

Petty Officer Third Class Benjamin Johnson while serving his country in the Persian Gulf.

Vincent Parker, noted for his devotion to God and country, grew up in rural eastern Mississippi. He attended Macon Elementary School and graduated from Nanih Waiya High School in Louisville. He was a devout member of the Assembly of God Church in Columbus, Mississippi, and he grew up in a loving, well-respected family with five siblings.

Like his brother John, he enlisted in the Navy upon graduation from high school. He successfully climbed the ladder as an enlisted man and was rated as an Engineman First Class Petty Officer. He was serving onboard the USS *Peterson*. This deployment was to be his last, completing a successful career in the Navy. His mission on November 18th was to enforce the United Nations sanctions imposed upon Iraq following the Gulf War. He boarded *Samra*, a ship believed to be smuggling oil for Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to Petty Officer Vincent Parker for his 19 years of service to the United States of America and the United States Navy. He is also to be commended for his life-long devotion as a son, husband, brother, father and citizen. Petty Officer Parker is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn D. Parker Jr. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte, and their two children, Vincent Jr. (age fourteen) and Rachel (age twelve). He leaves behind his sister Ruth Marie, and his four brothers, Glenn, Andy, Steven, and John.

Vincent was known onboard the *Peterson* not only for his Naval leadership, but also for the example he set as a citizen and man of God. He was simply known as "Butch" to his friends. He enjoyed the simple pleasures in life such as family and deer hunting. He will most be remembered for his devotion to God, country, and family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join me in remembering an American hero, Petty Officer First Class Vincent E. Parker. Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with the Parker family at this difficult time. May God bless the Parker family, and may God continue to bless the United States of America with heroes like Vincent Parker.

#### INTRODUCTION OF SPECTRUM LICENSE POLICY ACT

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be an original cosponsor of the Spectrum License Policy Act of 2001, and I am hopeful we can pass this bill into law this year before we adjourn.

After months of negotiation in this matter, I am glad we have a deal that represents a win for everyone. It benefits the government by providing ten billion dollars in revenues to our Treasury. It benefits the original license holder by preserving the benefit of the bargain it had originally negotiated. It benefits our bankruptcy code, by preserving the doctrine of the stay and the power of the courts to enforce it, even against the government. And it benefits con-

sumers by permitting the spectrum to come on the market as soon as possible, fostering much needed competition.

In a very real sense we have reached this point because of the interest and involvement of the Judiciary Committee. When the Federal Communications Commission was seeking to unilaterally take away NextWave's spectrum assets, in violation of the automatic stay, this Committee weighed in to preserve the integrity of the bankruptcy code. The FCC was unable to ram their legislation through and the parties, to their credit, continued negotiating.

I am hopeful that this bill will serve as a precedent for achieving settlements for other similarly impacted parties. For example, I would note that Urban Communicators PCS LP, a minority owned enterprise, has also filed for bankruptcy and been engaged in a dispute with the FCC over spectrum rights. I would urge the FCC and the Congress to take up their case on an expedited schedule as well.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO J. PAUL BROWN

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize J. Paul Brown for his contributions to the community of Ignacio, Colorado. J. Paul's civic involvement in the community spans over twenty years and involves the areas of agriculture, education, planning, and economic growth. I am proud to recognize him for his hard work and dedication in the following achievements.

J. Paul graduated from New Mexico State University with honors in 1975. In that same year, J. Paul became a rancher and entered the cattle and sheep market, a business he still runs today. In 1978, he began his civic service and was elected to the La Plata County Farm Bureau, serving later as President of the organization. He served on the State Board of Directors for the Colorado Farm Bureau, President of the Colorado Wool Growers, and was honored as the Colorado Wool Grower Of The Year in 1996.

J. Paul continued his service to the community and state as a member of the La Plata Planning Commission, Sergeant of Arms for Colorado Counties, Inc., and as Chairman of the Region 9 Economic Development District. As a father and firm believer in education, J. Paul was elected to the Ignacio School Board of Directors. His performance led him to the honor of being one of only five members in the state to be nominated for the State School Board.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize J. Paul Brown and his dedication to the community of Ignacio, Colorado. J. Paul comes from a long line of dedicated community activists, following in the footsteps of his parents, Casey and Jean, who have recently passed a milestone of their own by celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this year. His own dedication to the community is amazing when one considers he has raised a family of four along with his wonderful Debbie, during his service

to the people of Ignacio and the State of Colorado. Please continue your service to the community J. Paul and good luck in your future endeavors.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. JERRY MORAN**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2001*

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman Chris Smith for his leadership this year. Our new Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee has served our Veterans well.

