

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JASON M. WOOD, UNITED STATES NAVY

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize those men and women who have served this great Nation with honor, men such as Lieutenant Commander Jason M. Wood, United States Navy.

For the past year, Lieutenant Commander Wood served on my staff as a Congressional Defense Fellow. During his assignment, he served as a senior member of my staff responsible for defense, veterans, foreign affairs and intelligence matters. Lieutenant Commander Wood executed his work as a liaison to the constituents of the First District and the numerous defense installations in the First District with distinction. Furthermore, he provided exceptional support to me as my staff liaison to the House Armed Services Committee in my role as a Subcommittee Chairman and the Co-Chair of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus.

Lieutenant Commander Wood directly contributed to my goal of providing excellent constituent service to the people of the First District. He was responsible for bringing numerous constituent inquiries to a successful conclusion and he was able to leverage his personal and operational experience to respond to the most challenging inquiries.

In addition to his efforts on behalf of the First District, Lieutenant Commander Wood took on projects with regional, state and national implications, demonstrating his ability to view a challenge from many angles and develop innovative solutions often requiring collaboration across many levels of government.

Lieutenant Commander Wood's work ethic, duty to mission, and commitment to servant leadership is without equal. I believe that his personal drive to achieve excellence in his work has and will set a very high standard for his peers.

I would also like to thank Lieutenant Commander Wood and his beautiful young family for the service and sacrifice they make for our nation and our great Navy. His keen sense of honor, impeccable integrity, boundless work ethic, and loyal devotion to duty earned him the respect and admiration of my staff and the 1st District of Virginia. After spending eight of the last ten years stationed in Hawaii, which included three combat deployments to Afghanistan and a 12 month deployment to Bahrain, Lieutenant Commander Wood is headed to the N88 staff at the Pentagon. After that tour Lieutenant Commander Wood will return to the sky and to leading Sailors as he goes back in to harm's way to execute his trade as Naval Aviator. I have no doubt that Lieutenant Commander Wood will continue to serve the United States Navy honorably and with distinction.

I wish him the best of luck as he continues his Naval career. It was an honor and a pleasure having him serve on my staff. We all can sleep soundly at night knowing that men and women like Lieutenant Commander Jason Wood are members of our all-volunteer force and they stand ready to defend our country and take the fight to our enemies; far away

from their families and the comforts of the United States of America.

Lieutenant Commander Wood, thank you. Best of luck to you and God bless you, your family, and your fellow men and women in uniform.

RECOGNIZING THE CITY OF OWENSVILLE ON ITS CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the City of Owensville, located in Gasconade County in Missouri, as the community celebrates its centennial anniversary this year.

What is now the City of Owensville began as an early trail called the Potosi to Boonslick Trail. Spurs from this main trail went to the current city, creating a crossroads that later became the St. Louis to Springfield Road and the St. James to Hermann Road called the "Iron Road."

The city was originally laid out in 1886 by the Owensville Improvement Company, whose owner, Francis Owen, is the town's namesake. Owensville was named from the horseshoe contest in 1847 by Francis Owen and Edward Luster. The contest was won by Mr. Luster, but he did not want the town named Lusterville, and, therefore, it was named "Owen'sville" in honor of his friend. Later it was condensed to Owensville. Owensville residents believe their city is the only place named as a result of a horseshoe pitching contest. Owensville was incorporated as a fourth-class city on May 27, 1911.

Over the past century, industries such as a corn cob pipe factory, a tomato cannery, shoe factories and clay mining supported the town. Today, the RR Donnelly printing company and Emhart Glass Manufacturing are located there. Owensville is a thriving town and a proud community of more than 2,500 residents.

In closing, I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing the residents of the City of Owensville congratulations on their centennial anniversary.

THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CASE OF LOUIS R. HARPER, ET. AL. V. MAYOR AND CITY OF BALTIMORE, ET. AL.

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the case of Louis R. Harper, et. al. v. Mayor and City of Baltimore, et. al. This lawsuit, filed on December 6, 1971, to address discrimination within the Baltimore City Fire Department, BCFD, was the first federal lawsuit to combat discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion decisions in the public safety profession.

The BCFD hired its first African American fire fighters on October 15, 1953, from a group

of 41 men found eligible for appointment after the opportunity for them to take the entrance exam was opened in the summer of 1952. Almost 20 years later, one of those pioneering men became the architect behind the scenes of the legal action filed in 1971.

Mr. Charles R. Thomas was the founding president of the Vulcan Blazers Incorporated, the Baltimore City Chapter of the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters. Mr. Thomas approached Kenneth L. Johnson of the Johnson & Smith law firm asking if he would take on this monumental case. After hearing the facts of the case, Mr. Johnson and his law partner, Mr. Gerald A. Smith, agreed to take the case.

The named plaintiff in the case was Mr. Louis R. Harper, Jr. It was his bravery and selflessness that led the team of plaintiffs, including Mr. Thomas G. Deshields, Mr. Carl E. McDonald, and Mr. Alphonso Thornton. These BCFD members put their careers at risk to demand that the BCFD treat all employees equally.

This case addressed discrimination in the BCFD entrance examination and promotional practices. At the time of the lawsuit, the names of fully qualified African American candidates were marked in red by the civil service commission before being sent to the BCFD. The lawsuit also dealt with disparity in the Department's practices for disciplining African American fire fighters.

Upon the filing of the case, an injunction was issued to halt promotions into 44 newly created battalion chief positions. Finally, in the spring of 1973, Baltimore City was found guilty of discrimination in the management of the BCFD. Federal District Court Judge Joseph H. Young ordered a complete revamping of the Department's entrance examination and promotional procedures.

Since this lawsuit was concluded, the BCFD has appointed an African American Fire Chief and promoted several officers to all ranks as high as assistant chief.

Critically, the BCFD case win was just the beginning of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smith's mission to eradicate discrimination from the public safety profession all along the east coast. This team went on to win fire department cases in Philadelphia, PA and Richmond, VA. They also won cases for African American Baltimore City Police Officers and workers at Bethlehem Steel.

As I close, I also celebrate the remarkable careers of those involved in this groundbreaking case.

The named plaintiff in the case, Mr. Louis R. Harper, Jr., became the first African American to be promoted to Captain in the Baltimore City Fire Department. The other named plaintiffs all retired with the rank of Captain with the exception of Mr. Carl McDonald, who retired as Assistant Chief.

Mr. Kenneth Johnson has retired from the position of Judge on Baltimore's Supreme Bench. Mr. Gerald A. Smith still practices law from his office in the Baltimore area.

These men are true heroes who opened the doors of opportunity to subsequent generations. I thank them for their service to Baltimore and to our nation—and for their willingness to lead the fight against injustice.