

IN HONOR OF ELAINE DAVID

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Elaine David comes to us from Nova Scotia when her parents moved here to relocate in Mount Vernon where she graduated from high school, and by taking weekend and evening courses while working, she also graduated from Elizabeth Seton College.

As a hobby, she and her sister-in-law took classes in floral design and with the encouragement of her family, opened her own flower shop.

Elaine carried over that dedication into her community life. She is a devoted member of the Macedonian Baptist Church of Mount Vernon, a past member of the Black Women's Political Caucus of Westchester, and a member of several floral trade associations. She has received awards from Westchester School for Special Children, the Westchester Chapter of the National Association of Negro Professional Women's Club, the Empire State Funeral Directors Association and the Yonkers Chamber of Commerce.

For more than two decades Elaine David has served her community and the people in it faithfully and with devotion. I am happy to join with the Women's Civic Club of Nepperhan in honoring her for this dedication and thank her for all she has given.

HONORING COLONEL GEORGE D.
BURROW**HON. JOHN R. CARTER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor a decorated war veteran who has made countless sacrifices for our great nation. Retired Colonel George D. Burrow, an American hero, has received numerous medals and recognitions for his unwavering service.

Colonel Burrow was born on May 6, 1932 in Port Arthur, Texas. He began his military career in 1950, when he joined the Texas National Guard. By 1958, he graduated from Officer Candidate School as a Distinguished Military Graduate with an Army commission. Shortly after becoming an officer, Mr. Burrow became airborne and aviator qualified.

Colonel Burrow served five tours overseas during times of crisis, including in Germany, Korea and Vietnam. During these conflicts, Mr. Burrow built the reputation of a genuinely modest, superior warrior that executed his missions with phenomenal efficiency and brilliance.

One of the many examples of Burrow's impressive leadership was his guidance over the Bravo Troop of the famed 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry during the Vietnam War. Burrow commanded the 27 Huey helicopters of Bravo Troop and the legendary group of choppers acquired the nickname—"Burrow's Barbarians." Bravo Troop accounted for more than 2,000 confirmed enemy kills between April 1967 and February 1968.

Colonel Burrow demonstrated unparalleled bravery and perseverance during battle. He was shot down a total of 13 times in Vietnam. When asked about how he managed to survive these seemingly hopeless events, he doesn't boast of his courage and inordinate ability to lead. Instead, Burrow praises his fellow service men that courageously fought alongside him and often times rescued Colonel Burrow and his men.

Colonel George Burrow retired after 39 years of service to the United State of America; his medals include the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Crosses (3rd Award), Legion of Merit, Bronze Star (2nd Award), Air Medal (34th Award), Purple Heart (31st Award), DOD Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (3rd Award), Korean Defense Service Medal, Army Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Master Army Aviator Wings, Parachute Badge, and Joint Chief of Staff Badge. Furthermore, to continue the remembrance of Burrow's service, he was inducted into the Infantry Hall of Fame in 1979.

Mr. Speaker, Retired Colonel George Burrow celebrated his Eightieth Birthday on May 6th, 2012 and it is a great honor for me to recognize an American hero on this day. I will conclude this account of Colonel Burrow's selfless accomplishments by asking my colleagues to join me in reflecting on, and recognizing him, as one of America's greatest men.

IN HONOR OF JAMES L.
SIMMONS, JR.**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, James L. Simmons, Jr., is a Yonkers native who has been giving back to his community for years. For many of those years he was owner/operator of a hair care salon in Yonkers while also serving as a community planner for affordable housing.

In 1999 Mr. Simmons started a partnership with the city of Yonkers to assist in developing affordable homes in distressed areas of southwest Yonkers. Under his leadership as Director of the Center for Urban Rehabilitation and Empowerment, CURE, as it is known, acquired numerous parcels of land in southwest Yonkers with the aid of the Bureau of Planning and Development.

With the land, Mr. Simmons, as general contractor, then obtained various grants and loans to complete two- and three-family homes. He acquired another parcel of land on which he built twelve condominium units and named the development after his late mother.

He had worked on numerous developments including the Waterfront Development Project Gazette Building, and he is now in the predevelopment stage of Cook's Landing, his largest project, which will be 77 affordable rental units.