I am proud of the bill now before the House, H.R. 3447. It is a compromise that was achieved over several months by the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. It contains measures from the health care bill that I introduced earlier this year, H.R. 2792, as well as proposals from a number of Senate bills. This bill will provide veterans greater confidence in their health care system, along with higher accountability for the VA.

Important Provisions of this bill:

Enables VA nurses to pursue advanced degrees while continuing to care for veterans. This aids recruitment and retention of nurses within the VA health care system, and promotes higher quality of care for veterans.

Mandates Saturday premium pay to certain VA patient care staff, such as licensed vocational nurses, pharmacists, and respiratory, physical, and occupational therapists. This provision will ensure that the VA remains competitive with other providers.

Requires the VA to develop a nationwide policy on health care staffing to promote safe and high quality care for veterans.

Establishes a 12-member National Commission on VA Nursing that would enhance the recruitment and retention of VA nurses and strengthen the nursing profession in the VA and nationwide.

Authorizes service dogs to be provided to severely disabled veterans suffering from spinal cord injuries, other mobility diseases, hearing loss or other types of disabilities that having a trained service dog would assist.

Modifies VA's system of determining "ability to pay" for VA health care services by introducing an index used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to determine family income thresholds. This would reduce hospital co-payments by 80 percent compared to current law, for near-poor veterans who require acute hospital inpatient care.

Strengthens the mandate for the VA to maintain capacity in specialized medical programs for veterans by requiring each network of VA facilities to maintain a proportional share of national capacity in specialized health care programs, guaranteeing that these programs will be there if disabled veterans need them.

I am pleased to report that the bill establishes a program of chiropractic services in each network of VA facilities. It authorizes the VA to employ chiropractors as federal employees as well as to contract for these services.

Also, it creates a VA advisory committee on chiropractic health care.

Thank you Chairman Rockefeller, Senator Specter and Senator Daschle, as well as Mr. Filner and Mr. Evans, who worked with me to achieve this compromise for an effective new program of VA chiropractic health care.

Requires VA Secretary to assess special telephone services made available to veterans, such as "help lines" and "hotlines," with a report to Congress.

Provides authority for Secretary to study, then if found feasible, obtain a personal emergency-notification and response system for service-disabled veterans.

Authorizes critically necessary construction project at the Miami, Florida VA Medical Center.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this bill will improve veterans' health care programs as well as assist the VA's health care personnel to provide quality care to our nation's veterans, especially those most seriously disabled and least able to help themselves.

Veterans of our armed forces deserve a dependable and innovative system of health care and benefits. This bill increases our ability to meet the needs of veterans, who have sacrificed to meet ours.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Enhancement Act of 2001, and I want to thank the other Members and staff who have worked hard to finish this bill in the first session of this Congress. I particularly want to recognize my friend, Mr. FILNER of California, and Susan Edgerton and John Bradley, our Staff Directors of the Health Subcommittee, as well as Bill Cahill and Kim Lipsky, professional staff members of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. These and other staff have worked closely with us to achieve this legislation on behalf of America's veterans.

REMOVAL OF MRS. BIGGERT'S  
NAME AS CO-SPONSOR OF H.R. 3295

**HON. ROBERT W. NEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, the House printing deadline prohibited me from removing the gentlewoman from Illinois, Mrs. Biggert, from the list of co-sponsors of H.R. 3295. Mrs. Biggert's name was added as a cosponsor of H.R. 3295 in error. Had I not been precluded from doing so, I would have taken to the floor to correct this situation and ask unanimous consent that her name be removed from the co-sponsor list.

TRIBUTE TO HOOPS SAGRADO  
(SACRED HOOPS)

**HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, once in a while on this floor, we have the privilege to leave poli-

tics behind and recognize the outstanding achievements of Americans.

So today I would like to pay tribute to a group of young Americans—very close to my heart—that have become ambassadors of the playground.

In 1999, my friend Bryan Weaver founded a non-profit group named Hoops Sagrado. Hoops Sagrado is a cultural exchange program that is using the game of basketball to help bring a better life to two groups with seemingly little in common, young adults from the urban center that is Washington, DC, and young Mayans from the rural western highlands of Guatemala.

Despite the difference in cultures, the group share a common passion: They both love playing basketball. Hoops Sagrado is named after a Native American belief that all races are connected through the sacred hoops of life, and must live in balance with one another to survive.

