EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Federal Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. As a federal judge, Judge Johnson’s decisions literally shaped the future and the force of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. As an individual, he was a man whose commitment to his ideals and the law did not wane, despite considerable personal risk and significant sacrifice. Mr. Speaker, it is vital that Congress honor Judge Johnson for both of these roles, and to recognize the loss that his recent death represents.

Judge Johnson served on the U.S. District Court in Montgomery, Alabama, for twenty-five years, during the height of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. In that time he made several decisions that formed the thrust of the civil rights movement. In 1956, when deliberating the Montgomery bus boycott case, he outlawed segregation on public transportation, in parks, restaurants, libraries and schools. In the 1960s, Judge Johnson also signed the original order to integrate the University of Alabama, as well as the order to allow Martin Luther King Jr. and voting rights activists to march from Selma to Montgomery. Moreover, Judge Johnson participated in the decision that ultimately became the “one man, one vote” principle put forth by the Supreme Court.

Clearly, Judge Johnson’s contribution to the civil rights movement was both significant and integral to its ultimate success. His impact was felt not only in Montgomery, but throughout the South and the nation as well. One must wonder to what extent the civil rights movement would have succeeded without the support, honesty, and courage of Judge Johnson.

While these decisions are hailed today as just and honest, Judge Johnson faced severe criticism, damaging slander, and even personal danger in the time that he made them. Then Governor George Wallace fueled his gubernatorial race by denouncing Judge Johnson, while his mother’s home was bombed and a burning cross was placed on his own lawn. Yet Judge Johnson did not abandon his principles or his commitment to the law. He simply upheld the Constitution and did not question the consequences.

Judge Johnson was truly a great man, whose unwavering principles are too rare today. As a legislator, former judge and lawyer, I am personally inspired by Judge Johnson’s commitment to the law, and am grateful for his influence and the example he set for us all. Indeed, I am fully aware that I was able to become the first African American Federal Judge in Florida because of the principles Judge Johnson promoted and the opportunities he made possible for the African Americans of his generation.

Today, I remember him for these opportunities, the strides he made in civil rights, the definition he gave to the movement, and most of all, his commitment to what he perceived as right and just. Judge Johnson deserves this recognition, and I hope my colleagues will join me in paying tribute to this legacy that he has left after him.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition of providing normal-trade-relations status to the People’s Republic of China, because China continues to deny the greater part of its citizenry the most basic human rights; because it engages in the worse kinds of religious, political, and ethnic persecution; because it bullies neighboring countries, and because it undermines international stability by exporting missiles and nuclear technology to Iran, Iraq, and other rogue nations.

Furthermore, Congress must not provide normal-trade-relations status to China, in order to allow Martin Luther King Jr. and voting rights activists to march from Selma to Montgomery.

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