Mr. Simmons has served on the Yonkers Community Advisory Committee and has received numerous awards for his achieve-

ments. He currently serves on the board of the Yonkers Community Action Program and is commissioner of the Yonkers Municipal Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

I am proud to join with the Women's Civic Club of Nepperhan in honoring James Simmons for his outstanding work in developing and building homes for those who need them most.

IN RECOGNITION OF OFELIA
RUDER'S 50 YEARS OF SERVICE
WITH THE CUBAN HEBREW CON-
GREGATION OF MIAMI**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize a remarkable woman who has meant so much to our South Florida community—Ofelia Ruder. Ofelia has dedicated her life in service to the Cuban Hebrew Congregation of Miami for the last 50 years, starting out as Secretary in 1962 and eventually becoming its Executive Director.

For the last half-century, Ofelia has been the cornerstone of the Cuban Hebrew Congregation in Miami Beach. Through her tireless work on behalf of the congregation she has become an influential leader and role-model, not just for the Cuban-Jewish community, but for South Florida as a whole.

What started out as a small group of Jewish Cuban families in 1961, many of whom having been forced to flee their home country for a second time, the Cuban Hebrew Congregation has become a dynamic and thriving institution that represents a cultural and educational epicenter for Judaism in South Florida. The Cuban Hebrew Congregation's community, "El Circulo," with Ofelia at the forefront, has been committed to outstanding service to the Jewish community. For more than half a century Ofelia has been actively engaging our entire community, committed to improving our South Florida community and instilling the importance of community service and unity among those around her.

In addition to her numerous accomplishments, Ofelia is a proud mother of two sons, Albert and Bernie, who have continued her legacy of public service and have become dedicated public servants themselves.

On behalf of "El Circulo" and the entire South Florida community, I wish to congratulate and thank Ofelia for her 50 years of service with the Cuban Hebrew Congregation. I expect to hear ever greater things yet from Ofelia and the Cuban Hebrew Congregation.

IN HONOR OF NICHELE JOHNSON
AND BROTHER ARTHUR MUHAM-
MAD**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Nichele Johnson and her husband Arthur Muhammad are continuing working for the youth of Mount Vernon and they raise four daughters of their own.

Nichele is Corporation Council for the City of Mount Vernon but it is her work with our young people and their families as a counselor and mentor that led to her being honored tonight by the Henry Allen Educational & Learning Foundation. Her husband, Brother Arthur Muhammad can usually be found on streets where troubled youth congregate, there and in the classrooms of Mount Vernon High School where he engages with some of our city's most troubled youth.

Nichele was raised to embrace her multicultural heritage, to appreciate the power of prayer, and to contribute to society. This manifests itself through her counseling, her giving our food at soup kitchens, to gathering clothing for the needy.

Brother Arthur combines a soft-spoken demeanor with, when necessary, the firmness of one who knows what he is talking about. The respect he has earned often leads to his being called on as a mediator for all age groups.

The Henry Allen Educational & Learning Foundation is honoring Nichele and Brother Arthur who have worked to help all in need, no matter what the need. I am proud to join with the Foundation in praising the work of Nichele Johnson and Brother Arthur Muhammad for what they have done so much to make Mount Vernon a better place to live.

HONORING JUNE BURKART

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of a dedicated wife, proud supporter of our military and veterans, and most importantly, a great Alaskan. On April 26, 2012, Alaska lost one of its hardest working and most dedicated daughters, Mrs. June Burkart.

Mrs. Burkhart was a loving wife and mother whose life was defined by service to her family and community. For decades she served on the boards of countless organizations that supported Alaskans, most recently raising significant funds for the Wounded Warriors Program. As an avid outdoor lover, she worked to ensure that any wounded warrior who wished to hunt or fish had the opportunity to do so through the Safari Club International Alaska Chapter.

For days, I can continue praising her many accomplishments and the many ways that she improved my life and the lives of anyone who knew her. Her memory will continue to live on in our hearts and souls. I hope that June's family, and especially her husband Roy, can take comfort in the bond they had with June as it will be with them always. I hope the precious memories the family has of her will bring them comfort, and that they will come to find, in the lovely words of Hugh Robert Orr:

"They are not dead who live in lives they leave behind. In those whom they have blessed, they live a life again, and shall live through the years eternal life, and shall grow each day more beautiful, as time declares their good, forgets the rest, and proves their immortality."

