

1982, President Reagan said, "Mr. Weeks has exemplified the finest traditions of American volunteerism by his unselfish service to his country. As director of the National Veterans Day Celebration in Birmingham for the past years, Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran himself, has devoted his life to serving others, his community, the American veteran, and the Nation. He was the driving force behind the congressional action which in 1954 established this special holiday as a day to honor all America's veterans."

The tradition of respect and honor established by National Veterans Day in Birmingham would be ably carried on by Raymond Weeks' successor, Colonel Bill Voigt. To this pivotal position of community leadership, Colonel Voigt brought his experience from the Alabama Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force Reserves and a deep and abiding concern for our veterans. His dedication went above and beyond duty. New leadership has been tasked to continue this tradition.

As we look toward the 65th anniversary of America's first Veterans Day and to 2014, the 60th anniversary of the legal holiday, we can cast our vision. It is to continue to honor our veterans.

We would do well by restoring emphasis on General Eisenhower's request of Raymond Weeks in 1947 for Veterans Day to perpetuate world peace: "I wish you every success in your purpose of arousing all American citizens to the need for cooperating among ourselves to the utmost to achieve the greatest of all goals—assurance of enduring peace."

The history of Veterans Day is a lesson in character education that can be used to inspire students to learn "living history" from our veterans. Alabama teaches character traits daily, including those illuminated by the history of the founding of Veterans Day—patriotism, courage, perseverance, loyalty and citizenship. Raymond Weeks demonstrated these qualities in his pursuit of the creation of a National Veterans Day and stands as an example of good citizenship for all students and every generation.

The symmetry of service has been a powerful constant through the generations in Alabama.

As an example, recently a rededication was held for the Rainbow Viaduct Memorial in Birmingham, which commemorates the heroism of the 167th Alabama Infantry during World War I. At that same ceremony, members of the modern-day 167th Alabama National Guard were recognized as they prepared for deployment to Afghanistan. Almost a century apart, the challenges may be different but the ethos of service and duty remains the same.

It is important to remember both what we honor and who we honor on Veterans Day. We honor soldiers and their devotion to freedom, yes. But we reflect that these are people around us who have willingly and unselfishly served on our behalf: fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, grandparents, a favorite uncle or cousin, a high school buddy or college roommate, a best friend or a childhood playmate.

Some we have joyfully welcomed back from an assignment or waved at during a parade. Others we thank at their gravesite, shedding a tear in their memory. We thank them for their sacrifice, bravery, and patriotism. We forget none of them.

This is what inspires us as we prepare for the annual observance of Veterans Day this coming November, and it is what continues to motivate my native Birmingham to set the highest standard for honoring those who have preserved the precious gift of freedom for all of us.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEIGHBORWORKS HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTER SACRAMENTO REGION

### HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center Sacramento Region and its employees as they celebrate their 25th anniversary. NeighborWorks is a nonprofit organization committed to improving the Sacramento community by increasing opportunities for families to purchase their own homes and preserving homeownership. I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring NeighborWorks Sacramento Region for their important contribution to the Sacramento community.

Originally founded in 1987, NeighborWorks has grown tremendously and now serves the entire Sacramento Region as well as parts of California's Central Valley. Lead by a committed board of directors and CEO Pam Canada, the devoted staff and partners of NeighborWorks continually work alongside local residents to improve Sacramento's neighborhoods, and make the dream of homeownership a reality for all. For 25 years, NeighborWorks has been successful in increasing homeownership, assisting first-time home buyers, and empowering residents through education and community engagement. It is my privilege to serve as an honorary member of their Board of Trustees, as it was the honor of my late husband, Congressman Robert T. Matsui too. I have enjoyed working with Pam, and always find her and her staff to be responsive to the needs of my constituents.

As our nation's foreclosure crisis continued this past year, the NeighborWorks Sacramento Region has counseled more than 19,800 customers on a variety of housing related issues including foreclosure prevention, refinancing and home purchasing. Through their 3 offices, they have prevented more than 400 foreclosures by helping these distressed homeowners acquire loan modifications, and assisted 2400 residents in purchasing affordable homes. In conjunction with the McGeorge School of Law, NeighborWorks has provided more than 670 customers with free legal services through the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program. Through their work, they have helped hundreds of families avoid homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center Sacramento Region on its 25th Anniversary. I am confident that the organization will continue to be a beacon for those seeking the American dream of homeownership. I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the excellence of the staff and of NeighborWorks Sacramento Region who commit their lives

and professional careers to the people of Sacramento.

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE 37TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

### HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, each year about this time I rise to recognize the wonderful young men and women who have contributed a substantial amount of work to my office. Members of Congress know well, perhaps better than most, how important it is to have such exceptional young men and women working towards our nation's future.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows or interns. They do amazing work for the constituents we are privileged to represent, and are a vital part of every aspect of this establishment.

Although the United States has experienced some hard times in recent years, I simply have to look to the eager and idealistic young staff members and interns in my office to know the future of our country is bright and our best days lay ahead.

These are the people who toil in obscurity, but who willingly and happily jump at every task they are given because they know they are serving a great purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than serving your country. That is why I ran for public office. When I was six years old I dreamed of becoming a public servant when I grew up so I could help others. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said:

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

This rings true for a number of great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my office. Their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated and I wish to acknowledge them. They are: Ashley Guill, Ashley Bobo, Aliya Wishner, Quentin Scott, Anna Bartels, Tara Karoian, Lilit Rostomyan, Amanda Osborne, Monique Morgan, Sarah Birk and Francisco Guerra.

Mr. Speaker, the infusion of energy, intelligence, and idealism young people bring to their internships in my office and those of my colleagues helps keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

This is why I am so optimistic about our country's prospects for the future. As Margaret Mead said:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

These particular young people I have had the honor of getting to know have displayed extraordinary talent, quality, commitment and energy in their time in Washington. Their initiative and drive have shown me that in time,