RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

HON. DAVID R. OBEY

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. OBEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today, as a member of the House of Representatives who has been intimately involved with the area of biomedical research and health care, to draw the attention of the Congress and the nation to the 20th anniversary of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), a national resource for molecular biology information located at the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health (NIH).

I am reminded at this time of our late distinguished colleague Claude Pepper who, in 1987, introduced H.R. 393, a bill to establish a National Center for Biotechnology Information. As he eloquently described it, the Center would deal ''with nothing less than the mystery of human life and the unfolding scroll of knowledge, seeking to penetrate that mystery, which is life itself.'' A quick study, Claude early on concluded there was a growing need to fit together the pieces of the genetic puzzle so as to benefit humankind. Although the term biotechnology was relatively new at that time, there was clear evidence that the whole biotechnology information infrastructure was overloaded and there was an urgent need for developing a central repository for storing and sharing the data resulting from the explosive growth of research in molecular biology. The information-handling organization envisioned in the bill, the National Center for Biotechnology Information, became a reality with the signing by President Reagan of the Health Omnibus Extension Act (P.L. 100–607) on November 4, 1988.

I remember well those early years when a group of Nobel Laureates appeared before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and laid out a vision that revolutionized our understanding of biology and genomics. Chairman Bill Natcher and those of us on the subcommittee enthusiastically supported the Genome Project. Its magnitude was nothing short of President Kennedy's vision of landing a man on the moon for it launched a grand national challenge of utmost importance to human health. NIH Director James Wyngaarden testified that year that we had sequencing data on less than one-tenth of one percent of the human genome. He said then that while the pace of biology research was rapidly accelerating, the ability to analyze and share information was severely constrained and that if we were going to understand the disease process we would need new and better information approaches. Clearly, the organization defined in Claude's bill fit that need and so the Appropriations Committee readily provided the necessary funding for NCBI.

Today molecular biology and genomics are the primary drivers of medical progress. And, under the innovative leadership of Dr. David Lipman, NCBI's first and current director, NCBI's molecular biology information resources are empowering hundreds of thousands of researchers around the world to identify disease-related genes and develop strategies for treating and preventing disease. It's amazing that each and every week researchers are downloading data from NCBI that is equivalent in size—I am told—to the entire contents of the Library of Congress.

The U.S. Congress has encouraged and generously supported the more than 40 database resources developed by the NCBI. The recent legislative requirement that the results of NIH-funded research be made available through NCBI's PubMed Central database will, we believe, accelerate scientific progress and the discovery of new treatments.

Over the past 20 years, the management of biological information has progressed rapidly and has become an integral part of the scientific process. It is now virtually impossible to think of an experimental strategy in biomedicine that does not rely heavily on the kind of resources and tools developed by the NCBI for analyzing molecular and genomic data.

In summary, Madam Speaker, under Dr. Lipman's careful planning and creative stewardship the NCBI has responded successfully to the challenge of the mandate of the 1988 legislation by effectively developing a major national resource for molecular biology information that is greatly benefiting medical researchers, practitioners, educators, and the general public.

I believe that the era of ''personalized medicine''—including highly targeted individualized treatments— will soon be upon us, and NCBI clearly will be a driving force in making that a reality. So I want to offer my congratulations to NCBI's visionary leader, Dr. David Lipman, to NLM's excellent director, Dr. Donald A. B. Lindberg, and to the bright and dedicated staff of the NCBI for 20 years of outstanding public service to the nation and to the world.

HONORING MAYOR WILLIAM HICKS

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the remarkable achievements of William ''Bill'' Hicks, the beloved mayor of Romney, West Virginia.

Bill is a veteran of the Second World War's Pacific Theater where he was involved in navigation and sighting for secret bombing missions. Just fifteen days after returning home from the war, he married Thelma Elizabeth Berg on December 27, 1945.

Together, they made Romney their home on July 1, 1964 and have lived there ever since. Bill worked for Western Union Telegraph Company where he played a key role in setting up the first transcontinental microwave relay communications in the U.S. His work involved implementing communications infrastructure for private and government entities located throughout West Virginia and the surrounding areas. Through his work, Bill also developed a passion for public service.