IN HONOR OF CANTOR ERIK
CONTZIUS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the Cantor fills a special role within the Jewish community; leading worship, officiating at lifecycle events, teaching adults and children, conducting synagogue music programs, and offering pastoral care.

Ten years ago Cantor Erik Contzius brought his talent, his commitment to Reform Judaism and unique personality to Temple Israel of New Rochelle. All the congregants have been touched by him, from the training of children to become B'nai Mitzvahs, to making the High Holidays alive with sound, to entertaining us with song. He holds a special place at Temple Israel of New Rochelle.

Cantor Contzius founded Kol Simkha, the Temple's youth choir, as soon as he arrived in New Rochelle. A decade and hundreds of students later, Kol Simkha is going strong, singing the beloved prayers at Family Services. Cantor Contzius has cultivated many young voices in the congregation, giving them a chance to be heard during special services and on his own album, Teach My Lips a Blessing.

Cantor Contzius has given many distinguished solo presentations, most recently with the Westchester Chorale, singing the Darius Milhaud Service Sacré. Within the synagogue, he performed with its own jazz band, Yidlock, as part of the annual Follies show, and with the Chordsmen, a barbershop quartet.

In November of 2010, the Cantor's original composition, "Ma Ashiv Ladonai," was premiered at the Vatican—a true honor.

He was raised in Parsippany, N.J., received his B.A. in Psychology from Rutgers College and went on to study abroad at the University of York, England. He received his Master of Sacred Music degree from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music, studying in Israel and New York.

Before becoming a part of the Temple Israel family, along with his wife Monica and son Jacob, he served as Cantor at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel of Elkins Park, PA, and Temple Israel of Omaha.

I enthusiastically join with Temple Israel of New Rochelle in honoring Cantor Erik Contzius for the joy, guidance and leadership he has provided over the past decade and wish him many more years among us.

RECOGNIZING MAY AS NATIONAL
FOSTER CARE MONTH

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Res. 242, Recognizing May As National Foster Care Month, I rise to recognize this month dedicated to celebrating selfless foster families who open their hearts and their homes for children in need as well as rededicate myself to ensuring that every child has an opportunity for a brighter future.

I am honored to be a charter member of the Congressional Caucus for Foster Youth, a caucus that allows Members to gain a better understanding of the current state of foster care throughout the nation and identify potential federal policy modifications that could improve outcomes for the children in our country's foster care systems. On February 24, 2012, in an effort to address many of the ongoing issues foster youth face, members of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth launched a national listening tour which began in my district.

Mr. Speaker, currently there are over 463,000 children living in foster care. These children have been placed in homes on the account of the physical, sexual and emotional abuse they have endured with their biological caretaker. My state of California currently has the largest foster care population with the number of youths in foster care tripling since 1981.

Sixty-five percent of children who are not placed in a permanent home emancipate themselves from the system often left unemployed, without a place to live and resorting to homeless shelters. Less than 3 percent go on to college and emancipated females end up four times more likely to receive public assistance compared to the overall population of the United States.

Almost 30,000 children who are victims of abuse and neglect are entrusted to the care of the Los Angeles County Juvenile Dependency Court system. The court's primary mission is to ensure that these youth are safe, happy and secure. As a result, Los Angeles established the country's first courthouse especially designed for children and families.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that we provide more programs, events, activities, and funding that will educate Americans about the success of children placed in permanent homes, debunk myths about the process and acknowledge the thousands of children who could potentially become a part of these statistics. Through these efforts we can increase the rate of adoption, decrease the rate of homelessness among the youths in this group and help develop future leaders and innovative thinkers of tomorrow.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the families who have opened their hearts and homes to foster children. Foster parents play a critical role in the lives of some of the most vulnerable youth in California and across the country. They help hold our nation's social fabric together by ensuring that thousands of young people in this country stay on track towards successful futures.

In addition, I would like to commend SHIELDS for Families, an internationally recognized organization in my district that transforms the lives of parents by providing them with resources to prevent children from going into the foster care system. This month, we celebrate these unsung heroes and their efforts to change the lives of these children.

Mr. Speaker, I am a proud cosponsor H.R. 2012, Foster Care Mentoring Act, focused on connecting foster youth with responsible and caring adults and I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact legislation that addresses the very real and persisting needs of young people in our foster care system.