

was unheard of for an Asian American at that time. He faced harsh protest from his teammates the entire two years he played at UCLA, but he became the first Asian American to play and letter in a major sport at a West Coast college or university.

Pat and his wife Lily had been married for just two months in December, 1941 when our government gave them just four days to pack only what they could carry and sent them to live in an internment camp.

While in an assembly center at the Santa Anita race track, Pat and Lily were able to avoid going to an internment camp when Father Flanagan of Boys' Town convinced federal officials that his orphanage in Nebraska needed someone with Pat's psychology background. Pat worked at Boys' Town for 18 years, providing counseling and administering psychological tests.

After Boys' Town, Pat was appointed chief probation officer of the Douglas County Juvenile Court and helped establish a separate juvenile court system for the state of Nebraska. The Nebraska Psychiatric Institute later recruited Okura to head up the Community Psychiatric Services division, where he became the state planner for mental health and launched five successful mental health centers in the state.

In 1970, Pat's work in Nebraska prompted then-National Institute of Mental Health, NIMH, Director Bertram Brown, to recruit Pat to become his executive assistant in Washington, DC. Pat saw this position as giving him an opportunity to help minorities and children and address delinquency. Pat worked at NIMH for 17 years, retiring in 1985.

In 1988, when the U.S. government paid the Okuras and all other former internment camp prisoners \$20,000 each, Pat and Lily used that money along with personal savings to start the Okura Mental Health Leadership Foundation, which helps Asian Pacific Americans overcome racial, language and other barriers.

Pat's lifetime involvement with the Japanese American Citizens League, JACL, was filled with major accomplishments as well.

After joining the JACL at the age of 25, Pat moved up through the leadership ranks, gradually assuming greater and greater responsibility in this civil rights organization. In 1937, at the age of 26, he served as the Executive Director of the Los Angeles JACL Office. Pat founded the Omaha JACL Chapter in 1947.

By 1962 he became JACL National President and remained in office for three years. As JACL national president, Pat had the JACL march with Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1963, resisting opposition from some JACL members, who did not want to get involved.

Even into his 90s, Pat was an active member of the Washington, DC chapter of the JACL.

Mr. Speaker, I have only touched on the eventful and accomplished life of K. Patrick Okura, but clearly this was a man whose life represented a large part of our collective history.

IN HONOR OF RALPH B. THOMAS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate Ralph B. Thomas of the San Diego Border Patrol Sector. Mr. Thomas celebrates his retirement after 28 years of service in immigration policy and operations. I am honored to have this opportunity to pay tribute to an exceptional public servant.

In 1960, after a long day of campaigning for the presidency, John F. Kennedy arrived at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to find thousands of students waiting to hear him speak. He challenged the assembled students with the following immortal statement: "Ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man." These fateful words launched the Peace Corps.

A twenty-something Ralph Thomas learned of this challenge and answered it. In 1961, he joined the newly established international volunteer organization and traveled to the Philippines. He taught English as a Second Language in an elementary school and gave support to 35 volunteers in education and community development assignments as a volunteer leader.

Ralph Thomas completed his doctoral studies in Asian history and culture at the University of Pennsylvania in 1971, and taught Asian and American history at the University of Pennsylvania and Adrian College in Michigan.

His deep interest in urban and ethnic issues led to positions as Director of Black/White Curricula for the Education Development Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and as a process observer for the Detroit Education Task Force.

His involvement in immigration matters resulted from his friend and fellow Peace Corps/Philippines volunteer Leonel Castillo being named Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1977. After working as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner for two years, Ralph became Deputy Director of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. The Select Commission recommended a number of the policy changes enacted as part of 1986 and 1990 immigration reform legislation. Ralph returned to the INS as a special assistant and consultant for the first two years of the Reagan Administration.

In September 1983, Ralph was selected as an appellate examiner for the new Administrative Appeals Unit. In 1984, he was transferred to an inspector position in the Office of Refugees, Asylum and Parole. From 1986 to 1991, he served as Deputy Assistant Commissioner. Ralph spent six more years in the INS Office of Congressional and Public Affairs before coming to the San Diego Sector.

