

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RETIREMENT OF GENERAL ROSSO JOSE SERRANO AS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE

HON. BOB BARR

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the resignation this week of General Rosso Jose Serrano, as Director General of the Colombian National Police, has been met with sadness by those of us who have known him and assisted his efforts in the War on Drugs. He was a bright light to the United States during a dark period of U.S.-Colombian relations. His 40 years in law enforcement and his accomplishments stand as a testimony to the adage that "one man can make a difference."

General Serrano is a true hero in the War on Drugs, just as Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A.) Administrator Donnie Marshall termed him earlier this week. F.B.I. Director Louis Freeh accurately described General Serrano as a "Cop's Cop." I speak for many of my colleagues in this House who have been to war-torn Colombia, when I call him a "true inspiration to those who cherish the rule of law." Few men have equaled what this quiet policeman from the farmlands of north-eastern Colombia has accomplished.

I know of no other lawman who has faced down the type of ruthless druglords that General Serrano has, and lived to tell about it. At a time when Colombia was synonymous with corruption and drug crime, General Serrano stood tall to enforce the rule of law, when others hid.

In the early 1990's, General Serrano commanded the anti-narcotics agents of the world-famous D.A.N.T.I. These men and women worked hand-in-hand with our D.E.A. in fighting the drug lords in Colombia. As a result of General Serrano's leadership, and with the D.E.A.'s assistance, they dismantled the infamous Medellin Cartel and brought its vicious leader, Pablo Escobar, to final justice on the rooftop of his hiding place, in December 1993.

He then led the destruction of the Calia Cartel by arresting the leadership of this deadly drug mafia. Today, these drug lords sit in prison, awaiting extradition to courts in the United States. In Colombia, five years ago, these victories were thought to be impossible. These astounding efforts came at great cost, however, with the Colombian National Police losing over 5,000 officers to drug cartel violence.

In 1996, General Serrano was invited to testify before the United States Congress, to tell his own story of how the arrogant drug lords were brought to justice, at a time when justice was laughed at in Colombia. General Serrano accomplished this huge task despite overwhelming odds and great danger to his forces. By his plain-spoken words and his reputation

for honesty, he enlisted many Congressmen, from both sides of the aisle, in supporting his anti-narcotics efforts, when the Clinton Administration withheld support.

Today, I stand in the halls of the U.S. Congress to hail the extraordinary efforts of a man who has always claimed he was just an ordinary citizen of Colombia. I take great pride in saying that Rosso Jose Serrano, the very extraordinary man from the farmlands of north-eastern Colombia, is my friend. I would like to remind the people of America that "one man can make a difference," and that in our joint war against narco-terrorism, General Serrano made that difference. The American people owe his a huge debt of gratitude.

TRIBUTE TO RALPH THOMPSON, JR.

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, "Working Hard" is a phrase often spoken casually in conversation and this act seen exemplified is rare. However, Mr. Ralph Thompson, Jr. did prove so as an Attorney on the Monterey Peninsula. Thompson understood the value of hard work in his career as well as his personal pursuits. Over his years, Thompson dedicated his time and energy to his "labor of love"—Little League. Yet, on February 28, 2000, at the age of 80, Thompson's commitments to his laborious loves were ended.

Born in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, Mr. Ralph Thompson, Jr., exemplified this in his daily work ethic. After earning his law degree from Stanford University in 1948, he then moved to Carmel where he joined the Thompson & Thompson law firm. Following his initial success at Thompson & Thompson, Mr. Ralph Thompson later became a partner at Hudson, Wyckoff, Parker, and Thompson in 1961. Thompson found later acclaim, in his personal life, as a Little League coach as he was awarded the Chief Justice Phil Gibson Award from the Monterey County Bar Association for his outstanding public service.

Peers of Thompson, spoke of him highly, often noting that he would be remembered as a, "litigator with a heart." Another friend of Thompson's recounted him as being a mentor and teacher, "who taught [him] all that [he] knows[s] about practicing law." Thompson's courtroom life never strayed to his family life. Known as a 'tiger in the courtroom', he was also seen as a "warm, family man."

