

"numbers racket." Holstein was one of the largest contributors to Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, and was also politically active in his native Virgin Islands. Dr. Ben gained a unique insight into the rich cultural milieu of black New York, including its lively street life, informal "numbers" lotteries, street-corner preachers, and politics. At the time, Harlem was the epicenter of African American activism in support of Ethiopia, which had been invaded and occupied by Italy under Benito Mussolini during World War II. Although the occupation ended the year he arrived in New York, Dr. Ben joined the Ethiopian World Federation and African Nationals in America.

Ben Jochannan initially found work as a draftsman, but he was drawn to the study of Africa and its ancient history. He began to speak on Harlem street corners, mostly about African history, taking part in a tradition of public speechmaking that was one of the neighborhood's unique attributes, joining such noteworthy contemporaries as Arthur Reid, Carlos Cooks, and Wentworth Matthew. He then came to know several members of the Harlem History Club's leading intellectuals and historians such as John Henrik Clarke, J. A. Rogers, John G. Jackson, and Richard B. Moore. During the late 1940s, Dr. Ben met and befriended a young man known as "Detroit Red," who used to hustle on the corner below his Harlem office. Their friendship deepened after "Detroit Red" joined the Nation of Islam in prison, returning to Harlem as Malcolm X. They remained close up until Malcolm's assassination in 1965.

Through this early period of his life in the United States, Dr. Ben maintained the Jewish faith of his upbringing, attending Harlem's Commandment Keeper's Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation led by Rabbi Wentworth A. Matthew and other synagogues. In New York, he continued to struggle as he had in Puerto Rico, with the prevailing societal presumption that tended to question his identity as an African Jew; while at the same time, his study of ancient Egyptian history and spiritual practices was having an ever increasing impact on his thinking. He later wrote in several of his books, his differences with other Jews and his intense identification with the African American struggle eventually caused his complete break with Western man's Talmudic Judaism.

In the 1950s, Dr. Ben worked as a researcher for UNESCO and with the Zanzibar mission to the United Nations until that country merged with Tanganyika to become Tanzania in 1961. He later began teaching as an adjunct professor in New York, mostly as a lecturer on African history at such schools as Marymount College at Tarrytown and at Columbia Teacher's College. In 1957, Dr. Ben led a group of nine African American educators to Egypt to show evidence of his contention that sites such as Abu Simbel, the temple of Isis at Philae Island, and the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings were the remains of ancient black civilizations. He began a series of these trips over the years, and by his estimation led several thousand African Americans to Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia over the next four decades. The trips not only facilitated his own study and writing, but they came to be a major part of his legacy as a teacher and contributor. In 1960, Dr. Ben self-published his first work produced in the United States, entitled, "Black Man of the Nile," which

he sold for \$5 a copy at Lewis Michaux's National Memorial African Bookstore on Lenox Avenue. In 1961, he married Gertrude England, of St. Croix. The couple would go on to have nine daughters and three sons. They also adopted six other children. Throughout his career as a writer and teacher, Dr. Ben remained a fixture of the Harlem community where he raised his family.

When Harlem was engulfed by several days of social unrest during the summer of 1964, after the police slaying of a local teenager, Dr. Ben was one of several Harlem activists who met with New York Mayor Robert Wagner and, later, John Lindsay to address systemic problems facing the black community in New York.

As a historian and anthropologist, Dr. Ben would return to the Nile Valley more than fifty times and self-publish forty-two books on African pre-history; the civilizations of Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia; and on religion. His work argued that the creators of ancient Egyptian civilization (the builders of the pyramids, the Sphinx, and cities and lodges) were Black Africans who first migrated north from the Central Rift Valley of present-day Tanzania and Uganda. He claimed that mainstream publishers refused to publish his work, saying that there was not sufficient public interest in them and that the publishers had no way to fact-check his claims. His books were known for their tendentious tone and crude presentation that included newspaper clippings, hand-drawn maps, and an informal, idiosyncratic writing style. However, these shortcomings did not reflect a disregard for academic standards such as citation, footnotes, and bibliography, which he supplied extensively. Dr. Ben chose to write in a manner that could be readily absorbed by both lay readers and researchers with little more than a middle-school education. He also steadfastly criticized the overall presentation of African history in American universities and museums. In the late 1960s, Dr. Ben worked briefly as a writer for a New York publishing company, W. H. Sadlier, where he wrote textbooks on African history such as *Southern Lands*.

