

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO GERI COOMBS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Mrs. Geri Coombs, who is retiring from the California Teachers Association (CTA) after 25 years of dedicated service. I had the distinct pleasure of hiring Geri when I was involved with the CTA. I knew then, that Geri's arrival would be a great benefit to the CTA, and that judgment has been confirmed.

For the last twenty years Geri has been the Associate Executive Director and Controller of the California Teachers Association. During that time she has guided the Association from humble roots with an uncertain future to a strong and vibrant association that has become a model of financial stability for non-profits across the country. Under her direction the CTA Business Division was reorganized, resulting in both renewed financial success and a restored confidence in the future reliability of the Association. All who have had the privilege of working with this dedicated woman share my confidence in her extraordinary leadership and vision.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to her outstanding financial insight, Geri's understanding to the goals of the CTA has given her a unique ability to allocate and direct resources to meet the many and diverse needs of the CTA. Among Geri's many successes at the CTA was the successful balancing of the demand for CTA services and resources from both large urban and small rural chapters. In addition it was Geri's important role as a management consultant to the CTA Board bargaining team that was instrumental to ensuring the trust and respect of both professional and associate staff unions, thereby solidifying the integrity of the process.

Geri is respected by all who deal with her, as her colleagues stated in their glowing tribute of her: "No CTA member has been called upon more often to solve seemingly insurmountable problems and no CTA staff member will be missed more as she moves onward and upward to a most deserved retirement."

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to a tireless worker, a financial wizard, and an outstanding person on the conclusion of her extraordinary career with the California Teachers Association.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN "MIKE" FLYNN

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2001

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John "Mike" Flynn, who has served

as the Worcester County Sheriff since January 7, 1987.

Mr. Flynn's law enforcement career began with the Fitchburg Police Department where he served from 1952 until 1963. From 1963 until 1987, he served as Deputy Superintendent of the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction and Special Sheriff of Worcester County.

The sheriff has been active in many civic and community activities. He has been a member of the West Boylston Democratic Town Committee in West Boylston; Board of Directors of the Campaign for Human Development; Veterans of Foreign Wars, West Boylston, Post 6709; American Legion Post 21 Main South Post; President of the Armed Forces Committee in 1993; President of the Massachusetts Sheriff's Association, and his special 30 year association with the Mercy Center and their mission to serve the mentally retarded.

Son of Irish immigrants, the Sheriff is proud of his heritage, but proud to be an American. The "son of a steamfitter", he attended Northeastern University's Division of Law Enforcement, and served in the U.S. Army during World War II as an infantryman in the Asian Pacific Theater. During his service in the National Guard, he achieved the rank of Captain.

Above all, the Sheriff is a family man who enjoys time with his wife Joan, their six children, and seven grandchildren.

A true Democrat, a dedicated public servant, a loving parent and faithful brother, Sheriff Flynn exemplifies the ideals of the Democratic Party and the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt. The Shrewsbury Democratic Town Committee is honored to present him its 2001 Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award.

WASHING AWAY GRIEF

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2001

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, this article appeared in Newsday on Tuesday, October 23, 2001, on page A7. I would like to sincerely thank and commend Jean Gioglio for her generosity and kindness in donating her son Michael Gioglio's clothes to the World Trade Center rescue workers.

WASHING AWAY GRIEF

MOTHER DONATES DECEASED SON'S CLOTHES TO RESCUE WORKERS

(By Nedra Rhone)

It was nearing some ungodly hour, and as rescue workers labored at Ground Zero hoping to find traces of the missing, Jean Gioglio labored over her washing machine.

Suds from a homemade cocktail of detergent and disinfectant bubbled about and the piles of clothing seemed to grow before her

eyes, but she was determined to finish. The weatherman had predicted rain for the next day, and Gioglio wanted to get the clothing to rescue workers by morning.

As the machine rumbled in her Bay Shore home, Gioglio wrote a letter. "I cannot fathom how you have the strength to carry on, but from the bottom of my heart, I am grateful to you!!"

Into every sleeve, every trouser leg and each pocket she tucked the note explaining exactly where the items came from. "These are Mike's clothes; you see, he doesn't need them anymore . . . he died three years ago . . . I've asked Michael to be your guardian angel."

Michael was Gioglio's 19-year-old son. And in the three years since his death, she has held on. Held on to his clothing, his possessions, his life. Two nights after the attack on the World Trade Center, Gioglio was ready to let go.

"It hurts me that I'd been holding on to Mike's clothes. I was thinking about how tired the rescue workers must be, how shocked. I was stuffing letters into the shirts and just wanting them to put them on, find that piece of paper, and not feel anonymous," Gioglio said.

When Michael Gioglio was 16, Timothy McVeigh bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. "He wanted to jump on the plane right then," Gioglio said. He wanted to help the rescuers there in what was then the worst act of terror in America. "He was too young, how could I just take a kid into that environment?"

Michael gave logical reasons, Gioglio said. He was strong, level-headed and willing to follow direction, he told her. But the answer was still no. Michael never said another word about it.

Then, three years later, he committed suicide, and with time, Gioglio started the process of healing. But she never was able to part with her son's belongings.

"Being surrounded with Mike's things made it a little more comforting," she said. "It gave me a feel for what was."

Michael was an athletic young man. The walls of his bedroom still display the more sentimental reminders of his life—football photos, lacrosse pads, a golf iron.

People told her that when the time was right to let go, she would know. It just never seemed to come.

Until the moment in mid-September, when Michael had a second chance to help. She found herself in his old room pulling long-forgotten clothing out of drawers and closets. "Humanity is dying," Gioglio said about her sudden motivation, "and the simplest things are going to get all of us to a better place."

It had taken years for Gioglio to get to this point, but as she packed her son's belongings, which had remained in his bedroom untouched, her state-of-mind surprised her.

"I was comfortable with it; I'm not heartbroken at all," she said.

In fact, it felt as if Michael had tapped her on the shoulder and told her to do something, she said.

Family members who had watched Gioglio grieve over the years thought it was wonderful that she was able to give away her son's material possessions, Gioglio said.

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