

Ron Polk authored "The Baseball Play-book", the Nation's leading college textbook for baseball, and is featured in a recently published book, "6 Psychological Factors for Success: America's Most Successful Coaches Reveal the Path to Competitive Excellence."

Coach Polk has also been actively involved with coaching in international baseball. He has completed seven tours as a member of the coaching staff for the U.S.A National Baseball Team, twice serving as the head coach (1991 and 1998) and five times as assistant coach. Two of his teams represented the United States in the Olympic Games. He was an assistant coach on the gold medal-winning U.S. team in the 1988 Olympics and on the bronze medal-winning U.S. team in the 1996 Olympics. Coach Polk has also skippered Mississippi State teams in international competition including a goodwill summer tour of West Germany in 1976 and in 1982 and competition at the World Amateur Tournament in the Netherlands.

And Mr. Speaker, these numbers and records and achievements do not include his 1997 victory as Honorary Coach of the Republicans in the Annual Congressional Baseball Game, which I will remind my colleagues, we won. I take this opportunity to salute and honor Coach Polk's achievements at this 1000 MSU win milestone. As this and other seasons continue, I know we will see the steady hand and experienced leadership of Coach Ron Polk. He is the lead spokesman for baseball at Mississippi State University, and beyond, the king of college baseball.

A TRIBUTE TO ANITA BURSON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Anita Burson who has dedicated her life to empowering disenfranchised citizens, improving her community and strengthening her church.

The first child of a distinguished Baptist minister and church leader, Anita was born at the segregated Jubilee Hospital in Henderson, North Carolina, on the Fourth of July at the conclusion of Sunday services, to Rev. Dr. O.B.J. Burson and Katie Leak Burson, an educator and engineer. Her late parents were college sweethearts at Shaw University. Anita is a direct Native American descendant.

A child of the parsonage during the turbulent last days of de facto segregation, Anita was privileged to witness daily the planning and activities involved in the fight for desegregation. She was also privileged to meet and hear some of the great pulpiteers and civil rights leaders of the time, who were often guests in the family home. Anita was immersed in religious activity, as well as education and civic awareness. One of her strongest memories of the struggle for civil rights was the evening white supremacist terrorists fired bullets into the church her father pastored in Coley Springs, North Carolina, while an integrated prayer rally and training sessions for voter registration and civil dem-

onstrations were in progress. Those bullets remain lodged in the doors of that church sanctuary today.

Anita attended public schools in North Carolina and Virginia, where she was one of the first students to integrate a Summer Enrichment Program for gifted students. Later the family moved to Brooklyn, New York where she completed high school. While still a high school student, she organized the first on-site voter registration campaign for 18-year-olds, at her high school. During her college career, she became the first Black woman to serve as an elected student officer at Finch College, and the first to earn a position on the Academic Council. Anita graduated from Finch/Marymount Manhattan College with a Bachelor's Degree in Cultural Anthropology & Sociology.

In 1977, Anita was elected to Community School Board #17, and became a member of the first Black majority in New York City's Crown Heights-Flatbush district in Brooklyn. She served as an officer on that body's executive board. Later, as a political campaign professional, she worked for President Jimmy Carter. She has served as a consultant to candidates for Federal, statewide and municipal legislative offices and other positions.

The Rev. O.B.J. Burson's role as a religious and civic leader ushered Anita into a life of community awareness and commitment. Her life has always been deeply rooted in the Baptist and AME Zion denominations. She is the great-great-granddaughter of Rev. Washington Leak and great-granddaughter of Rev. Thomas J. Leak, two prominent AME Zion leaders and educators. She is a fourth generation member of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. (NBC,USA); her paternal great-grandfather and his brother were present at its original meetings. Continuing that legacy in 1992 and 1993, Anita became the first outside consultant (in 112 years) for The NBC, U.S.A., to coordinate convention activity for its annual board meeting and annual session held in New York City.

Professionally, Anita is best known for her unparalleled skill as an advisor to pastors, clergy, denominational organizations, and to individuals, groups and corporations seeking to relate better to them. With nearly 25 years of experience in all aspects of professional campaign management and not-for-profit organizational development, Anita's professional acumen has been enhanced by her life's experiences. She is noted for her creative concepts and approaches to building sustainable relationships and enhancing networks between the public and private sector and religious organizations. Anita is a frequent speaker at churches, and for special events within local communities around the nation. She is to begin her own seminary training later this year.

Mr. Speaker, Anita Burson has been a leader in her community through her commitment to her church, civic organizations and coalition building. As such, she is more than worthy of receiving our recognition today and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable person.

VETERANS SELF-EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 2005

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Veterans Self-Employment Act," legislation to establish a five-year pilot program that allows our Nation's servicemembers, veterans, national guardsman, reservists, and qualified others to use part of their VA educational assistance programs to defray legitimate training costs associated with obtaining a business franchise.

Mr. Speaker, franchising is an enormous component of the United States economy. According to a study conducted by International Franchise Association Educational Foundation, nearly 760,000 franchised businesses generate jobs for more than 18 million Americans annually, comprising nearly 14 percent of the Nation's private-sector employment and accounting for \$1.53 trillion in economic output. Over 75 industries utilize the franchise model for distribution of products and services, ranging from familiar restaurants and hotels to home movers, tax preparers, personnel providers and so on. Clearly, franchising is a critical engine of America's economic growth.

When an individual acquires a franchise, the individual must first undergo various types of training, depending on the specific franchise he or she wishes to acquire. Training can include education on specialized knowledge of goods, services, policies and practices of the individual franchise system. Training may also include customer service, daily operational management, business computer systems, inventory control, costing and pricing as well as regulatory obligations.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, American military members, whether as active duty servicemembers or veterans, possess a wealth of experience and abilities. Their training in the armed forces has provided them with high-end skill sets that employers are looking for in the future workforce. Yet outside of what has been provided during their tenure with the military, statistics show that many of our young military men and women have had no formal education or training beyond their high school years.

Mr. Speaker, the "Veterans Self-Employment Act" will allow more veterans to take advantage of the opportunities in franchising by allowing servicemembers, veterans, national guardsman, reservists, and eligible dependent spouses or children to apply a portion of his or her educational benefit to defray the portion of a franchise purchase cost attributable to training. Specifically, in a one-time lump sum payment, beneficiaries will be able to use the lesser of 1/3 of the remaining Montgomery GI Benefit entitlement or 1/2 the franchise fee.

In addition, the bill provides the Secretary of Veterans Affairs proper authority to oversee and avoid any possible abuse of this program; submit to the Secretary a detailed description of the training program; two year operating rule for franchise businesses; and provide individual progress reports regarding successful completion of individual training, among other things.