He was first elected to the Romney City Council in 1968 and later was elected as Mayor of Romney in 1991. After more than 40 years of service, Mayor Hicks recently stepped down, but still remains committed to serving his community. He has been involved in numerous community organizations. He also serves on the Hampshire County Development Authority, the Potomac Valley Transit Authority, the Romney VFW, and the American Boy Scout Committee, just to name a few.

Bill and his wife Thelma remain committed to their community and their family. They raised five children, boast eight grandchildren and now have five great-grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Romney's beloved Mayor and long-time distinguished public servant, William ''Bill'' Hicks for his years of service and contributions to Hampshire County and the State of West Virginia. Mayor Hicks is a friend and a fellow West Virginian. I wish him all the best in the years to come.

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF PETE'S HAMBURGERS

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. KIND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Pete's Hamburgers of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin and to recognize their 100th anniversary.

It is reassuring to see that despite these tough economic times many American small businesses are still thriving. It was 100 years ago when Pete Gokey opened Pete's Hamburgers as a small, humble stand selling panfried hamburgers. Pete Gokey's life embodies the hard work, dedication, and commitment that have made our country great.

Although we recognize it today for achieving the feat of keeping its doors open for 100 years, the story of Pete's Hamburgers is one founded upon an individual's commitment to public service and hard work. Before opening his stand to sell hamburgers, Pete Gokey was a member of the volunteer fire department in Prairie du Chien. As fate would have it, Pete was selected to be the chef for one of the fire department's community events, at which he was expected to serve fried hamburgers with onions. The hamburgers were a huge success and became the catalyst for Pete Gokey's successful stand.

Gokey was able to turn his stand into a fixture of the Prairie du Chien community. Whether serving hamburgers or volunteering as a fire fighter, Pete Gokey was a man who lived a life based on hard work and service to his community.

Pete's Hamburgers and its quality product have stood the test of time and I proudly stand before this chamber to recognize the success of Pete and his family who have dedicated their lives to something they love: hamburgers.

I applaud the efforts of Pete Gokey and his family members who now run the business and I am proud to see their hard work rewarded by 100 years of business and 100 years of service to the Prairie du Chien community. May their success continue for many more years to come.

CONGRATULATING PAIGE EPLER ON HER GRADUATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HIGH SCHOOL

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Paige Laura Epler from Woodbridge, Virginia, on her graduation from the University of Oklahoma High School. Twelve year old Paige graduated on June 5, 2009 as the youngest girl to earn a high school diploma from an accredited high school. Paige had a 4.0 grade point average; however, she excelled in other areas as well. An extremely accomplished violinist, in addition to playing at her graduation, she was the selected violinist for NASA's 50th Year celebration and at President Obama's Inaugural Luncheon.

My colleagues also may know Paige from her passionate efforts to Save the Sharks. Starting at age eight, she has worked to educate people about sharks and dispel the myths that have led to a number of species becoming endangered. Paige has given briefings at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, the Science Museum of Virginia, and to the United States Congress.

Madam Speaker, Paige Epler represents the best this country has to offer, and her dedication to her studies bespeaks of the bright future before her. I congratulate her on her wonderful accomplishment and wish her well in all of her future endeavors.

IN TRIBUTE TO THE LATE AUBREY EMMITT FALLIN

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of a truly great American, Aubrey Emmitt Fallin. Aubrey was a courageous veteran, a dedicated citizen, and a fiercely loyal friend and father.

Aubrey was a patriot by anybody's definition. He served as a marine during WWII, landing on Iwo Jima February 19, 1945. He demonstrated indestructible bravery and strength, enduring a grueling 24 hours in which 2,721 of his fellow patriots lost their lives. Within the following 36 days, over 7,000 American soldiers were killed in action. His presence during this historic struggle put him in one of the bloodiest battles in World history. If it were not for brave men like Aubrey the war would have been lost. Risking and overcoming much, Aubrey emerged from the war with deeply rooted pride, admiration, respect, and love for his America.

