

Board of Stewards were created. The church established a relationship with the A.M.E. Zion Church, and was legally confirmed in 1904.

Mr. Speaker, founders and early members of John Wesley, like those of many other black churches, were attracted by the doctrine of Methodism. This doctrine, expressed strongly in the sermons of John Wesley and in the hymns of his brother, Charles, proclaimed that no one was too poor, too humble, or too degraded to share in the privilege of divine grace, have a personal intimacy with God, and have assurance of eternal life. Pioneering black Methodists in New York City, led by James Varick, paved the way for the creation of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. From the founders of this church, the organizers and leaders of John Wesley Church in Washington, D.C. were destined to draw their inspiration and guidance. Since 1851, the leadership of the church has been vested in forty ministers.

Mr. Speaker, from 1855 to 1866, John Wesley Church was an important community facility for black education during a time when public schools in Washington were not available to blacks. The church, with the support of philanthropic groups, provided substantial elementary education under instruction from black and white teachers.

The early growth of the church was stimulated by a remarkable group of able ministers. Five of them had been elected bishops of the A.M.E. Zion Church by 1904. Very substantial growth was indicated as early as 1884, when the church expanded its edifice by adding a second story. The architectural expansion was made under the supervision of Calvin Brent, the son of founding member John Brent who was one of Washington's first black architects.

For a dozen years before its move to its present location in 1914, John Wesley Church was located at 1121 18th Street, NW. The relocation to 14th Street provided a beautiful, large edifice that many persons felt was an appropriate place to have a national church of Zion Methodism, just as other denominations had a national church in the nation's capital. At the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church, held at John Wesley in 1940, John Wesley was officially designated the National Church of Zion Methodism.

During the twentieth century, the history of John Wesley Church has been characterized by increasing concern for the social welfare and the general quality of life of its members. The church has shown this concern while maintaining a strong interest in the spiritual well-being of its members and others. The ministerial and lay leadership of the church has been in the vanguard of the civil rights movement and the general effort to make Washington and the nation a better place in which to live. Two former pastors, The Right Reverend Stephen Gills Spottswood and Dr. E. Franklin Jackson, national civil rights leaders, were instrumental in the desegregation of public accommodations in Washington, D.C. The church has held sustained leadership roles in the NAACP, assisted in the coordination of the 1963 March on Washington, hosted President Bush in 1989, and will be hosting the cultural program for the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Conference later this year. John Wesley Church is a mem-

ber of the Interfaith Council and Downtown Cluster of Churches. Outreach programs at John Wesley include workshops on domestic violence, care for the senior citizens, feeding the homeless, and awarding scholarships to high school seniors and college students.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the pastor, The Reverend Vernon A. Shannon, the officers and members of the John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, "The National Church of Zion Methodism"—a Washington monument beyond the monuments.

HILLSBORO HIGH SCHOOL TEAM
COMPETES IN NATIONAL FINALS
OF WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE
CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION
PROGRAM

HON. BOB CLEMENT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my alma mater, Hillsboro High School, for their participation in the We the People—The Citizen and the Constitution program. On May 1–3, 1999 more than 1200 students from across the United States will be in Washington, D.C. to compete in the national finals of the We the People—The Citizen and the Constitution program. I am proud to announce that the class from Hillsboro High School from Nashville will represent the state of Tennessee in this national event. These young scholars have worked diligently to reach the national finals and through their experience have gained a deep knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The We the People—The Citizen and the Constitution program is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The three-day national competition is modeled after hearings in the United States Congress. These hearings consist of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges. The students testify as constitutional experts before a "congressional committee," that is, the panel of judges representing various regions of the country and a variety of appropriate professional fields. The student testimony is followed by a period of questioning during which the judges probe students for their depth of understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge.

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the We the People . . . program has provided curricular materials at upper elementary, middle and high school levels for more than 26.5 million students nationwide. Members of Congress and their staff enhance the program by discussing current constitutional issues with students and teachers and by participating in other educational activities. I wish the student team from Hillsboro High School the best of luck at We the People—national finals.

THE CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION AND THE "WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION" PROGRAM

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring an editorial in today's Washington Post about the recent Center for Civic Education National Competition to the attention of Members. For 12 years, the Center for Civic Education has developed and promoted its "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution" program to increase student understanding and knowledge of the Constitution and this document's impact on today's society. Over this period, the program has provided instruction to 26.5 million students, distributed more than 89,000 sets of free textbooks, and trained more than 82,000 teachers in 24,000 elementary and secondary schools across the country. In light of the tragic recent events surrounding our Nation's schools, this editorial shows the positive impact that this program is having on our Nation's students and their sense and understanding of citizenship and its responsibilities.

[From The Washington Post]

A CLASS ACTION

(By David S. Broder)

The topic was the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association, and the questions from the Kentucky college teacher, the Virginia judge and the Charleston, S.C., lawyer came thick and fast.

"Given the volatile nature of the atmosphere in Colorado following the Columbine High School tragedy, do you think the Denver City Council would have been justified in saying, 'We do not want the NRA [National Rifle Association] meeting here this weekend?'" "Could it have restricted the number of people at the meeting?" "Could it have asked for the names of those attending?"

The five Hempfield High School students from Landisville, Pa., facing them were not rattled. One by one, they made their points in quick, incisive fashion, referring twice to the controlling Supreme Court cases: Barring the convention would have been justified only if there were a real threat of retaliatory violence. Limiting its size was not sensible—"It should be all or nothing." Asking for names could not be justified by any compelling state interest.

The discussion moved to the issue of youths wearing symbols or clothing that others in school might find intimidating—and once again, the students spoke calmly and clearly about the issues that have agitated the country since the Littleton massacre.

On Sunday, the second day of the annual national competition sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, a downtown Washington hotel was the place to have your faith in the younger generation restored.

For 12 years, the center, funded by a \$5.5 million annual grant from the Department of Education and six times that much in state, local and private support, has promoted semester-long curriculum called "We the People. The Citizen and the Constitution," and trained thousands of teachers to use it in classrooms across the country.

Each class is invited to compete at the congressional district and state level, and