

a great moment for me on the evening of Friday, November 3, when I get to be part of the evening in which the Shreveport community says, "Thanks, Virginia. Let Shehee's March continue." •

A TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL AGENT  
TOM LAPISH

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, during the 106th Congress, the Detroit Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation lost two of its most dedicated agents to battles with cancer. Both were respected not only for their professional accomplishments, but also for the manner in which they conducted themselves outside of their work, as each contributed considerably to the Detroit community. I rise today in honor and in memory of Special Agent Tom Lapish, one of these two men.

Special Agent Lapish entered on duty with the FBI in 1976. After a brief stay in Kansas City, he was assigned to the Detroit Field Office. In Detroit, he developed an expertise in white collar crime investigations, and was regarded as one of the Bureau's top agents in that arena. With a background in accounting, he thrived on the protracted, intricate nature of investigating complex fraud matters, and was formally commended for his investigative accomplishments on several occasions.

Not surprisingly, Special Agent Lapish was known for his attention to detail. He was also known for his high ethical standards. He stood for the ideals of the FBI motto—Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity—at all times. Even as his illness made him weak, he would contemplate going to the office to work on cases he had been assigned. In addition, he was very active within his church, helping to promote the Christian lifestyle which he believed so deeply in.

Special Agent Lapish was also an extremely gifted athlete, and his passion for soccer became legendary within the Detroit community. He served as the coach for nearly 30 soccer teams, and in this capacity mentored hundreds of young individuals. His impact on them was seen at his memorial service, which was crowded with soccer players paying final respects to their favorite coach. It can also physically be seen in the Detroit area, where a soccer field was posthumously named in his honor.

Special Agent Lapish passed away on May 18, 2000 at the age of 50. He is survived by his wife, Mary, and two sons, Matthew and Andrew.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation works hard to ensure that its agents set a strong moral example for the people they are entrusted to protect. There is no question that Special Agent Lapish was a leader in this regard. Dedicated to his Nation, his agency, his family and his faith, he was a

role model in the Detroit community, and he will be deeply missed. •

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. CHARLES  
E. THOMAS

• Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dr. Charles E. Thomas, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church upon the occasion of his retirement. During his time in the ministry, Pastor Thomas has shown a great commitment to both church and community.

Under Pastor Thomas's leadership and guidance, The New Hope Baptist Church has accomplished a great deal and continues to grow. The New Hope Day Care Center has been established and the edifice of New Hope has been renovated and expanded, creating a beautiful church with seating for over 1,200. Further, numerous programs have been implemented to enhance the lives of The New Hope members.

Pastor Thomas has also contributed much to the Newark community. He established the Minority Contractors and Craftsmen Trade Association and the New Hope Skills Center to enable individuals to pursue careers in carpentry, masonry, and machinery. In 1975, the New Hope Development Corporation was organized to build New Hope Village, a 170 family housing complex in Newark that provides affordable housing for lower income families.

For over 20 years, Pastor Thomas has dedicated himself to both his congregation and his community. His efforts have benefitted the lives of countless individuals, and he is richly deserving of our thanks and well wishes for his retirement. •

REVEREND DR. BENNIE THAYER

• Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I rise to note the recent passing of the Reverend Dr. Bennie Thayer. Dr. Thayer was an extraordinary and inspiring figure in the eyes of all who knew him, and I would like to take this opportunity to describe for the record just a few of his achievements and his many attributes.

I have found it striking that the people who are now mourning Dr. Thayer's loss come from so many different backgrounds and walks of life. Clearly this was a man who touched many people in many different ways. Dr. Thayer was an ordained minister, the Senior Pastor at the United Methodist Church of the Redeemer in Temple Hills, Maryland. He also worked tirelessly to expand the political activities and economic opportunities for African Americans, both within his community and across the nation. His funeral last Saturday literally produced an overflow crowd—testimony to the high esteem in which he was held in religious communities, in political circles, and among many others.

Reverend Thayer was also the President and the CEO of the National Association for the Self-Employed, and it was in this capacity that I had come to know him. Along with Senator JOHN BREAUX, Congressman JIM KOLBE and Congressman CHARLIE STENHOLM, I co-chaired the CSIS National Commission on Retirement Policy. In the course of our work we took testimony from all sorts of groups—seniors' groups, youth advocacy groups, employer groups, and others—and it was through the gathering this testimony that my office first established regular contact with Reverend Thayer.

Among those who worked in the area of Social Security reform, Dr. Thayer stood out for his passionate and unswerving dedication to his cause. He also stood out in every other respect as well. He was an impressive, imposing figure of a man, with a deep and sonorous voice that he used to tremendous effect. And he was always there to do whatever was necessary to advance the work in which he so deeply believed. In the rough and tumble world of Social Security politics, it is easy to become discouraged or demoralized, but Dr. Thayer was unfazed by any setback. Regardless of the short-term fortunes, he always kept his eye on the long-term horizon, and applied all of his considerable gifts and his hard work to achieving it.

All of us who knew Dr. Thayer admired him deeply for his willingness to argue passionately for an unconventional position when he knew that he was right. What was striking about Dr. Thayer's oratorical style was that he always strove to appeal to the very best instincts in his listeners—never selfishness, never division, never despair—always hope, opportunity, advancement, responsibility, self-reliance, and giving all that one can. There's a poignant example of this in a recent speech that he gave in Nashville, Tennessee, "The Power of Small Business for Wealth Creation in the Minority Community"—when he talks about why he felt that African Americans should support reform of the Social Security system. To quote from his words:

"First, African Americans tend to start working at a younger age than whites. So we pay taxes into the system for more years than whites. And second, African-Americans also have shorter life expectancies than whites. The average African-American male currently has a life expectancy of less than the retirement age of 65! So many African-Americans will spend their entire working lives paying taxes into Social Security. But then, they won't draw out a dime in retirement benefits. Or accumulate any wealth to pass along to their children, or other heirs." This is typical of his approach; noting not what was in it for him—but what kind of legacy was being left behind.