

October 13, 1999

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JESSIE
COLLINS TRICE

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a distinct honor to pay tribute to one of Miami-Dade County's unsung heroines, the late Jessie Collins Trice. Her untimely demise from the scourge of lung cancer last Friday, October 8, 1999 will truly leave a deep void in our midst.

Mrs. Jessie Collins Trice represented the best and the noblest of my community. Having dedicated a major portion of her life in championing the health care of African-Americans and Hispanics throughout Florida, she tirelessly advocated a monumental struggle toward ensuring the creation of the Health Choice Network to provide comprehensive primary and preventive health care to low-income and uninsured populations in minority communities. Her mission undergirded her belief that health care was a right for the poor and the underserved.

Ms. Trice was a multi-dimensional public servant, a civic activist par excellence, an indefatigable community-builder, a loving mother and a doting grandmother, completely unselfish in all her endeavors. The genuineness of her stewardship on behalf of our community was buttressed by her utmost consecration to her vocation as God's faithful servant, bringing hope and optimism to thousands of ordinary folks whose lives she touched so deeply, never holding anyone at arm's length.

What we most know about Jessie Trice is that she was a trailblazer in the realm of health care. She was the first Black to receive a nursing degree from the University of Miami, the first and only Black to serve as Director of Nursing for the Miami-Dade County Department of Public Health, the only Black to have served as Chairperson of the Florida State Board of Nursing, and founder of the Miami-Dade Black Nurses Association. She also served as the past President of the Florida Association of Community Health Centers and the National Association of Community Health Centers.

For the past eighteen years, she held the distinction of President and CEO of the Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Inc., the largest minority employer in the Liberty City community. Through a staff of 300 employees, more than 9-million dollars are added annually to the local economy. Her record of sustained service has been recognized at the local, state and national levels. This was evidenced by her appointment in 1991 to the National Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality by then Secretary of Health Louis Sullivan and the Florida Work Group on Health Care by the late Governor Lawton Chiles. Along with Elizabeth Taylor, she was featured in the Miami Herald as the distinguished "Miamian," after testifying before the U.S. Senate for increased funding for those afflicted with the HIV-AIDS virus.

This remarkable lady was my friend and confidante. I am deeply saddened by her passing away. She will indeed be an indelible

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reminder of the noble commitment and awesome power of public service on behalf of the less fortunate. Her faith was deep and genuine, and her love for our community defined her dynamic friendship and understanding. No one who knew Jessie—and being struck by her sunny disposition and optimism—went away not acknowledging the presence of a caring and compassionate community leader.

Jessie Collins Trice's life was akin to that of a burning candle. A candle's lifelong service is to shed its light to illuminate the darkness of pessimism and hopelessness—until it is consumed. She conscientiously consecrated her life by serving God through her fellow human beings—especially the women and children from the innercity. I do remember cogently her challenging words: "Our children are our future, and if we don't expend every effort to help our children, we won't have a future."

This Friday, October 15, 1999 at a funeral mass at the Archdiocese of Miami's St. Mary's Cathedral, I join the Miami-Dade County community to celebrate her life and her friendship. Undoubtedly, Jessie Collins Trice would urge us that her death does not represent an irrevocable termination or a grim finality. She would rather have us firmly believe that she will live on in the good deeds she amply left behind. She will carry on through the wonderful thoughts and memories we all have of her.

Like the God whom she served faithfully during her earthly sojourn, she came and lived among us that we may have life—and have hope more abundantly. This is the wonderful legacy Jessie Collins Trice left behind. And this is the gift with which she blesses us. May Almighty God grant her eternal rest!

LABOR CELEBRATION

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues a very special celebration taking place in my district this week. The Greater Wilkes-Barre Central Labor Council will gather to recognize the contributions of organized labor over the last century. I am pleased and proud to have been asked to participate.

A number of my good friends at the Labor Council will preside at this event: President Sam Bianco, Vice-President Joseph Capece, Secretary Lois Hartel, Treasurer Joseph Gorham and Trustees Ed Harry, Ed Hahn, Ed Walsh, David Williams, and Jerry Kishbaugh. The banquet will feature a comprehensive slide show that depicts the struggles of labor over the last century, highlighting such victories as anti-child labor laws, free public education, voting rights, equal pay for equal work, Social Security, job-safety, workers compensation, civil rights, the eight-hour work day, the minimum wage, and other triumphs. The program will also highlight the historic contributions of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Central Labor Council, which received the 1998 National AFL-CIO Model Cities in Community Services Award.

The Greater Wilkes-Barre Central Labor Council was founded in September 1894 by a

group of six men: John J. Casey and Daniel Shovlin of the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union, Pat O'Neill and John Gibbon of the Stone Cutters Union, Amos Ayers of the Carpenters Union, and David Brovea of the Painters Union. In the beginning, fear of being blacklisted and jailed forced the Council members to hold secret, hidden meetings. The first such meeting was held in an old stone yard until rain forced the gathering to move under a bridge. There, in the rain-soaked autumn air, the Labor Council was founded.

John J. Casey went on to head what was then called the Central Labor Union, or CLU and the Building Trades Council. By 1902, 118 local unions were affiliated with the CLU. In 1903, United Mine Workers President John Mitchell told the American Federation of Labor convention in Boston that Wilkes-Barre was the "best organized city in the United States." Within the next few years, it was common to see as many as 300 members at the bi-monthly meetings.

The father of Labor Council was John J. Casey, who sought to unite all the trade unions in the event of a major problem with local contractors. Casey, a central figure in the history of the local labor movement, came from an inspiring background. Born in a company-owned mining shack in the anthracite region, Casey lost his father in a mining accident at age eight. With no compensation laws in place at that time, Casey was forced to leave school and become a breaker boy, working ten-hour days for pennies. It was here that the seed of labor activism was born in John J. Casey.

John J. Casey realized legislation was needed to obtain equal labor rights and social justice for working men and women. He successfully ran for State Representative and, later, for the United States Congress. When he won his congressional seat in 1912, John J. Casey became the first labor leader ever elected to that body. During his tenure, he was instrumental in the passage of laws prohibiting child labor and supporting vocational education in public schools.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of the labor unions in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The unions not only brought fair labor practices to the area, they saved lives, protected our children, and are responsible for much of the wonderful quality of life we enjoy here. I join with this hardworking group of dedicated individuals in paying tribute to their origins, their heroes, and the rank-and-file laborers whose rights they so fiercely protect every day. I applaud the Greater Wilkes-Barre Central Labor Council for bringing the proud history of local labor unions to the attention of the Luzerne County community and send my sincere best wishes for continued success.

TAIWAN'S NATIONAL DAY

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of Taiwan's National Day, I wish to convey my best wishes to the people of Taiwan, congratulating them for their successes in the

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