After his completion of service, Aubrey was not only a veteran, he was a veteran's veteran. Beyond his recollection and stories of this era he would also give lectures on how to apply yesterday's lessons to today and tomorrow. In peacetime, he was just as fierce of a freedom fighter as he was when bullets were flying all around him. Even as his health failed him, he kept a vigilant eye out for the best interest of America. He used his devotion to our great nation to spur and awaken that very same passion within every individual he knew.

Beyond the battlefield, Aubrey served on the front lines of his local political community through his active leadership. He was a member of Coffee County Board of Registrars, The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War, past chairman of The Coffee County Republican Party, former president of Douglas Hobos & Shriner Clowns, a member of the Masons and Shriners, and a past president of the Exchange Club. He manifested his faithful love for our country through continuing to sacrifice his time and serve his fellow citizens. His unwavering service, vigilance, and outspoken nature secured freedom for all.

Aubrey was an unquestionably loyal friend. I never left Coffee County without at least one bag of peanut brittle. Enjoying a treat made by such patriotic and loving hands was an honor. We will miss Aubrey as a friend and companion, and we will always be appreciative of the freedom we enjoy because of his and others' sacrifice. His life undoubtedly impacted all who came in contact with him for the better. Aubrey has left a lasting legacy of compassion, strength, and service. May God bless his memory forever!

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THOMAS RAE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Thomas Rae and in recognition of his dedication to his family and country.

Thomas was born on March 2, 1930 in Cleveland Ohio as one of five siblings. Upon graduating from high school, Thomas joined and served in the United States Army for three years before being honorably discharged. After returning to Ohio, he married Mildred Dziak, and they had four daughters who were raised in Strongsville, Ohio. While raising a family, Thomas worked as an inspector for Terex General Motors and later as a supervisor at NASA. Thomas enjoyed his later years in the company of his children and their families. He was fortunate enough to spend time with all thirteen of his grandchildren and especially enjoyed watching them participate in sports. Thomas also took pleasure in the outdoors, playing golf, and handy-work after retirement.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembrance of Thomas Rae, who lived his life with the enduring support of his family and in recognition to his dedicated service to our country. I offer my deepest sympathies to his wife, Mildred; children, Denise Kucinich, Karen Vraja, Arleen Miciunas and Cheryl Vanderwyst; and grandchildren, Gary, Matt, Ryan and Michael Kucinich, Amanda, Samantha and Tommy Vraja, Lukas, Alyssa and Alec Miciunas, Lindsey, David and Nicole Vanderwyst.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. LUJÁN. Madam Speaker, due to scheduling conflicts, I was unable to be present for rollcall vote No. 431. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

RECOGNIZING EUROPE'S BLACK POPULATION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution recognizing Europe's Black population and expressing solidarity with their struggle.

Last year, on April 29, 2008, I chaired the U.S. Helsinki Commission hearing entitled, "The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics" which focused on the more than 7 million people who make up Europe's Black or Afro-descendant population.

Despite their numerous contributions to European society, like African-Americans here, many Black Europeans face the daily challenges of racism and discrimination.

This includes being the targets of violent hate crimes, many of which have resulted in death. Existing inequalities in education, housing, and employment remain a problem and racial profiling is a norm. Few Black Europeans are in leadership positions and political participation is also limited for many, providing obstacles for addressing these problems.

In an effort to raise public awareness of these issues at the national and international level, the Black European Women's Council (BEWC) was launched on September 9, 2008 at the European Union's headquarters. More than 130 Black women from across Europe came to "insist on the recognition and inclusion of Black Europeans economically, politically, and culturally."

This resolution supports BEWC's fight for equality and urges European governments to implement anti-discrimination legislation and other plans of action, including a fund for victims incapacitated as a result of a hate crime.

Given the history of our own country, an increase in transatlantic cooperative efforts between our government and European governments, U.S. and European based civil rights groups, and within the private sector would also provide useful partnerships and assistance in combating racism and discrimination abroad and at home.

This resolution therefore also calls on the U.S. Government to increase support for public and private sector initiatives focused on combating racism and discrimination in Europe as part of our efforts to support global human rights.

It is for this reason that on April 15–16, 2009, I also co-hosted the "Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion" at the European Parliament in Brussels with Black and other European minority parliamentarians to exchange information on the roles of racial and ethnic minority policymakers in developing and supporting policies