

Championships, she led the team in runs scored.

Laura has brought honor and credit to the community and country as part of the U.S. team that won the gold medal in softball at both the Atlanta and the recently concluded Sydney Olympic games. Laura Berg's leadership and persistence not only helped the U.S. softball team rebound from losing three games in a row, she powered the game-winning run against Japan that gave the United States the gold medal in Softball at the 2000 Sydney Olympic games.

In returning to her roots at Lakeland Elementary School, Ms. Berg challenged students to never give up on their dreams and stressed the value of education.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to rise in support of Ms. Berg, not only for her accomplishments on the field but also to recognize her as an outstanding role model for the youth of this country.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to stand before the House today to honor the Fairfax County Park Authority's 50th anniversary on December 8, 2000. Fifty years ago, private citizens were the catalyst for the creation of the Fairfax County Park Authority. Looking to the future, they worked with the county's elected officials to establish the means to protect open space, historic sites, places for family recreation, and resource areas where wildlife could continue to thrive.

The wisdom of those farsighted activists is evident today. Islands of woodlands and playing fields, strips of stream valleys and trails, historic fragments of Old Fairfax, Virginia and centers for active recreation and leisure pursuits form a patchwork of parks across the county, accessible to everyone and offering something for every interest. Fairfax County has a park system recognized as among the best in the nation.

The Park Authority has over 386 parks on more than 19,326 acres. Park facilities include a horticulture center, a working farm, an activities and equestrian center, eight indoor RE-Centers, five nature and visitor centers, eight golf courses, on/off-leash dog park, three lakes, two campgrounds, an ice skating rink, a Water Park and a working mill. Recreational opportunities in the parks abound, with millions of people per year enjoying picnicking, hiking, fishing, tennis and golf. There are also carousels, miniature golf courses, amphitheaters and marinas.

Together, people of Fairfax and their Park Authority have kept trust with the ideals of those who founded the Park Authority. With the support of the people and volunteers, the agency has maintained its commitment to preservation, protection and play. With their support the agency has survived shifting attitudes towards land use, the ups and downs of

budget, changes in government and shifts in demographics.

The Fairfax County Park Authority was created in 1950 to plan, acquire, develop, operate and maintain a park and recreation facility system that would contribute to the quality of life and environment for the citizens, visitors and tourists to Fairfax County. Over the past five decades, this system has evolved into a diversified mosaic of open space and recreation facilities, ranging from small neighborhood parks to an extensive network of county-wide parks which afford a variety of recreational opportunities for county residents. The park system also serves as the primary public mechanism for the preservation of environmentally sensitive land, water resources and areas of historic significance.

The Park Authority protects, manages and preserves thousands of natural and cultural resources located within its 19,326 acres. The cultural resources, bits and pieces of our history which allow us to understand our present and plan our future, include structures, roads, landscapes, folklore, artifacts, historic and pre-historic archaeological sites. These resources are preserved for our enjoyment and the education of our children.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this December, the Park Authority will mark a half century of touching people's lives. Today, the children and the grandchildren of our original park patrons come to our parks for recreation, relaxation and respite. Together, people and parks will build on the past to shape the future. Like the couple at the golden wedding party, I toast a powerful union and an enduring relationship.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER DISTRICT DIRECTOR AND FRIEND JOHN J. MCGUIRE

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 16, 2000, John J. McGuire, my former District Director in Syracuse, New York, and close, personal friend, died after a long battle with brain cancer. John served as an integral part of my staff since my election to Congress in 1988. Prior to that time, he served as a compliance officer for 11 years with the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor in Syracuse.

John McGuire, a former Marine, was a highly decorated disabled American veteran. He is a past recipient of the Veterans Service Award from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, four Special Achievement Awards and the Federal Distinguished Career Award. After serving as a sergeant in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, John taught English both here in the United States and in the Balkans.

With John's death early last week, his wife and children lost a terrific husband and father, and I lost a neighbor, a close advisor and loyal friend. The Central New York community lost a tireless worker and community advocate, and the entire nation lost a dedicated public servant and true American patriot.

I submit the attached column by Mr. Sean Kirst printed in the October 18th issue of the Syracuse Post-Standard, which so eloquently details John McGuire's motivation and career, be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to commemorate his distinguished life.

He certainly will be missed, but can never be forgotten.

VETERAN, AIDE, FAMILY MAN DIDN'T DIE FOR NOTHING

John McGuire was a neighbor. He lived on the dead-end block of Robineau Road in Syracuse. Years ago, he bought a big metal pole and set it into a deep hole. He got a backboard and a rim, and he hung them above the street.

His children, all the time, were out there playing basketball. Other kids often joined them in shooting hoops. Sometimes they were kids McGuire never saw before.

It became clear, over the years, that he was a true believer.

McGuire, 55 died Monday morning. His death was the second jolt in recent weeks on our small block, where Nick Rossi, a teacher, also died of cancer. In a sense, that is the cost of any strong neighborhood. With every loss, the fabric changes—much like a family.

Years ago, Representative JIM WALSH also lived on that same block. WALSH and McGuire, as neighbors, turned into good friends. When WALSH was elected to Congress, he asked McGuire to join his staff. McGuire was called "district director," but an awful lot of people knew him as WALSH's guy for vets.

WALSH will tell you he got lucky. He couldn't have made a better choice. There are countless stories of McGuire going to the wall to help someone receive benefits, or McGuire helping old veterans get the medals they deserved.

McGuire was an ex-Marine, a combat veteran of Vietnam. Sometimes he'd be sitting outside on his porch, watching a crowd of kids playing basketball, and he'd talk a little about the war. He spoke in a soft voice, with an accent forged in Brooklyn, and he'd recall the time they split dozens of Marines into two groups. They put both groups on different planes, to fly to the same place.

One plane got hit. Everybody died. John McGuire was on the other plane.

He came home angry, he said, lacking faith in anything. He wondered at the senseless luck that sent him back alive, when good friends in Vietnam seemed to die for nothing. Over the next few years, he forged a hard logic. He dedicated himself to justifying those who died, and the best way to do it was by helping veterans. If that circle went unbroken, then their sacrifice made sense.

That is what he did, for the rest of his life. He married a strong woman, Joyce Kusak, and they had four terrific children. McGuire lived for two things—his family and his cause. Kusak-McGuire tells a story of standing exhausted at the door, a newborn baby in her arms, while her husband left in the middle of the night to take down a veteran threatening suicide.

The McGuires settled on the dead-end block of Robineau. Years later, my family moved in down the street. One night, McGuire sat on the porch and watched a crowd of kids shooting baskets. Some of them he knew. Some of them he'd never seen. As he watched, he explained why he lived in the city.

He expressed a great respect, almost a reverence, for elderly veterans. He spoke of how he admired his parents and their contemporaries, the way they dealt with the Great