These young men and women are doing their part to fulfill what Dr. Martin Luther King said was "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

For the last two years I have had the great privilege of serving as an honorary chair of the Hoops Sagrado project, and was thus especially pleased to see that last week the Washington Post devoted a Metro Section series to Hoops Sagrado's mission in Guatemala. The series highlighted the hope that Hoops Sagrado brings to these young people from Guatemala and America, a disproportionate portion of whom are raised by single mothers, and touched by the scourge of violence.

With great pride in the achievements of Hoops Sagrado, I urge all Americans to follow their example in touching young people, and review the Washington Post series published during the week of November 25, 2001 and describing how they overcame hardship to build bridges of friendship.

Finally, I would like to thank them and their sponsors Ben Cohen, Phil and Jan Fenty of Fleetfeet, and The National Basketball Association for the important and honest work they did as ambassadors on behalf of this country.

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 25, 2001]

Ambassadors of the Playground

By Sylvia Moreno

Two vans stuffed with tall, gangly teenagers, oversized suitcases and boxes of basketballs wend sluggishly westward from the Guatemala City airport on a muggy summer night, the riders seeing this new world through the prism of the one they just left.

"This looks like Georgetown," says 17-year-old Max Costa as the van he rides in passes a few blocks of small shops and boutiques.

Moments later, whoops and hollers greet the sight of a Wendy's, one of several fast-food restaurants on the outskirts of the capital.

"This looks like the Adams Morgan part of town," Max announces excitedly, as they pass strip malls punctuated with neon signs and billboards advertising a Burger King and a Domino's Pizza. "That's straight, joe!"

They get to the ancient and picturesque city of Antigua close to midnight, and as they stroll the historical streets, their minds are fixed on things such as finding a burger or a hip-hop disco. They encounter neither.

They are more than 3,000 miles from home—in body, perhaps, not in spirit. This

trip is supposed to show them that there's so much beyond the 'hood, but they're still looking for home.

The ancient colonial arch in Antigua is compared to McDonald's. They it look at stunning examples of centuries-old Spanish architecture and Antonio "Biggie" Dupree, 18, asks:

"Is that a church? That's big, dog!" His friends call him Biggie because he looks like one of their idols, the late rapper Notorious B.I.G.—except Biggie has a baby face and a soft voice.

He walks through a small plaza lined by grand 16th-century ruins—convents and churches toppled in 1773 by an earthquake that forever changed the face of this former Central American capital. But looking at the massive stone walls with small, high-set windows, Biggie says, "Imagine what it would be like to be in one of these Guatemala jails."

A GRAND VISION

That night was the first in a three-week journey to the lush highlands of western Guatemala, a country of spectacular beauty and stark oppression, poverty and hunger. Group members came to play hoops, but they had been told they would do much, much more.

These African American teenagers—nine from the District, two from Montgomery County—were to see some of the country's most cherished sites, take Spanish classes, conduct daily basketball clinics for Mayan children and repair basketball courts for a poor, mountainside school.

They had come as representatives of Hoops Sagrado (Sacred Hoops), a fledgling non-profit group whose leader hoped that such an experience would instill leadership skills and a sense of community service in disadvantaged youths through playing and coaching basketball. For the players, it was a free trip, a chance to get out of Washington, to see things, to enjoy themselves. Their leader had a grander mission in mind.

Bryan Weaver founded Hoops Sagrado in 1996 after his first visit to Guatemala, when he was struck by the role that hardscrabble basketball courts played as social centers of indigenous Mayan villages. He returned in 1999, bringing one of the African American kids whom he coached in youth leagues in Adams Morgan and Columbia Heights. Last year, he brought three. He was convinced that African American and Mayan kids could learn valuable lessons from each other. They are unlike racially, culturally and linguistically, but they face the same problems of bigotry, street violence and relegation to the margins of their societies.

Bryan expected members of his group to grow in self-confidence from coaching kids and to realize that they were not alone with their problems—that others might have even harder lives. And the Mayan youngsters, he figured, would benefit from the court moves his players could teach and be inspired to strive for more in their lives than a sixth-grade education and recycling the meager lives of their parents, grandparents and great-grand parents. To help the Mayan kids, Bryan also started a scholarship program to help keep girls in school past sixth grade, when free public education ends in most indigenous villages, unlike in the cities, which get enough resources to pay for public education through 12th grade.

He figured that this—the third summer of the program—would be pivotal.

He had joined forces with directors of the Shiloh Development Community, a teenage mentoring project in Columbia Heights, and with the addition of the Shiloh group was