Ralph's career spans the arenas of international development, education, immigration policy and border management. His sincerity, modest demeanor and community involvement make him a true public servant. For example,

when impassable road conditions at Border Field State Park threaten to cancel a mass organized in memory of those who lost their lives crossing the border, Ralph stepped in. The mass took place as scheduled.

As Special Assistant to the Chief Patrol Agent of the San Diego Border Patrol Sector, Ralph has impressed me with his dedication to conveying the magnitude of the Border Patrol's work. I have experienced first-hand the rugged and steep terrain along the Imperial Beach-Tijuana border and flown over the expanse of the San Diego-Tijuana border with Ralph and Border Patrol Chief William Veal. Border Patrol agents are working hard to secure our borders.

On behalf of the people of San Diego, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for Ralph's commitment and my best wishes for his retirement. I wish him, his wife Janet, and their son, Michael, the very best in their new endeavors. My office will miss his hard work, hearty laugh and quick wit.

INTRODUCING THE ARTHRITIS PREVENTION, CONTROL, AND CURE ACT OF 2005

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Arthritis Prevention, Control, and Cure Act of 2005.

With more than 100 different forms, arthritis is one of the most widespread and devastating chronic diseases in the United States. These conditions are extremely costly to our health care system, our economic vitality, and erode the quality of life for nearly 70 million, or one in every three Americans who suffers from arthritis or chronic joint symptoms. It is estimated that 300,000 children are affected by juvenile arthritis, a disease with high prevalence yet widely unknown, that causes deformity, blindness and in some cases death. As the number one cause of disability in the United States, arthritis is a painful and debilitating disease affecting men, women and children alike—arthritis has no boundaries. Simple, daily tasks like brushing teeth, pouring a cup of coffee and even just getting out of bed become excruciating obstacles for millions of people with the disease.

The costs associated with arthritis are immense. The disease results in 750,000 hospitalizations, 44 million outpatient visits and 4 million days of hospital care every year. The estimated total costs of arthritis in the United States, including lost productivity, exceeds \$86 billion.

While the current impact of the disease is quite astounding, efforts now can help prevent and control arthritis for future generations. Despite myths that inaccurately portray this illness as an old persons' disease, two-thirds of those with osteoarthritis are under the age of 65. Maintaining a healthy weight and being physically active are both steps that can prevent this form of arthritis. More broadly, the pain and disability accompanying all types of arthritis can be minimized through early diagnosis and appropriate disease management.

This legislation will bring critical Federal resources to bear on a significant public health problem facing this country. This legislation will lessen the burden of arthritis on society and on individual citizens, like my constituent, Alfred Price of Brandon, Mississippi. Mr. Price has suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for more than 50 years, and I have witnessed over the years how this disease has ravaged his body.

In recent years, research into the prevention and treatment of arthritis has led to measures that successfully reduce pain and improve the quality of life for millions. This legislation would develop a National Arthritis Education and Outreach Campaign to educate healthcare professionals and the public on successful self-management strategies for controlling and preventing arthritis. To ensure greater coordination and intensification of federal research efforts, this legislation would create a National Arthritis and Rheumatic Diseases Summit to look at challenges and opportunities related to arthritis research within all the agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services. Finally, this legislation expands research for juvenile arthritis at the National Institutes of Health through the creation of planning grants for innovative research. To address the severe shortage of pediatric rheumatologists, it creates incentives to encourage physicians to enter the specialty field through the establishment of education loan repayment and career development award programs.

Mr. Speaker, we must make the necessary investments in the fight against arthritis—our Nation's number one cause of disability. This legislation will improve the quality of life for millions of adults and children and save our nation valuable human and economic resources. I urge all my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support this legislation and enact it in a timely manner so millions of Americans, like Mr. Price, can live life with less pain.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
S. PAUL EHRLICH, M.D.

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a distinguished American, Dr. S. Paul Ehrlich, who died on January 6, 2005.

Dr. Ehrlich served our Nation with great distinction as Acting Surgeon General in the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations and as the United States Representative to the World Health Organization. He received the Public Health Service's Outstanding Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal. Dr. C. Everett Koop, the Surgeon General under President Reagan, said that Dr. Ehrlich "did more than anyone I've ever known for American health."

