

surgery, Bonnie said, "I had faith, trusted in God, and made it through."

Bonnie emphasizes her gratitude for her donor. Through the hospital, she was able to get in touch with the donor's family, and they exchanged letters. Bonnie wrote, for instance, "I will forever marvel at the miraculous gift of life an organ donor gives." Bonnie eventually also met her donor's parents and sister. "We still email back and forth," she said. "I carry a picture of Chad in my billfold."

Mr. Speaker, Bonnie Hudgeons, who is sometimes called "the miracle girl," is a source of hope for anyone who faces difficult odds. I would like to pay tribute to her for sharing her story, and for being an inspiration both to those who need a transplant and for those who are contemplating becoming a donor.

HONORING STEVE RIPPY

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Steve Rippy for helping to build a successful assessor's office in Garfield County, Colorado, and to wish him luck on his next endeavor as New Castle Town Administrator.

Steve served as Garfield County assessor for almost seven years, and his total time in the office amounts to twenty years. In addition, he served as New Castle Mayor for seven years and as Councilman for eight years. Steve was also a member of the Town Planning and Zoning Commission for fifteen years.

Steve reflected on his time as Garfield County assessor, telling Mike McKibbin of The Daily Sentinel, "I think I'm proudest of a well-organized and efficient office with appraisals of property." Steve's satisfaction is certainly well founded, as the "significant reduction in the number of appeals (of reappraisals)" during his time there reflects. Certainly related, too, are Steve's communication skills. "We're very willing to listen to people," he said.

In addition, Steve demonstrated his ability to overcome adversity. While the assessor's office employed sixteen people when Steve began working in 1981, they lost nearly one third of their workers when the oil shale bust forced the office to lose five employees. However, under Steve's direction, the assessor's office bounced back nicely. "Now we're almost back to where we were and I think we're able to handle so many more new subdivisions," he said.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, Steve Rippy is an excellent community servant and a skilled leader. I would like to congratulate him for a job well done, and to wish him well on his new career.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PAYING TRIBUTE TO EARNEST "DOC" WALCHER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Earnest "Doc" Walcher of Gypsum, Colorado. After 25 years of retirement, Doc is now lending his hand to the town of Gypsum. He and town manager Jeff Shroll, it turns out, make a great team as well as good neighbors.

Doc Walcher was born in 1921 in Oklahoma, and he moved with his family to Gypsum during the Depression. He enlisted in the Army during World War II as an aircraft mechanic, serving at Guadalcanal and in the Philippines. After the war, he returned to Gypsum, where he has resided ever since.

Doc served the people of Colorado diligently before his retirement, working as head supervisor of the Colorado State Highway Department. He helped build and maintain Highway 24, Tennessee Pass, and Interstate 70 over Vail Pass before retiring in 1976.

Jeff Shroll, Gypsum's Town Manager, "noticed that Walcher, who lives directly across the street. . . had the most manicured and best-kept lawn in town." Jeff asked Doc if he might be interested in helping to keep up the lawns in Turgeonville, a property owned by Gypsum. Walcher eagerly accepted, and now that he is working again, he is "loving every minute of it," according to Julie Imada-Howard of the Vail Daily. The feeling seems mutual; Jeff says that it has been "great to work with" Doc.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor Doc Walcher for his continued service and willingness to help the community. He is truly an inspiration to us all.

HONORING DR. RICHARD HOFFMAN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor Dr. Richard Hoffman, Colorado's chief medical officer and state epidemiologist. Richard recently resigned from his position at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, after serving as state epidemiologist since 1987, and as chief medical officer since 1998.

Richard has remained active, professional, and reliable throughout his time with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. He has drafted laws, seen his writings published in over sixty peer-reviewed journals, written for ten non-peer-review or public health publications, written two book chapters and five published letters.

According to Dr. Sue Binder of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control division of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, he also directed one of the division's most successful traumatic brain injury (TBI) surveillance projects. In addi-

tion, he helped to launch the Colorado follow-up registry. These efforts have "led to the first credible estimate of TBI-related disability and health services usage prevalence in the United States." The Colorado TBI registry, wrote Dr. Binder, "blazed the trail for our planned efforts to create spinal cord injury registries."

In addition, according to a draft of the Colorado Board of Health Resolution, Richard "epitomizes public health leadership and leaves an indelible legacy of accomplishments." The resolution says, also, "Dr. Hoffman's efforts have paved the way for significantly improving the health and welfare of our state's population." Jane Norton, the executive director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment agrees; she wrote, "The bottom line is that his efforts have translated into making Colorado a healthier place to live and raise a family."

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Richard Hoffman's expertise, leadership, compassion, and hard work have improved the state of Colorado. I would like to thank him for his positive influence on Colorado's health care, and I wish him well on his future endeavors. His dedication is certainly deserving of this honor.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF WALLY WALDROP

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a remarkable individual who performs a remarkable service, and has for more than 22 years. Just this past May, Capt. Milton R. Waldrop, better known as Capt. Wally Waldrop, retired from Lake Piloting.

Born in Texas, Capt. Waldrop joined the Navy in 1948, serving aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Tarawa*, which served as embassy protection during the Chinese Revolution in 1948. He left the service in 1952 and moved to the Great Lakes, where he began a career as a Great Lakes Mariner. After 19 years as a mariner, he became a Lake Pilot in 1979.

Now for those of you not familiar with Lake Piloting, it is a fascinating profession. Every cargo freighter that enters the Great Lakes, must, by law, be piloted by a licensed Great Lakes pilot. Even though these ships have their own very capable crews, they still have to have a Lake Pilot aboard during their voyage through our water system. Capt. Waldrop is not only one of these master pilots, he is the best of the best. One day he could be at the helm of a Greek vessel, the next day it's a Russian freighter.

Great Lakes shipping is critical to the regional economy and has an impact on world markets and economies. Without the services of Wally Waldrop, and others like him, safe and efficient commerce through the Great Lakes would not be possible. Please join me in saluting Capt. Wally Waldrop, a great pilot and a servant to the entire Great Lakes region.