

TRIBUTE TO KRISTINE ELLIOT-  
THALMAN

**HON. GARY G. MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 14, 2000*

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a fine public servant, Kristine Elliot-Thalman, who will be retiring this month from her distinguished career at the City of Anaheim, California. As part of her service to the City, especially for the last 13 years, she has headed intergovernmental affairs matters involving local, state, and federal initiatives that are so important to Anaheim's vital needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially honored to bring Kris Thalman to the attention of the U.S. House of Representatives, because on the very same day as her retirement, she is having a birthday as well and congratulations are doubly in order.

My colleagues in Congress, many of whom have had the pleasure to know and work with Kris through the years, wish her Godspeed in whatever endeavors she may choose in the future.

HONORING MICHELLE KATHERINE  
MIHIN

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 14, 2000*

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special member of the staff of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Michelle Katherine Mihin, who is leaving us this week to return to her home in Ohio and accept a position with the Charles Schwab organization, an exciting and richly deserved opportunity.

Originally from Youngstown, OH, Michelle came to the Washington area to attend Marymount University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. Of particular relevance to us, Michelle was active for a number of years in, and served as President of, Marymount's Society for Political and Government Awareness. After graduation she stayed in the area and worked as an intern in the office of her Ohio Congressman, our colleague, JIM TRAFICANT.

Shortly thereafter in 1996, Michelle joined the Committee to work as a staff assistant with both our Aviation and Railroad Subcommittees. During her time with us, she has earned a solid reputation for excellence and dedication in her work. What has especially impressed us is the initiative she has taken to reach beyond her assigned responsibilities. Michelle has always been ready to volunteer and see what jobs needed to be done and plunge in to help to do them no matter what the issue or hour of the day. As an avocation, she has become our unofficial "Social Director". If there is an occasion to celebrate or a staff member to bid farewell, Michelle is always ready to volunteer and put her organizational talents to work. Above all, we will miss

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

the sparkle, enthusiasm and the laughter she brings to the Committee.

On many occasions I have quoted one of those gems of wisdom where the thought stays with you but the author's name does not: "Success is getting what you want, happiness is wanting what you get"—Michelle has earned both. I join with all Michelle's friends on the Committee in wishing her every success and happiness in her future endeavors.

IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND COST  
EFFICIENCY OF THE MEDICARE  
SYSTEM: SUPPORT REIMBURSE-  
MENT FOR CERTIFIED REG-  
ISTERED NURSE FIRST ASSIST-  
ANTS

**HON. MAC COLLINS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 14, 2000*

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to introduce The Certified Registered Nurse First Assistant (CRNFA) Direct Reimbursement Act of 2000, which will provide equity in reimbursement for certified registered nurse first assistants who provide surgical first assisting services to Medicare patients.

Having received more advanced education and training in first assisting than any other non-physician provider, CRNFAs serve a vital role, directly assisting physicians with surgical procedures. Additionally, CRNFAs and RNFAs are the only providers—aside from the rare physician making house calls—who sometimes provide post-operative care by actually visiting patients at home following surgery. Thus, not only do CRNFAs have more clinical experience and education than other non-physician providers, but they also provide continuity of care to patients enabling higher quality and better patient outcomes.

CRNFAs also provide the additional benefit of cost efficiency. Health claims data from the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) reveal that physicians file more than 90% of the first assistant at surgery claims for Medicare reimbursement. Physicians receive 16 percent of the surgeon's fee for serving as a surgical first assistant. Under this legislation, CRNFAs will receive only 13.6 percent of the surgeon's fee for providing first assistant services. Furthermore, CRNFAs are equally as cost-effective as other non-physician first assisting providers who currently are reimbursed at 13.6 percent of the surgeon's fee for first assisting. Use of CRNFAs would, therefore, be a high quality yet cost-effective alternative for the nation's health care delivery system, affording additional flexibility to surgeons, hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work of the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) and its president, Patricia Seifert, RN, in bringing this issue forward. As a provider of health care, the CRNFA is a viable solution for controlling rising health care costs. Working in collaborative practice with surgeons, CRNFAs are cost-effective to the patient and to the health care delivery system. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting equity for cer-

*March 14, 2000*

tified registered nurse first assistants by co-sponsoring The Certified Registered Nurse First Assistant Direct Reimbursement Act of 2000.

HONORING MICHAEL VICK

**HON. ROBERT C. SCOTT**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 14, 2000*

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this time to acknowledge the accomplishments of one of Newport News, Virginia's hometown heroes, Michael Vick, who recently led the Virginia Tech Hokies to this year's Sugar Bowl. His leadership and humanity during this exciting battle of champions continue to make a lasting impression on the minds of many in Newport News and indeed throughout Virginia.

Michael's talent on the field is more than evident. His remarkable athletic achievements as quarterback for the Hokies included being named Big East Conference Offensive Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year, Player of the Year by Virginia's sports information directors for the Division I all-state football team, and being named to the all-state team. To top off this impressive list, Michael led the Nation in pass efficiency and earned third place in the Heisman Trophy balloting.

Although Michael has gained national prominence for his athletic achievements, he remains well aware that he is a role model to young people in the local community. As a graduate of Warwick High School in Newport News, he returns often to speak with young students. Michael encourages them to set goals and work hard to achieve success. In doing so, he displays humility and an appreciation for his own accomplishments. These are the same skills he champions on the field and in the classroom at Virginia Tech where he is a sophomore studying criminal justice.

The City of Newport News will join with Michael's family and friends to salute him and celebrate his accomplishments throughout the weekend of March 17. These activities include a student assembly at his alma mater, where his high school football jersey number will be retired. The program also includes a recognition dinner and a community rally.

In a time where we are inundated with negative media accounts of our Nation's youth and sports figures, Michael shines as a positive example that hard work, determination and perseverance do, in fact, equal success. Newport News will long remember his outstanding role as an athlete and a gentleman while leading the Hokies to a national championship game. I join with the citizens of Newport News, Virginia in looking forward to Michael's continued legacy of success.