Dr. Ehrlich was among six Surgeons General who in 1994 urged Congress to ban smoking in public buildings and to enact stricter controls on secondhand smoke and the sale and advertising of tobacco. His commitment to the health of all Americans and to

stopping the spread of AIDS led him to oppose a federal policy that would require minors to get parental consent before receiving contraceptives and information on birth control.

Dr. Ehrlich was born and educated in Minnesota, where he earned his medical degree. He served our Nation in the Coast Guard, and received a master's degree in Public Health from the University of California. He taught at Georgetown University, the University of Texas and the University of California. He was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1981 and lived bravely with the challenges of his disease for more than twenty years.

Dr. Ehrlich was the devoted husband of Geraldine McKenna Ehrlich, proud father of three accomplished and loving daughters, Susan, Paula, and Jill, and the doting grandfather of one.

It has been a personal privilege to have known the Ehrlich family for many years and to have had Jill Ehrlich Robinson as my Legislative Director and Chief of Staff. Her integrity and public service are an eloquent statement about she and her father who gave so much to better our country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this good and great American and in extending our deepest sympathy to his family. Dr. Ehrlich's life as an outstanding physician bettered the health and the soul of our Nation.

LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH THE
ATCHAFALAYA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA IN LOUISIANA

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, Atchafalaya refers to both a river and a large wetlands region of Louisiana; the name derives from the Choctaw hacha falaia, meaning "Long River." The river itself serves as a major tributary of the Mississippi and Red rivers, and runs through a swampy wetlands called the Atchafalaya Basin, which is about 20 miles in width and 150 in length. The Atchafalaya Basin is rich with wildlife, including three hundred bird species, as well as crawfish, shrimp, crabs, frogs, snakes, nutrias, beavers, raccoons, foxes, alligators, and black bears. Since the 18th century, Cajun fishermen and trappers have depended on the basin and river for their livelihoods and culture. Today, I rise with all my colleagues from Louisiana to offer legislation to preserve this unique area of natural, cultural, historic and recreational resource as a National Heritage Area.

This legislation will designate the Atchafalaya Trace Commission as the local coordinating entity of the Heritage Area. In 1997, the Atchafalaya Trace Commission was created by the Louisiana Legislature and was charged with planning and managing the Atchafalaya Heritage Area to help our communities save important cultural and natural resources. I support their mission to enhance the positive benefits of tourism and create a sustainable, healthy economy. I commend the

Atchafalaya Trace Commission in their leadership in preservation and advocacy on behalf of the Atchafalaya Heritage Area.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that I submit today also establishes a procedure for the voluntary inclusion of private property in the Heritage Area. I believe this is important in balancing both public and private interests in such a diverse natural and cultural area.

In conclusion, I believe the establishment of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area will provide the direction and resources needed to maintain what the area has to offer for generations to come. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass this important legislation.

CHANGING THE WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF THE
DEMOCRATS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, when the Ways and Means Committee held our organizational meeting earlier today, I offered an amendment to change the committee rules on behalf of the Democrats. My amendment would have allowed the minority party to conduct oversight hearings on the administration when the majority refused to do so. Such a change is vitally important because, with Republicans controlling both Congress and the White House, it is clear that they do not want to expose problems that exist in the Bush administration.

Below is my statement in support of the amendment I offered. It was defeated on party lines. I encourage my colleagues and the public to read this statement and take notice of the fact that Congress' duty to conduct oversight is being undermined in this Republican-run House of Representatives. The full statement follows:

As we consider changes to the Committee's rules, I have an amendment to offer on behalf of the Democrats.

The purpose of my amendment is to restore the duty of oversight to our committee. Since President Bush took office, House Republicans have decided that conducting oversight of the Administration is not a necessary function. We'd like to fix that.

My amendment is very straightforward. It would allow the Ranking Member to request in writing that the Chairman hold a hearing regarding alleged ethical misconduct or any violation of the law by an Administration employee. If the Chairman chose not to hold a hearing within 30 calendar days, then the minority would be allowed to move forward with an official Ways and Means Hearing. We would schedule it. We would invite the witnesses. We would have subpoena authority as well.

Why is this amendment needed?

This amendment is vitally necessary because the Committee on Ways and Means is no longer doing its job with regard to protecting the integrity of the programs under our jurisdiction.

The lack of oversight is a problem across our committees in Congress, but let me provide three prime examples of this problem