

human health as well. I especially appreciate MERI's groundbreaking studies of the effects of chemical exposure on firefighters, a group that encounters high incidences of cancer. The organization has conducted the most extensive bio-monitoring assessment of firefighters to date and continues to gather information that can be used to protect the health of the first responders who keep our communities safe.

As beings on this planet, we cannot separate ourselves from the environment. What we do to it, we do to ourselves. I truly appreciate MERI's work to remind us all that wildlife and humans alike benefit from protecting the environment and limiting the spread of dangerous chemicals. May it continue to do this important work for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW SHAFNER

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. Matthew Shafner, who recently passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. Matt was a beloved native son of the Groton-New London community, and a legendary attorney who never wavered as a champion of the underdog.

Born in New London in 1935, Matt attended the Bulkeley School and graduated from New London High School in 1953. Growing up, Matt worked for his family's renowned furniture business headed by his father, who also served as a state representative in the Connecticut General Assembly. Matt earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Connecticut and was awarded a law degree from UConn Law School in 1959. Shortly thereafter, Matt opened and built a workers' compensation practice with John O'Brien in New London, representing the region's shipyard workers. These deep roots in the southeastern Connecticut community indelibly connected Matt with the citizens—his neighbors—whom he would represent in the courtroom.

In the early seventies, Matt took the case of a shipyard worker who died of lung cancer and then took on asbestos companies. The lawsuits started with one asbestos case and one lung cancer case and quickly grew to 12 cases and then 50 cases including asbestos, lung cancer, mesothelioma, laryngeal cancer, esophageal cancer and GI cancer. By the end of the decade, the first 50 asbestos cases settled for \$6.5 million—winning surviving families justice and compensation for their losses.

Matt continued to handle many other cases, including 90 aerospace workers who had developed brain tumors after working in the same factory. Another powerful case for Matt arose out of a fabricated glove and aprons manufacturer in northeastern Connecticut using chrysotile asbestos cloth and gas masks with crocidolite asbestos filters. The plant manager's son, who worked during school vacations and was a biking champion of Connecticut, developed pleural mesothelioma at age 41. He died soon after, leaving a young wife and two infant children. Matt won the case for this family in court.

In the New London Day, Senior Superior Court Judge Robert Martin described Matt as

a “unanimous first ballot hall-of-fame lawyer. He had no peer in the personal injury field. We have a lot of good lawyers in New London County, but Matt really set the bar and I think everybody played off him. I don't know any lawyer who cared about justice more than Matt Shafner.”

Matt served his community as faithfully he served individuals in need, as the attorney for the City of Groton for 20 years.

Matt was named among the Super Lawyers of Connecticut every year from 2007 to 2012, as well as in New England and Metropolitan New York. Matt served as President of the New London County Bar Association, on the Board of Governors of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and as State Delegate to the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. His lectures included a 1981 address to the XI Triennial World Congress of Pathology in Jerusalem on the legal aspects of asbestos disease. Matt was awarded the first Paul Tremont Award for Advocacy recognizing the first asbestos litigation in the Northeast filed in 1975.

In addition to his prolific professional career, Matt was a stalwart, grassroots activist in local, state, and national politics. A member of the Groton Democratic Town Committee, Matt faithfully worked at party headquarters, attended conventions as a delegate, and shared his compassionate perspective on issues of the day in the press and with public officials and candidates.

I benefited greatly from Matt's strong support during my two campaigns for Congress as a challenger. In 2006, when my race was decided by 83 votes out of 242,000 cast, Matt volunteered to help with the recount process—a very tense and challenging task. His training and experience as a lawyer and his passion for democracy were a perfect blend, from which I feel honored to have benefited.

For someone so accomplished, Matt was known equally for his extraordinary humility. His gentleness belied a tenacity in the courtroom that was unparalleled for his clients and achieved major victories for them.

Matt is survived by his wife Denise, four children, three step-children, nine grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest sorrow for their loss and to the southeastern Connecticut community who lost a humble legal legend, who never stopped fighting for the underdog.

TRIBUTE TO ELLEN GRACE BROWN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ellen Grace Brown on the celebration of her 100th birthday. Ms. Brown celebrated her 100th birthday on August 30th, 2015 in Lenox, Iowa.

Our world has changed a great deal during the course of Ms. Brown's life. Since her birth, we have revolutionized air travel and walked on the moon. We have invented the television, cellular phones, and the internet. We have fought in wars overseas, seen the rise and fall of Soviet communism, and witnessed the birth of new democracies. Ms. Brown has lived

through seventeen United States Presidents and twenty-four Governors of Iowa. In her lifetime, the population of the United States has more than tripled.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent Ellen in the United States Congress and it is my pleasure to wish her a very happy 100th birthday. I invite my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Ms. Brown on reaching this incredible milestone, and wishing her even more health and happiness in the years to come.

COMMEMORATING THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF LEXINGTON

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 2015

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the centennial year of the Rotary Club of Lexington, Kentucky. This honorable humanitarian organization has been bringing men and women together to serve the Bluegrass community since 1915. It is one of the oldest and best established community-oriented organizations in the state and was Lexington's first civic club. The newly established Rotary Club first met in the historic Phoenix Hotel, which has been host to numerous celebrities and public figures including six United States Presidents. The club has grown over the years to become the twenty first largest in the world.

The motto of the Rotary Club is “Service over Self” and the Lexington club certainly exemplifies that. They are a shining example of individuals with servants' hearts coming together to better their community. Rotary organizes and implements several significant service projects that benefit our community, our commonwealth, and the world. Hundreds of community projects have been completed by the Rotary Club of Lexington, including providing clothing for children in the Fayette County School System, organizing the Southern Lights Santa Project, funding the Surgery on Sunday program, mentoring and assisting in school classrooms, funding the Born Learning night classes for parents, awarding sizeable college scholarships, and sponsoring international youth exchange programs. Rotary raises money and donates thousands of dollars each year to worthy programs such as the End Polio Now campaign and the Cardinal Hill Foundation.

Rotary membership consists of business owners, professionals, managers, and community leaders who take great interest in the happenings and welfare of the community. Lexington's Rotary Club members have been instrumental in community action for the betterment of Lexington and the quality of life of its citizens for one hundred years and this is cause for celebration. It is my honor to stand before the United States House of Representatives to acknowledge the historic celebration for the Rotary Club of Lexington. I wish them the best for a successful future in their next one hundred years.