

the local Beltone Hearing Aid Center, serving 16 counties in Southwest Texas. He has been active in a number of nonprofit organizations, including the Kiwanis Club and the first Methodist Church, and he is a former president of the Texas Hearing Aid Association.

Tracy King was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1994, and is currently serving his fifth term. He is a member of the House Appropriations Committee, and is Chairman of Budget and Oversight for the House Regulation Committee.

Mr. Speaker, the life of Tracy King is an example of what hard work and responsible service can accomplish, and I am proud to have the opportunity to recognize him here.

A TRIBUTE TO MARY
CAMMARANO, 29TH CONGRES-
SIONAL DISTRICT WOMAN OF
THE YEAR—2005

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our Nation's women during the month of March. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District.

I would like to recognize an outstanding woman in my Congressional District, the Honorable Mary Cammarano. For many years, Mary has brought an abounding spirit and energy to her service in the community. Those fortunate enough to meet and work with Mary instantly recognize her joy, enthusiasm and passion for helping others in her community.

A native New Yorker, Mary moved to San Gabriel in 1964 with her husband Mike. As a young mother, Mary was active in her children's activities, volunteering for 3 different Parent Teacher Associations, Little League, Girl Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America and a foreign exchange student program. Her past involvement also included board memberships on the American Heart Association, the YMCA, the American Red Cross, and the Italian Catholic Federation, where she served as President.

Elected to the San Gabriel City Council in 1989, Mary served on the council for 16 years, serving as Mayor for 3 terms, until her retirement in 2005. She was a long-time member of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments and the Independent Cities Association.

Ms. Cammarano's current volunteer service with the City of San Gabriel is extensive and impressive. A 30 year member of the San Gabriel Historical Association, where she provided her homemade lasagna for 15 years for the association's annual fundraiser; she also successfully brought the Ramona Museum to San Gabriel. For 35 years, she has been a member of the San Gabriel Coordinating Council and the Women's Division of the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce, where she's brought her homemade minestrone soup for the last 10 years. Additionally, she is active in the San Gabriel Kiwanis Club, serves on the

San Gabriel Valley Medical Center Foundation Board, is President of the San Gabriel Valley Music Theatre, and assists at the La Casa Community Center's annual fundraiser, the San Gabriel Mission's Annual Fiesta and the Mission's St. Joseph's Day Festival.

Mary has received several awards over the years including the Woman of the Year from the 49th Assembly District, Woman of the Year from the City of San Gabriel, San Gabriel Business and Professional Women's Woman of Achievement, and a National Lifetime Membership in the Parent Teacher Association, as well as many others.

Mary and her husband Mike have been married for 47 years, have 5 children, and 11 grandchildren.

I ask all Members to join me today in honoring an outstanding woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Mary Cammarano. The entire community joins me in thanking Mary for her success and continued efforts toward making the 29th Congressional District a more enjoyable place in which to live and work.

IN HONOR OF JFK HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to today to honor the boy's basketball team, at John F. Kennedy High School in Kingsbridge, NY. These fine young men, whom critics called the underdogs, won the PSAL tournament in New York, defeating Lincoln High School at Madison Square Garden 62–57.

It has not been an easy season for the Knights, which makes their victory all the sweeter. Midway through the season, Coach Johnny Mathis nearly had to quit the team. In the past year, Coach Mathis, who has led the team for 18 years, lost three toes to diabetes and underwent three circulatory bypass surgeries on his legs. Yet, this dedicated coach only missed two games all season. He always believed in his team. Mathis called the team's win "very special" and said he always believed we were good enough and that the team worked pretty hard and in the team's minds they came in to win the game.

It takes an extraordinary team to beat a three-time champion like Lincoln, but the Kennedy Knights are such a team and did just that. The final game was close—and with the score tied and 5 minutes left, MVP Emilijano Kinaj sank a three-pointer and the Knights were on their way. They worked hard as a team and the results are obvious.

I congratulate the players and Coach John Mathis for their 28–4 season record and for winning the championship.

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PENSATE REAL VICTIMS; SUP-
PORT ASBESTOS LITIGATION RE-
FORM

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, for almost two decades, Congress has unsuccessfully grappled with the challenge of assuring fair and timely compensation to workers who have become sick after being exposed to asbestos fibers. The pioneering work done by litigation reform advocates like Rep. HENRY HYDE laid the foundation for ongoing negotiations in the other body that may finally result in legislation that assures compensation to sick plaintiffs and allows defendant companies to move beyond the uncertainty of decades-long mass tort litigation.

In his State of the Union address, President Bush told us, "Justice is distorted, and our economy is held back, by irresponsible class actions and frivolous asbestos claims and I urge Congress to pass legal reforms this year." It is time for the House to enter the debate.

Many of you have heard how asbestos litigation reform has hurt workers and our economy. Over 8,000 defendants must spend time and money responding to asbestos lawsuits. Since the mid-1980's, 730,000 asbestos claims have been filed—and over 100,000 asbestos suits were filed in 2003 alone. Defendants point to examples of clever attorneys "working the system" to benefit certain plaintiffs, escalating the cost of litigation beyond reliable measure. For example, in 1998, a Fayette, Mississippi, jury awarded \$2 million each to five plaintiffs who had been exposed to asbestos fibers but had little or no symptoms of illness. In 2003, the Supreme Court has upheld a \$5.8 million award to plaintiffs with lung x-rays showing evidence of asbestos exposure, who successfully argued that they deserved compensation for living with fear of contracting an asbestos-related disease—or "asbestophobia," as some call it. The uncertain cost of asbestos litigation has driven at least 74 companies into bankruptcy. Employees of these bankrupt firms have watched the value of their 401(k) accounts drop by 25 percent. As many as 60,000 workers have lost their jobs.

This focus on numbers can make us forget that asbestos litigation reform is about people:

Mary Lou Keener watched her father die painfully from mesothelioma, a cancer he contracted from asbestos exposure while he served in the Navy during World War 11. He filed legal claims years before he died, yet his widow has received almost nothing.

Workers who are sick from years of exposure to asbestos while working for Johns Manville Corporation might be told that approved compensation for their mesothelioma is \$700,000; however, since the bankruptcy trustee pays only five cents on the dollar, their claim is worth \$35,000.

David Coleman, exposed to asbestos as an infant when he inhaled fibers embedded in his father's work clothes, died of mesothelioma in