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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 17, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TED POE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. ETHEL HARRIS HALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Ethel Harris Hall, who passed away last Saturday at the age of 83. Dr. Ethel Hall was one of Alabama's premier educators and one of our Nation's strongest advocates for children. She was the first African American to serve on the Alabama State Board of Education, and she was the first African American and the longest-serving vice chairman of the board of education.

She served as the State board of education's vice president for 10 years and presided over meetings in the absence of the Governor. Dr. Ethel Hall retired 10 months ago after serving on the Alabama State Board of Education for 24 years.

Dr. Ethel Hall was born to Harry and Fannie Mae Harris on February 23, 1928. The Harris family lived in Morgan County, Alabama, and due to the limited educational opportunities in their area, they sent their daughter to live with her grandparents in Jefferson County so she could attend school in north Birmingham.

She attended Parker High School in Birmingham until she moved back home with her parents to attend Council Training School, a laboratory high school of Alabama A&M. She graduated valedictorian of her high school class and then attended Alabama A&M University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree cum laude in 1948.

Dr. Ethel Hall went on to obtain master's degrees from the University of Chicago and Atlanta University. She taught in the Hale County, Jefferson County, and Birmingham city school systems, and later became the first African American faculty member of the University of Montevallo. Dr. Ethel Hall continued to further her education by attending the University of Alabama where she earned a Doctorate of Social Work in 1979. She later taught in the School of Social Work at the University of Alabama.

After decades of teaching, Dr. Ethel Hall entered politics, and she was elected the first African American member of the Alabama State Board of Education on January 19, 1987. She went on to serve six terms before becoming vice chair in 1994. Dr. Ethel Hall served on the State board of education for 24 years and was named vice president emerita.

Dr. Hall served on the State board of education during many of its tumultuous

battles over issues such as funding levels in schools, teacher testing, accountability standards for schools, and academic standards for students. In making these tough decisions, she also remained principled, putting Alabama's children first.

Dr. Ethel Hall wrote about her long career in education in a recently published autobiography, "My Journey: A Memoir of the first African American to Preside Over the Alabama Board of Education."

I rise today to remember Dr. Ethel Hall on the floor of the United States Congress as a trailblazing Alabamian, a gifted teacher, and a strong advocate for the education of our Nation's children.

Dr. Hall was a mentor to so many educators throughout the State of Alabama and this Nation, including my own mother, Mrs. Nancy Gardner Sewell. Through her numerous mentoring relationships, Dr. Hall encouraged teachers to use their talents to positively affect the lives of the students they taught. Not only did she lead by example; she also trained and mentored the next generation of educational leaders.

Indeed, my generation owes pioneers like Dr. Hall a debt of gratitude. Dr. Ethel Hall sowed the seeds for the opportunities that now flourish for so many. I know that I stand on the shoulders of many great giants like Dr. Ethel Hall.

On election night, November 2, 2010, several trailblazing Alabama women made the trip to Selma, Alabama, to be there when I was elected. I will never forget that Dr. Ethel Hall was one of them. Her presence meant so much to me, more than she will ever know. It was her light that guided the path that led me to become Alabama's first African American Congresswoman.

Dr. Ethel Hall was the epitome of a servant leader. She led by example and was motivated by a driving passion

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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