

several years to veterans' causes. He is also a champion of the rights of workers, serving for several years as Union President/Business Agent of American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 1061, at all veterans' hospitals in Southern California. He won 90% of his labor grievances with management during his term and helped to bring the Union local out of trusteeship and return it to the members.

Dennis has been a Life Member of the California Narcotic Officers Association and of AMVETS Post#2 in Culver City. He is a member of the VVA Chapter #53 in Redondo Beach, the American Legion Post #46 in Culver City, the Marine Corps League of San Diego East County, the Hermosa Beach Veterans Memorial Commission, the AMVETS National Committee on Homeless Veterans, the Advisory Committee of the VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care System, and the Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Committee. He has held elective office of the California Democratic Veterans Caucus.

He serves on the Board of New Directions, a long-term program for homeless veterans with drug and alcohol addiction with a spectacular success rate of 85%. He helped New Directions raise \$5 million to restore a 60,000 sq. foot, three story building with the assistance of Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS and Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, and helped to guide the donation of a new state of the art kitchen by AMVETS Department of California Service Foundation.

Dennis is immediate Past State Commander of AMVETS, which has over 10,000 members in California. During his term, more women, people of color and gays joined AMVETS than any period in history. He also served AMVETS as Post #2 Commander, District 2 Finance Officer, Southern Area Commander, California Department Commander, and Trustee of the AMVETS Department of California Service Foundation.

Through his participation in these many organizations, his achievements for veterans are too numerous to mention. He helped to get Veterans' Memorials in Hermosa Beach and in Palm Springs, and wheel chair buses for the VA in West Los Angeles and for the State Veterans Home in Chula Vista. He has handed out over 4000 blankets to homeless veterans, he started a web site for California AMVETS, and helped in writing a Veteran Plank for the California Democratic Party Platform.

The Maxine Waters Award for Courage, which Dennis is receiving, is named for Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, Representative of California's 35th Congressional District who has been invited to attend the award ceremony. Dennis made headlines when he gave a key to Congresswoman WATERS so she could make an unannounced inspection of a VA hospital locked-down psychiatric ward. The Congresswoman found the conditions deplorable, and sweeping reform took place. Dennis has shown other courageous action by walking with MAXINE WATERS and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, with the news media, from his union headquarters to the Director's Office of the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center to hand over thousands of pages of documents to the Director showing the alleged misappropriation of funds and misuse of VA land at this Medical

Center. He undertakes these courageous actions despite the fact that he has had severe heart problems.

As a Member of the House of Representatives Veterans' Affairs Committee, I thank Dennis O'Dell for his dedication and for his achievements on behalf of our nation's veterans. I am pleased to recognize Dennis O'Dell for his service to veterans and to congratulate him as the recipient of the Maxine Waters Award for Courage.

IN HONOR OF MARCUS R. HABEEB

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Marcus R. Habeeb in recognition of his dedication and commitment to creating funding opportunities for those in need.

Marcus R. Habeeb is a proud product of New York's education system. As he tried to decide on a career path, he received a paralegal certificate from Adelphi University. Once he recognized that the law was not for him, he changed his focus and received a Finance degree from Baruch College, followed by a Master's of Business Administration from the same institution.

Over the past twenty years, Marcus has developed and broadened the scope of his expertise. Beginning in 1980, as an Accounts Receivable/Computer Operator, Marcus has steadily increased his responsibility and broadened his portfolio. He followed his first job, with a position as an Assistant Controller, where he was responsible for the financial management of a fine jewelry manufacturer. A few years later, he moved on to a position as a Chief Financial Officer, for a company in a difficult financial situation. Marcus was able to work with the bank and other creditors to recover potentially large losses. He moved from this position to Senior Vice-Presidency for a financial institution. While there he built a small Asian bank into a very important player on Wall Street. In his next position, he expanded his scope of responsibilities yet again, as the Operations Manager for Hometrust Mortgage Bank. While there, Marcus began to focus increasingly on marketing strategies, investor relations, and home mortgages. He has used this experience, most recently, in creating his own business, P & R Funding. Finally, Marcus is able to bring together all of the knowledge that he has accrued over his twenty year journey to independence to focus on developing financing and business products for those in need.

Marcus is also the proud husband, of fifteen years to Annie, and the father of two children.

Mr. Speaker, Marcus R. Habeeb has dedicated himself to business and his community. As such, he is more than worthy of receiving this recognition today and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable man.

IN HONOR OF JAMES BUTLER

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of James Butler in recognition of his lifetime of outstanding service.

Jim Butler, is the President of a 10,000 member union, Local 420 Municipal Hospital Workers Union, DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO. He has had a lifelong interest in the living and working conditions of the people around him. For over 40 years he has played a leadership role in the struggle to improve those conditions.

Since beginning his career at Local 420 as a union organizer in 1954, Butler has been a tireless fighter for better pay, health, education and other benefits for hospital employees. Gains for workers in these areas are the most obvious marks of his leadership. "I never felt better," said President Butler, "than when we were able to win respect for hospital workers."

Over the last several years, Jim Butler and his local have waged a battle against threats to privatize public hospitals in New York City. The Local saw their efforts pay off with a victory in stopping the privatization of Coney Island Hospital, and the recent victory in saving Brooklyn Central Laundry, and 200 member jobs with no layoffs. Jim Butler is currently engaged in a boycott at several hospitals against the contracting out of employee cafeterias to fast food operation such as McDonald's and Burger King.

No less important, however, are his contributions to the community which the hospital workers serve. Butler has been the driving force behind the union's frequent demonstrations and rallies for social justice. Under his leadership, Local 420's political action also makes itself felt in voter education and registration drives. Annually the Local registers thousands of voters and directly involves hundreds of union members in political campaigns. The Local was a key supporter in the historic campaign to elect the first African-American Mayor of the City of New York, the Honorable David N. Dinkins.

Jim Butler has long been part of the struggle for equal opportunity for minorities within the labor movement through active membership in the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, PUSH, NAACP, Urban League, and SCLC Labor Committees. He served on the executive board of CBTU's New York Chapter. He also served as a member of the New York Consumer Assembly's Board of Directors.

Butler is the recipient of numerous awards and honors from civil rights, labor and community organizations, including the Labor Committee of the NAACP, the New York and Jamaica (Queens) chapters of the NAACP, the CBTU New York Chapter, Memphis Municipal Workers Local 1733, the Coalitions of Labor Unions Women, New York State's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, the Hispanic Labor Committee, the Harlem YMCA, Queensborough Women's Clubs, the Negro Labor Council, the Community Leadership Network, and Central Baptist Church's honor for Outstanding Christian Leader.