

She is currently a member of the Board of Trustees for the Gary Community Schools. She is the author of several books for children, including Martin Luther King, Jr. which is published in both English and Norwegian. She has authored two other books on the childhood and young adulthood of Crispus Attucks and Louis Armstrong. She has also written Yesterday in Gary, a book about Gary's African-American heritage. She is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Gary Historical and Cultural Society. She is considered the Historian of Gary, Indiana, and frequently speaks to audiences of children, youths and people of all ages about the history of Gary and Lake County.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my distinguished colleagues to join me in commending these outstanding African-American leaders and their efforts to build a better society for our country and the citizens of Northwest Indiana.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to lift up three extraordinary people who have contributed much the Civil Rights Era: Martin Luther King, Jr., John Coltrane and Nelson Mandela.

Dr. King was very much aware of the cultural impact of jazz on the civil rights struggle. He talked while he was in Berlin, Germany about how music is such a great unifying force, in particular jazz, that connects people and enhances cultural development of society. King went on to discuss how jazz evolved from the black churches gospel songs and hymns into a popular art form that has wide appeal across racial and ethnic lines. Coltrane was instrumental in insuring jazz's distinction as a National American treasure. Coltrane once said, "My goal . . . is to uplift people as much as I can, to inspire them to realize capacities for living meaningful lives." Through his boundless music, he like King and Mandela helped to break down the walls of prejudice and intolerance in our nation. Because of Coltrane, jazz has become the music that America is known for around the world. Jazz has such cultural significance that it crosses racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and geographic boundaries. The importance of music cannot be understated in the struggle for African-Americans in this country to gain rights of equality and fair treatment. Coltrane's musical genius acted to soothe the wounds after the harsh, brutal fight, acted as healing salve to bring both black and white, red and brown peoples together. It is Coltrane musical essence that still brings us together today.

President Nelson Mandela is the last name in this trinity that I would like to lift up. It was Mandela who endured 27 years of prison internment only to merge as the leader of the most feared, apartheid ruled, police state in the world. It was Mandela who, in his brilliance organized his people and all South Africans to move toward reconciliation and forgiveness. President Mandela was also acutely aware of the healing power of music to the soul. If you ever listen to African music, to the congo drums, the singing, envision the women and men swaying with the beat, you can hear reminiscences of jazz, you can sense the cultural divide weakening, you can feel the healing in the music. We owe a great deal to King, Coltrane and Mandela and we profoundly thank them for their contribution to our lives.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I would like to take a moment to thank my colleagues, the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. CLYBURN, chair of the Black Caucus, and the gentlewoman from Ohio, Ms. TUBBS JONES, for organizing this Black History month special order.

Today I join my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus, and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle as we acknowledge the contributions of African American women and men to the building and shaping of this nation.

What began as Negro History week in 1926, expanded to Black History month in 1976. Let me say that one month cannot capture in full the history of a people. It is important that we make efforts to incorporate the contributions and achievements of African Americans to this nation, year round.

As we mark the 1999 observance of Black History month, I do so keeping in mind this year's theme, "The Legacy of African American Leadership for the present and the future." The theme this year gives us an opportunity to draw strength and inspiration from the many African Americans who have gone before us. I would like to use this time to highlight the legacy of African American women's political involvement and participation.

The history of African American women's participation in American politics must recognize our involvement in traditional political acts, such as registering, voting, and holding office, but also those nontraditional activities in which we engaged long before we had access to the ballot. Because African American women are simultaneously members of the two groups that have suffered the nation's most blatant exclusions from politics, African American and women, our political behavior has been largely overlooked.

African American women organized slave revolts, established underground networks, and even sued for the right to be free. Public records reveal that many African American women were involved in the abolition movement and were active participants in the early women's rights movement. African American women's political activity has largely been directed towards altering our disadvantaged status as African Americans and women.

Because African American women have only recently been granted access to the political arena as voters and officeholders in significant numbers, there is a lack of information about them, and even less information about those actions that predated these roles.

Today, we look to African American women holding political office as a recent experience. The First African American woman elected to state legislature took office in 1938, the first to sit on a federal bench in 1966, and the first elected to Congress in 1968.

This is the legacy that I follow. I am thrilled to stand here on the House floor as an American, as an African American, and as a woman member of Congress. I stand here as the 171st Woman, the 99th African American, and the 19th African American woman ever to have the privilege of serving in this body. I stand here today because of the legacy of those who have gone before me.

I stand here today because of those African American women who had the courage to be involved in electoral politics, and I stand here today to fulfill my role as an African American leader.

Again, Madam Speaker, I thank so much the gentlewoman from Ohio, and the gentleman from South Carolina for the opportunity to say these words.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. REYES (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and for the balance of the week on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mrs. JONES of Ohio) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SMITH of Washington, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DOOLEY of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHOWS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROEMER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FALCOMA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. NETHERCUTT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BALLENGER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELLER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BEREUTER, for 5 minutes each, today and February 25.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes, March 1.

Mr. SCHAFFER, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. JONES. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.) the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 25, 1999, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

730. A letter from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report detailing the security situation in the Taiwan Strait; to the Committee on International Relations.