HONORING THE MEMORY OF MR. KENNETH KRAKAUER

HON. KAREN McCARTHY OF MISSOURI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kenneth Krakauer, whose death on June 16 is an incalculable loss to his loving family, cherished friends, and to our community. Ken touched the lives of many people through the inexhaustible energy and caring that he brought to every aspect of his life. He was a lifelong Kansas City resident and the great grandson of Bernhard Ganz, one of the first Jewish sellers in Kansas City. Throughout his life, Ken Krakauer remained extremely dedicated to his faith, country, and community. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps where he flew 27 missions in the European Theatre and was awarded the Air Medal with Five Oak Leaf Clusters for his bravery. He played a significant role in and was devoted to many organizations in our community, including: Director of the Menorah Medical Center for 42 years, Secretary of the Kansas City Crime Commission, Chairman and Co-founder of the Kansas City Chapter of the American Jewish Community, Co-chairman of the Kansas City Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and a Director of the Barstow School, Visiting Nurses Association, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, UMKC University Associates, Jewish Family Services, and the Jewish Community Relations Bureau to name a few. Ken Krakauer also was an important part of the Kansas City business community. After his Presidency of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, The Kansas City Star praised him as "an unqualified expert." His grandfather, Bernhard Adler, founded Adler's in 1894, and Ken became owner and President in 1956. Adler's was the place women of all ages shopped to find the latest in fashion. It was always a special occasion for me because of the high standard of service and quality in his stores. His staff reflected his love of helping people find the uniqueness in themselves.

Ken Krakauer was instrumental in the founding of the Committee for County Progress (CCP) with community and civic leaders Bernie Hofman, Jim Nutter, Sr., Charles Curry, Alex Petrovic, Sr., and Frank Sebree. The government reform movement in Jackson County resulted from their efforts. A charter form of government—modern, open and accessible—was created which was re-exported to its citizens and inspired future generations of county leaders. I became active in the CCP, volunteering in local elections to keep the reform alive that Ken Krakauer achieved in the mid-'60s as Chairman of the CCP. Through my friendship in high school with his daughter-in-law, Rex Rieger and Xiaoning Evans, Jane Rieger Krakauer, his son and daughter-in-law, Ren Dee Krakauer Kelley and Michael J. Kelley, and our friendship, I have learned.

Ken Krakauer was so sweet with Jake, such a wonderful role model for our young boy. A pat on the back, a bear hug, always a “How’s it going Jake?” And then, he would listen. Many mornings, when I came down to the kitchen, how many mornings did I see the top of his head walking past my kitchen window and hear the newspaper would be at my back door when I came down to the kitchen. How many mornings did I see the top of his head walk past my kitchen window and hear the slight thump of Uncle Ken in his bathtub, delivering the news to the kitchen door? How many times did I call him when the power went out, the alarms went off, a strange sound was heard? He would show up at my back door to see if we were OK, one time at 1:00 in the morning dressed in his trench coat over his pajamas with a butcher knife in his sleeve, ready to protect the children and me from an intruder.

Two weeks ago, Jim was baby-sitting our two-year-old granddaughter Morgan Grace on a Saturday afternoon. They too, knocked on the Krakauers' back door. Aunt Jane was not home but Uncle Ken was, and of course there was no question as to whether he would rush to the kitchen table for a big chocolate brownie and milk. Papa Lynch, our little girls stopped at their back door to ask for cookies too. He filled off their Halloween costumes, their Easter dresses, their prom dresses, their wedding dresses. Uncle Ken was there to talk about the problems of the day. He would read the newspapers, 2009
love him deeply and completely. He will al-
ways be a part of our lives. How we will miss
his wave across the driveway. The last thing
he ever did when entering his house was al-
ways to glance at our kitchen window before
the garage door would come down. Always
checking on us in his loving way. How I will
miss those taillights pulling into the garage,
the sound of the car door slamming, and that
sweet smile and wave across the drive.