leaders from fields in politics, academia and various fields, held a meeting about the increasing use of media and technology by campaigns to manipulate information, and the citizen’s diminishing access to dependable, abundant information on issues and political candidates.

That meeting gave birth to Project Vote Smart (PVS), a small 501(c)(3) now engulfed in its own success. In the beginning the idea seemed simple: use young people from throughout the country to collect millions of documented facts about issues, candidates and other information about politics; index the information and then categorize it so that citizens could easily access the information through local libraries, toll-free hot lines, the internet and published reports.

Specifically, the Project is in a national library of factual information on over 40,000 candidates and incumbents in public office, all presidential, congressional, gubernatorial, state legislative seats, county, and local candidates and incumbents. They are indexed in over 4,000 public libraries and hundreds of local news organizations. National leaders were allowed to join the founding board without a political opposite—now over 45,000 members. Election-year programs are sponsored by over 4,000 public libraries and hundreds of local and national news organizations. National leaders were allowed to join the founding board without a political opposite—founding board members are national leaders as diverse as Goldwater and McGovern, Carter and Ford, Hatfield and Ferraro, Gingrich and Dukakis. PVS is staffed by volunteers, interns and a small staff paid only minimal salaries. They are conservatives and liberals, men and women of character, ambition, and initiative, who have already learned well the value of hard work, discipline, and commitment.

These exceptional students have consistently displayed their dedication, intelligence, and concern throughout their high school experience. They are people who stand out among their peers by achieving high honor marks and grades. They are people who always follow the information and then challenge their students. They are people who already have the keys to success in any endeavor. I am proud to join with their many admirers in extending our highest commendations and congratulations to the finalists of the 2001 LeGrand Smith Congressional Scholarship Program.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF SERGEANT RON PACKARD, OFFICER JOE REIS AND OFFICER JOHN NYIKES OF THE UNION CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2001

Mr. PACKARD, Mr. Speaker, on July 14, 2001, the Union City Police Department will celebrate the retirement of three of its finest officers, Sergeant Ron Packard, Officer Joe Reis and Officer John Nyikes.

Sergeant Ron Packard began his law enforcement career with the Union City Police Department on November 1, 1968. His first assignment was undercover at a local high school, posing as a student. During the day, he attended classes with the intention of identifying sales and distribution of illegal drugs on campus. In the evenings, he completed class homework assignments and police reports. Sergeant Packard continued in his career, and was promoted from Officer to Sergeant on January 16, 1974. He has served as a Firearm Instructor and Range Master, SWAT member, and has supervised a number of divisions, including Traffic Investigations and Patrol. Sergeant Packard was instrumental in developing the Union City Police Department’s current Canine Program and is currently the Canine Program Manager. During his off-duty hours, Sergeant Packard enjoys participating in local and international Police and Fire Olympic Games, and is the recipient of numerous silver and gold medals in archery.

Officer Joe Reis, President of the Union City Police Officers Association, began his career in law enforcement on December 16, 1974.