In 1973, he served as an adjunct professor of History and Egyptology at Cornell University's Africana Research Center, where his longtime friend and colleague John Henrik Clarke was teaching. Dr. Ben taught there for fifteen years, a period during which he also served as a visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Languages at Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. In 1979, he traveled to the South Pacific where he lectured in Papua New Guinea about the native population's origins on the African continent. In 1984, he became one of six founding members of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization (ASCAC), an organization of black scholars focusing on the ancient African world. The other founders were John Henrik Clarke, Asa G. Hilliard III, Jacob H. Carruthers, Leonard Jeffries, and Maulana Karenga.

Dr. Ben was a popular and sought-after lecturer on college campuses nationally and internationally, celebrated for his direct, polemical style and wit. In 1993, Mary Lefkowitz, a Wellesley classics professor, mentioned him prominently in a Wall Street Journal editorial that fueled an acerbic national debate about "Afrocentrism" in academia. Dr. Ben, a lifelong bibliophile had amassed a personal library of over 15,000 books chronicling African and Af-

rican American history. Outside of academia, Dr. Ben's reputation remains high particularly among many African American laypeople. Today, he can be frequently spotted around Harlem where residents greet him warmly as Dr. Ben!

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 7, 2009

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to cast one of the most important votes of my congressional career—a vote in support of H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act.

We are on the threshold of history that has been a half-century in the making.

The promise of America as a land of equality and opportunity that embraces and cares for all of its citizens is but an empty promise without the guarantee of healthcare and the freedom from financial devastation resulting from illness.

For so many of us, this long battle has had a singular, courageous champion who has fought like a lion for the sick, the elderly, the left behind and the left out. Our great achievement today will also be our greatest memorial to our friend, mentor and inspiration, Senator Edward Kennedy.

Like Senator Kennedy, many of us wondered—as the decades marched by—whether our efforts for comprehensive healthcare reform would ever be successful.

His unwavering commitment to decent healthcare for all Americans has paved the way for the bill before us today. It is on the shoulders of this giant that we stand and I pledge my vote as a tribute to the late Senator.

At the heart of this legislation is one simple, indisputable idea: Everyone deserves health insurance they can afford.

Our system is broken. In a nation where health is a daily value and where health care is the finest in the world, I hear daily from constituents who cannot afford to take care of themselves or their families, who are driven out of the system by skyrocketing premiums, who live under the threat of a shuttered business or a bankrupted household, or who simply have to roll the dice and hope they will get better—or not too much worse.

Perhaps most tragically, our current system turns its back on those most in need—those with a pre-existing condition. Health insurance is meaningless if it's only available to the healthy.

H.R. 3926 will cover 96 percent of all Americans.

It prohibits discrimination based on pre-existing conditions.

It eliminates lifetime caps—immediately.

It includes a non-profit public insurance option designed to increase competition and lower prices.

It provides affordability credits to lower-income Americans to help them pay for coverage.

It modernizes and strengthens Medicare, ensuring the program's continued solvency and eliminating the prescription "donut-hole."

And, very importantly, it is budget neutral.

When I return to my constituents in California, I'll be proud to tell them that with this bill: Employer-based health coverage will improve for 461,000 men, women and children who live in my District; 84,000 households in my District will receive affordability credits to help them pay for coverage they otherwise couldn't afford; 9,500 of the seniors in my District will no longer fall victim to the prescription drug "donut-hole"; 17,100 small businesses in my District will be able to obtain affordable healthcare coverage; and that 15,400 small businesses will qualify for tax credits that will help reduce their health insurance costs.

I'm also proud that I joined with Senator Kennedy to author H.R. 3962, to create an FDA pathway for the approval of biosimilar drugs.

Biotechnology is a complex and emerging field that can harness the power to cure cancer, AIDS, and diabetes, and prevent the onset of deadly and debilitating diseases such as Alzheimer's, heart disease, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and arthritis.

My amendment will save the government \$6 billion over the next ten years while continuing to foster innovation and new advancements.

After President Obama signs this bill, millions of Americans who today have no health insurance will have it. Patients who are now denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition will no longer be shut out of the system. Millions more seniors will be able to afford their medications, and the average American family will pay less for their health coverage.

Most importantly, we will be keeping our promise to the American people that they will have affordable health insurance which they cannot lose or have taken away from them if they become ill.

I look forward to passing this landmark piece of legislation and seeing it signed into law by the President.

ADELE O'TOOLE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 16, 2009

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Adele O'Toole for her outstanding service to our community.

Adele O'Toole has lived in Jefferson County Colorado for 20 years, and during that time has been very active in PTA, co-founded a local book club, served as a Cub Scout den mother, Girl Scout leader, and a frequent volunteer at her children's school events. She sponsored a team for the Relay for Life event in Wheat Ridge, and frequently participates in Race for the Cure.

