

in Africa, moves firmly back into the camp of democratic nations. On May 29th, President Olusegun Obasanjo will become President of Nigeria, having won a decisive victory in democratic elections in February. President Obasanjo assumes the leadership of more than 120 million Nigerians, and he will be assisted in this task by a democratically elected bicameral Assembly, elected state assemblies and elected state governors, in a political system which now mirrors the United States' own democratic process.

The new government in Abuja is determined to develop Nigeria as a democracy and a friend of the West. During his transition period, President Obasanjo visited many world capitals, including Washington, to begin the process of binding Nigeria into the global diplomatic framework. No other African state has introduced a new government with greater care and preparation, and President Obasanjo has been careful to learn the attitudes of the world's major trading states and to brief them in return on Nigeria's great challenge of rebuilding its economy and its state.

President Obasanjo comes to this position with a strong electoral mandate, and with many decades of experience as a statesman, diplomat, soldier and farmer. He was heavily involved in helping to negotiate the transition from apartheid to democratic government in South Africa some years ago. He was a political prisoner under the military government of General Sani Abacha, who died last year, paving the way for the restoration of Nigerian democracy. President Obasanjo is therefore highly conscious of Nigeria's need to play a leading role in African and international peacekeeping and diplomacy, and is, of course, thoroughly familiar with Nigeria's historic commitment to UN and OAU peacekeeping efforts. Furthermore, Nigeria is once again poised to become a major force for peace and stability in Africa.

The US is going to benefit from a democratic and prosperous Nigeria. After all, Nigeria is the largest single supplier of foreign oil to the United States, and is, as a result, integrally linked into our economy. It is potentially a large export customer for the US, as well. Therefore, I believe the United States should cooperate with Nigeria to the fullest extent possible in order to ensure that its democratic, economic and governmental structures flourish to the fullest degree possible.

Mr. Speaker, we need to send our congratulations today to President Obasanjo, and all of the officials elected to the two houses of Nigeria's Federal Assembly, and to the newly elected State Assemblymen, and State Governors, and to the elected municipal officials. This is a great watershed for Nigeria, a great day for Africa, and a great opportunity for us to participate in helping to make Africa a vibrant, democratic and self-sustaining continent and a healthy part of the world trading system.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on May 20, 1999, I missed the vote on the motion to con-

cur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 4, the National Missile Defense Act of 1999, because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO CHANCELLOR HILDA RICHARDS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with the greatest pleasure that I pay tribute to an exceptionally dedicated, compassionate, and distinguished member of Indiana's First Congressional District, Chancellor Hilda Richards of Gary, Indiana. After serving as Chancellor of Indiana University Northwest for six years, Hilda Richards will be retiring next month. On June 5, 1999, Chancellor Richards will be honored with a final, formal salute for her service, effort, and dedication, at Innsbrook Country Club in Merrillville, Indiana.

Born in St. Joseph, Missouri, Chancellor Hilda Richards received her Diploma in Nursing from St. John's School of Nursing in 1956 and continued her education in New York City, New York, where she graduated cum laude from Hunter College with her Bachelor of Science degree in 1961. Chancellor Richards continued her education at Columbia University, where she received her Masters in Education in 1965, Masters of Public Administration in 1971, and her Doctorate of Education in 1976. Chancellor Richards understands that a solid educational foundation will challenge one's mind, empower one's sense of well-being, and rekindle one's heart, with a commitment to values and beliefs essential to becoming and being a whole individual. In the words of Chancellor Hilda Richards herself, "I knew I wanted to make a difference—and I needed a good education to do that. My personality would not allow it to be any other way." Chancellor Richards has continued to challenge herself by doing post-doctoral work at Harvard University.

Chancellor Hilda Richards began her professional life as a staff nurse at Payne Whitney Clinic of New York Hospital in 1956. Four years later she became an instructor of nursing in the Department of Psychiatry at City Hospital in New York, where she also rose to the position of head nurse in the Department of Psychiatry. From 1971 to 1976 she served as the Director of Nursing Programs and Chair of the Health Science Division at Medgar Evers College in New York City, and from 1976–1979 she served as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for Medgar Evers College. Chancellor Richards continued her professional career as Dean of the College of Health and Human Services at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Before coming to Indiana University Northwest to serve as Chancellor, she served as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Indiana University of Pennsylvania from 1986–1993.

Though extremely dedicated to her academic work, Chancellor Hilda Richards selflessly gives her free time and energy to her community. Chancellor Richards is a life mem-

ber of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a member of the American Nurses Association. She also serves as a board member for several organizations in Northwest Indiana, including: The Gary Education Development Foundation, Inc.; Tradewinds Rehabilitation Center, Inc.; Boys and Girls Club of Northwest Indiana; WYIN-Channel 56; and the Northwest Indiana Forum. Additionally, Hilda Richards has volunteered countless hours of service to the Times Newspaper Editorial Advisory Board, the Indiana Youth Institute, and The Methodist Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in commending Chancellor Hilda Richards for her dedication, service, and leadership to the students and faculty of Indiana University Northwest, as well as the people of the First Congressional District. Northwest Indiana's community has certainly been rewarded by the true service and uncompromising dedication displayed by Chancellor Hilda Richards.

A TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to America's servicemen and women for their heroic sacrifices made to preserve freedom. With the upcoming observance of Memorial Day, the United States recalls once again how freedom is not free. This hallowed national holiday is followed on June 6 by the 55th anniversary of D-Day, the date of the 1944 Invasion of Normandy by the Allied Forces to liberate the European continent from the darkness of Nazi tyranny.

It is the spirit that compels Americans to defend freedom at all costs that we honor at this solemn Memorial Day holiday. Senator Robert Kennedy once wrote: "Every time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

President Reagan once mentioned that we don't have to look in history books to find heroes; heroes are all around us, in every American city and town, as well as in the towns of our Allies. On Memorial Day, I pause to pay tribute to such heroes as the late Tom O'Connor of Quebec, Canada, who, as a young Canadian paratrooper, landed in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, fought in the dreadful Falaise Gap during the following Battle of Normandy, was severely wounded by machine gun fire, and spent the rest of the war in a German hospital.

I pay tribute to John J. McDonough who, as a reliable young sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Corps, served the Allies in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. At the same time, his teenage brother, Thomas J. McDonough, was a faithful seaman in the U.S. Navy who