As we remember Mr. Ralph Thompson, let us remember his many fine accomplishments as a husband, father, coach, friend and mentor. In time, hard work pays off and leaves pride in the hearts of those who knew and loved Thompson. He is survived by his wife,

Joan; his four sons, Lawrence, William, R. Cole, and Douglas; two daughters, Nancy Eskilon and Beth Carpenter; and 14 grandchildren.

CONGRATULATING THE ARMENIAN RELIEF SOCIETY

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Armenian Relief Society on celebrating 90 years of providing assistance to the Glendale, CA area.

As a nonprofit organization, the Armenian Relief Society provides a broad range of services to the Armenian community. It gives humanitarian aid, offers translation services, helps the homeless, and offers English as a second language classes to new immigrants. The agency also offers assistance in health care, job referrals, placement, and in finding housing.

The agency has branches in 23 counties, with 18,000 members and 1,400 volunteers in the western United States. To this day, the Armenian Relief Society is still called upon to help the Armenian people and to preserve the cultural identity of the Armenian nation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Armenian Relief Society as they celebrate 90 years of service. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing the Armenian Relief Society many more years of continued success.

HONORING ELIZABETH KIMMEL-HIEKEN

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Elizabeth Kimmel-Hieken for her outstanding contributions to the community. For more than 40 years in the labor movement, Liz Kimmel has tirelessly organized workers, walked picket lines, fed the unemployed, marched for civil rights, lobbied the legislature, and pioneered the way for more women and minorities in trade unionism.

The Harris County AFL-CIO is honoring Liz on her 85th birthday this month, for her more than four decades of valuable service to the labor movement and to the greater Houston community.

Texas has been fortunate to have such a daughter. Liz Kimmel arrived in Texas in 1947 to help organize union activities. She ended up staying for the latter half of the century, and our workers, our senior citizens, the handicapped, and the poor are better off for it.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

The labor movement and the community have benefitted from Liz's clarity, wisdom and constant dedication. She is among those inspiring leaders responsible for helping to eventually expand the labor movement through what was then a new, emerging public employee union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). She was at the forefront in leading AFSCME in Houston and Texas for two decades before her retirement.

Liz has also used her boundless energy over the years to become a stalwart in the Democratic Party. She has been a true activist, serving as a Precinct Judge, floor leader, block walker, an avid campaigner, and a successful recruiter. She has been a loyal and valuable member of the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national level for the last forty years.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Elizabeth Kimmel-Hieken for more than four decades of service to Texas and Harris County. Her contributions to the labor movement and politics will always be present, and her legacy shall endure.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOUTHERN
HIGH PLAINS GROUNDWATER
RESOURCE CONSERVATION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation which will bring focus to an issue that concerns the long-term economic viability of communities in much of America's heartland: the southern High plains stretching from the middle of Kansas, the Texas panhandle, Oklahoma, the eastern portion of Colorado, and the eastern counties of my home state of New Mexico.

Much of the area that I just described is farming country and much of its economy is linked to the Ogallala aquifer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service recently determined that there are over six million acres of irrigated farmland overlying the southern Ogallala. These farms use between six and nine million acre-feet of water annually. The problem however, is that the aquifer is being depleted very quickly. In just seventeen years we have seen large areas of the southern aquifer experience a 10- to 20-foot drop in their water table. These decreased levels will negatively affect aquifers used for irrigation, and for municipal water on the southern High Plains.

The problems facing the groundwater resources on the southern High Plains is a multi-state issue with significant economic and social consequences for America. Ignoring the problem and continuing uses to go unabated invites tremendous economic dislocation for a large portion of our country.

To address this issue I am introducing the Southern High Plains Groundwater Resource Conservation Act. This bill recognizes that accurate scientific information about groundwater resources is necessary to make good decisions.

It calls upon the U.S. Geological Survey to develop mapping, modeling, and monitoring strategies for the Southern Ogallala, to provide a report to Congress and relevant states with maps and information, and to renew and update that report every year.

It also acknowledges that a sound water conservation plan must be developed on a multiyear goal. Conservation measures must be implemented over a large area in order to observe a long-term groundwater trend. This bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide planning assistance on a cost-share basis to states, tribes, counties, conservation districts, and other local government units to create water conservation plans designed to benefit their groundwater resource over at least 20 years.

