last 25 years, I am proud to have worked with PAWS to ensure improved, humane standards for captive wildlife. An early success for PAWS and animal rights activists was celebrated in 1985 with the passing of California Assembly Bill 1620 which introduced humane standards for the care and handling of wildlife. Following that initial success, more support was garnered which led the California Assembly to pass the Elephant Bill in 1995. This historic statute mandated that elephants be provided minimum adequate space to move freely and prohibited the use of chains for confinement.

Building on previous accomplishments, PAWS forged a bipartisan partnership with Congress in 1997 to pass the Asian Elephant Conservation Act. In another watershed moment for animal protection advocates, this important legislation provided financial assistance for projects intended to protect Asian elephants and blocked funding for captive breeding programs. As a co-sponsor of the original Act, and having twice voted to fully fund the Asian Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Acts of 2001 and 2007, I understand the importance and deeply appreciate the beneficence of PAWS. In addition to protecting elephants, PAWS has successfully implemented solutions to rescue and relocate over 35 tigers and other animals from breeding facilities.

Through The Performing Animal Welfare Society's extraordinary accomplishments, which now includes over 2,400 acres of natural protected sanctuaries, countless captive animals have been rescued from hazardous and inhumane conditions and have been provided with healthy and sustainable environments in which to live quality lives. Without their steadfast support and dedication for the humane treatment of wildlife, our nation's efforts to protect these animals would be drastically impaired.

Madam Speaker, it is with the upmost respect and gratitude that I rise to honor the 25th anniversary of PAWS and especially to pay tribute to Pat Derby and Ed Stewart.

TRIBUTE TO THE BOOKER T. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1949

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize and extend my congratulations to the Booker T. Washington High School Class of 1949 as they prepare to celebrate their 60th class reunion. Booker T. Washington High School is located in Overtown, Miami, Florida, which is in my congressional District.

Founded in 1926 for African-American students residing from West Palm Beach to Key West, Booker T. Washington High School has served as a stalwart in the Miami-Dade County community since its inception. By 1949, Booker T. Washington High School was one of three African-American high schools in Miami-Dade County and since then has become a vital center for cultural activities in Overtown.

The Class of 1949 was the first high school alumni group in South Florida to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a holiday. Additionally, the Class of 1949 has been the sole alumni group in the country to file and successfully conclude a Civil Rights Action, specifically a public accommodation lawsuit against a commercial establishment. Moreover, many "49ers" have engaged in charitable endeavors including granting educational scholarships, annual contributions and support to the United Negro College Fund, the Black Archives and the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation.

Noteworthy achievements by the "49ers" include: the first African-American elected to public office in Miami-Dade County as a County Commissioner, the first African-American to serve as chairman of a board in Miami-Dade County the Fair Housing and Employment Commission and the first African-American to serve as a head coach at a fully integrated public high school in Miami-Dade County.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to commemorate Booker T. Washington High School for its remarkable role in fostering education among African-Americans and implore its alumni to ensure that future generations have educational access to foster the skills to face complex challenges. I once again extend my congratulations to the members of the Booker T. Washington High School Class of 1949 as they prepare to celebrate their 60th class reunion.

CONGRATULATING THE ROCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

**HON. JOE DONNELLY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 21, 2009*

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Madam Speaker, today I rise to extend my congratulations to the Rochester High School Boys Basketball Team. The Zebras succeeded in placing second in the IHSAA 3-A State Tournament on March 28, 2009 at Conseco Field House in Indianapolis. After making it to the championship