The dedication demonstrated by Adele O'Toole directly benefits her community. Not only does she run a multimillion dollar business, O'Toole's Garden Centers but finds time to serve her community. In her service to the area homeless Adele O'Toole frequently organized Thanksgiving and Easter Basket drives for the homeless and regularly prepares meals for families who stay at the JeffCo Action Center's shelter.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Adele O'Toole for her recognition by

the West Chamber of Jefferson County. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

HONORING JUNIOR LEAGUE OF FRESNO

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 16, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Junior League of Fresno upon 50 years of community service to Fresno County. The Junior League of Fresno will celebrate their 50th anniversary on Saturday, October 10, 2009, in Fresno, California.

In 1948, the Service League of Fresno was established and in 1959 it was accepted into the Association of Junior Leagues International, Incorporated, and became the Junior League of Fresno. The organization was created as a way for women to promote volunteerism, develop the potential of women and to improve the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

Each year the Junior League of Fresno with hundreds of active and sustaining members, contributes over 20,000 hours of volunteer service toward community efforts. Over the years the league has successfully met the needs of many in the community. The league members research, develop, manage and support projects with community partners in the Fresno region where current needs are unmet and existing resources are minimal. Trained volunteers are matched with specific community needs, which has led to successful partnerships with many organizations such as Break the Barriers, Children's Hospital Central California, the Discovery Center, Firefighters Creating Memories, Fresno Art Museum, Marjorie Mason Center, and the Sanctuary Youth Center.

By educating, training and creating a hands-on experience for the volunteers, the Junior League of Fresno has contributed over 1 million hours of service in the community and has raised over \$3 million for community projects for children, health care issues, social services, education, women's issues, and cultural arts.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Junior League of Fresno for 50 years of service to the Fresno community. I encourage my colleagues to join me in wishing the league many years of continued success.

IN RECOGNITION OF GENE SKOROPOWSKI

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 16, 2009

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my esteemed colleagues from California, MIKE THOMPSON, ZOE LOFGREN, PETE STARK, MIKE HONDA, BARBARA LEE, JERRY MCNERNEY and JOHN GARAMENDI as we honor Eugene Skoropowski, who has served the public and private sector of the passenger rail business

for more than 40 years. He is retiring this week as the Managing Director of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, CCJPA. As his colleagues, friends and family gather together to celebrate the next chapter of his life, we ask all of our colleagues to join us in saluting this outstanding public servant and supporter of passenger rail.

Not long after receiving his degree in architecture, from the Catholic University in Washington, DC, Gene became an active rail advocate in the late 1960s. His passion and desire to improve the passenger rail business has led him to be not only a national leader, but also a forward thinking innovator. Throughout his career he also has been an inspiration to foreign nations looking to enhance passenger rail service.

Before serving as Manager Director of the Capitol Corridor, Gene managed rail projects with Fluor Corporation for ten years in Los Angeles. During his tenure at Fluor, Gene worked closely with both the French National Railways and SYSTRA. He also served with the Philadelphia Regional Transit System and was Chief Railroad Services Officer for Boston's intercity rail system.

When Gene joined Capitol Corridor in 1999, the CCJPA serviced only eight daily trains. In less than a decade the CCJPA service grew to 32 daily trains on weekdays and 22 trains on weekends. As the number of trains grew, so did the ridership and revenue. He has given commuters across Northern California a convenient transportation alternative. Many train stations have benefitted from Gene's assistance. Such projects include the Richmond Intermodal Station, the Berkeley Station Platform Improvements, New Martinez Intermodal Depot and many more. In recent months, he has been intimately involved in the design of a new station in Sacramento.

Gene's efforts to improve the passenger rail business have not gone unnoticed. Since his arrival, Gene's leadership has led the CCJPA to a number of awards. These awards include, but are not limited to: the Regional Award—Project of the year in 2001, presented by Sacramento Area Council of Governments, SACOG, the Graham Clayton, Jr. Award for Distinguished Service to Passenger Transportation, the Partner of the Year, presented by Solano Transportation Authority, STA, and the 2007 President's Service and Safety Award, presented by Amtrak.

Madam Speaker, we are truly honored to pay tribute to our friend and dedicated public servant. We ask all of our colleagues to join with us in wishing Gene, his wife Joann, daughters June, Julie and Jeannette and grandchildren Nicholas and Samantha continued success and happiness in all of their future endeavors.

HONORING EDWARD R. ROYBAL METRO GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 16, 2009

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the opening of the Edward R. Roybal Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension project into my 38th Congressional District.