Lastly, this bill will provide two primary forms of assistance for groundwater conservation on farms. They are a cost-share assistance program to upgrade the water use efficiency of farming equipment, and the creation of an Irrigated Land Reserve.

The cost-share program is based on the up-front costs frequently prohibitive for modern irrigation methods. It is estimated that an initial \$20,000 in Federal investment in equipment on a cost-share basis would save between 325 to nearly 490 acre-feet of water over a ten year period.

The Irrigated Land Reserve is designed to convert 10% or approximately 600,000 acres of irrigated farmland to dryland agriculture. Because dryland farming is less productive than irrigation, this bill would provide for a rental rate to farmers to ease the economic impact of changing over. When fully implemented this program can potentially save between 600,000 and 900,000 acre-feet of water per year at a cost of \$33 to \$50 per acre-foot.

There is a pressing need to conserve this valuable aquifer, we must acknowledge that this is a precious commodity that is worth saving. It's good for the southern High Plains and it's good for our Nation.

HOMER HICKAM: WEST VIRGINIA'S
ROCKET BOY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, a few years ago a blockbuster best-seller book, originally called "The Rocket Boys" was published, and shortly thereafter a movie was made based on the book, titled "October Surprise." It was a sell-out at bookstores and theaters across the Nation.

This story, written by former NASA engineer from McDowell County, West Virginia, was about a boy, his friends, and his weary but supportive parents, who was so taken by what he read about NASA's early rocket experiments commissioned by the United States Government, that he spent his childhood experimenting with homemade rockets

His name was Homer Hickam, now a retired NASA engineer, who wrote "Rocket Boys."

On June 21, 2000 I received an official commitment from NASA detailing a long-term loan

of a model of a U.S. Space Shuttle for exhibit in Coalwood, West Virginia, Homer Hickam's hometown.

I worked closely with NASA officials in this successful effort to obtain a display in recognition of the accomplishments and vision of Homer Hickam and the "Rocket Boys" from Coalwood.

The display of this U.S. Space Shuttle is a tribute to Homer Hickam, his remarkable talent, and his teenaged tenacity in making his dreams come true—not only to shoot his own rockets into space as a boy, but to take his talents and his dream to NASA itself as a grown man.

Homer Hickam is an inspiration to our youth—not only in West Virginia but the Nation—that their dreams can come true, and that they should reach for the stars.

The U.S. Space Shuttle model will come from the Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama, and will be in place in time for the celebration of the Second Annual Rocket Boys Day Festival on June 24, 2000.

I believe, and the NASA Space officials agree, that this model is most appropriate to commemorate Mr. Hickam's work in propulsion, spacecraft design, and payload and crew training at the Marshall Center.

After the festival ends, the 13-foot scale model will be on long-term display across from the Country Corner Store on Route 16, in the heart of Coalwood, West Virginia, across the street from Homer Hickam's homeplace.

For those of you who read the book or saw the movie, you will understand the significance of placing this display across from Homer Hickam's old homeplace—the homeplace about which Mr. Hickam wrote, got a brand new furnace one day when Homer tossed a handful of unknown chemicals into the old furnace to see if they had enough explosive quality to thrust his next rocket high into the skies over McDowell County. They did, his mother got the new furnace she had always wanted, and the rest as they say is history.

RECOGNIZING BOB WILLIS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a dear friend and public servant who is stepping down after nearly thirty years with the U.S. Forest Service. Bob Willis has spent his life dedicated to the protection and conservation of several of our country's national forests.

Bob Willis began his career with the Forest Service in 1971 in the beautiful White River National Forest in Glenwood Springs, Colorado and in Monte Vista, Colorado in the magnificent Rio Grande National Forest. From there, Bill moved on to the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. Bob went on to "Big Sky" Country in 1976, with service in the Bitterroot and Lolo National Forests in Montana, and finally found a resting place in Rolla, Missouri in 1980 serving the Mark Twain National Forest.

Bob is the longest serving Staff Officer that Mark Twain has ever had, serving 19 years.