

HONORING RICHARD GIMBL

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in honor of an American hero and one of the bravest firemen that Long Island has ever known, Mr. Richard Gimbl, Chief of the Holbrook Fire Department.

It is a tremendous privilege for me to inform the House that Chief Gimbl was recently selected by the great State of New York as its 2006 "Fireman of the Year." This award is the most recent of a long and highly prestigious list of decorations bestowed upon Chief Gimbl throughout a remarkably distinguished career exemplified by valor, sacrifice and selfless dedication to his fellow firemen and on behalf of a grateful community that he served and protected for 36 years.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Gimbl has answered the call time and again. He was dispatched to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to help with the relief and recovery from the violent hurricanes of the late 1980s. As part of a FEMA relief unit, he responded to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. And he was there at Ground Zero on September 11th when the World Trade Center and so many of our bravest firemen fell.

At a time in our Nation's history when the ever-present threat of terrorism and natural disasters continue to imperil our safety and security here at home, we need and are deeply grateful for heroes like Chief Gimbl, who set the bar for a higher standard of commitment and bravery consistently demonstrated by our first responders, and who comfort us each day by the blanket of security they provide at the expense of tremendous sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, as Chief Gimbl recovers from injuries sustained in the line of duty last year, we join with his family, fellow firefighters at the Holbrook FD, and the entire Long Island community in expressing our sincere best wishes for a full and speedy recovery and to assure each of them that he will remain in our thoughts and prayers.

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF UKRAINE'S
INDEPENDENCE**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, August 24th marked the fifteenth anniversary of Ukraine's rebirth as an independent state, finally being freed from the shackles of Soviet misrule that included a reign of terror, cultural suppression and a genocidal famine.

The last fifteen years have witnessed peaks and valleys as the Ukrainian people have struggled to overcome the legacy of communism and Moscow's imperialism. While the process of Ukraine's restoration is still a work in progress, great strides have been made to consolidate that nation as an independent, free and democratic state. The December 1,

1991 referendum on independence, the 1996 Constitution and especially the 2004 Orange Revolution stand as highlights, demonstrating Ukrainian resolve for independence, rule of law, democracy and freedom, and the continuing promise of a better life.

In contrast to the first 13 years of independence, Ukraine is now "free", and not merely "partly free." The March 26 parliamentary election was one of the freest and fairest ever held among post-Soviet states. The Ukrainian economy is on the road to recovery and development after the initial post-Soviet decline of the 1990s. Ukraine is a responsible neighbor and has shown its mettle as a partner for peace and security in the world.

Of course, challenges remain despite the real progress that has been made. There have been missed opportunities. Many of the promises of the Orange Revolution are only partially fulfilled. The rule of law, including a truly independent judiciary, remains to be consolidated. Corruption, although not as egregious as before the Orange Revolution, still rears its ugly head. Many Ukrainians believe all too many among the political elites look first toward their personal interests rather than to the good of the people and of the nation they are supposed to serve. As the last months have demonstrated, political stability can be elusive, and it remains to be seen what direction the new government will take. Nevertheless, Ukraine continues to show tremendous potential, and I am firmly convinced that this still relatively young 15-year-old independent state will fulfill its potential.

Mr. Speaker, in looking over the last fifteen years, we must not forget the sacrifices of millions who fought for Ukraine's liberty over the course of the last century, often against great odds and at great personal risk. Whether in the struggle for Ukraine's short-lived independence in 1918-21, or the insurgent armies that fought against both Nazi and Soviet rule during and after World War II, many Ukrainians made the ultimate sacrifice.

More recently, in the final decades of Soviet domination, Ukrainian Helsinki Monitors and other human rights activists challenged the system, calling upon the Kremlin to live up to commitments voluntarily undertaken when Leonid Brezhnev signed the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. One such renowned activist, Ukrainian Helsinki Monitor Nadia Svitlychna, who served three years in a Soviet labor camp for her tireless defense of human rights and freedom, died last month. We honor the memory of Mrs. Svitlychna, recalling that it was courageous and dedicated individuals like her who, as much as anyone, paved the way for an independent, democratic Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the role that the Helsinki Commission, which I Co-Chair, has played throughout its 30-year existence in firmly supporting human rights and freedom for Ukraine. I am pleased that the Congress has stood firm in support of Ukraine and am confident that the United States will continue to extend the hand of friendship as Ukraine moves toward its rightful place as a fully integrated member of the Euro-Atlantic community of nations.

TRIBUTE TO MARK CHESNUTT

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mark Chesnutt on this day September 6, 2006, his 43rd birthday. This outstanding country music star currently has 14 No. 1 hits, 23 top ten singles, four platinum albums, five gold records, and continually maintains a hefty live tour schedule.

Born in Beaumont, TX, Mark got his start playing in honky-tonk bars throughout his hometown area singing alongside his father, Bob Chesnutt. His dad traveled often to Nashville and started taking Mark along at 17 where he was soon discovered by talent agents who recognized the vocal and authentic talents Mark possesses.

Signed at 17 by MCA, Mark soon won the coveted Country Music Association's Horizon Award recognizing the industry's top new talent. At the awards ceremony, he was introduced by legendary country music star George Jones who remarked, "This boy from Beaumont, Texas is the real deal."

Throughout the 90's Mark's singles continued to light up the chart including some of the decade's most memorable up-tempo hits like "Bubba Shot the Jukebox" and "Going Through the Big D." Also accelerating his rise to stardom were hits like the emotional ballads "I'll Think of Something" and "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing."

Mark's excellence continues today combining world-class vocals and awe-inspiring stage performances that leave crowds standing in ovation until they themselves are hoarse! Most remarkable of all, he stays true to his roots keeping the traditional country music style he was raised on in an ever-changing country music landscape.

Mark Chesnutt is a true gift to Country Music and specifically the 8th District of Texas. Not only has he blessed us with musical hit after hit, he also has tirelessly given of his time and talent to assist east and south-east Texas in their recovery from the devastating effects of Hurricane Rita. Mark also has a wonderful marriage to Tracie Chesnutt with three beautiful children: Waylon, Casey, and Cameron.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for helping me honor Mark Chesnutt, this America country music superstar, on his 43rd birthday.

CONGRATULATING RONNIE LÓPEZ
FOR HIS INDUCTION INTO VALLE
DEL SOL'S HALL OF FAME**HON. ED PASTOR**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to proudly pay tribute to an Arizonan who has exemplified the meanings of leadership, commitment to community, social justice and integrity. He is a highly-regarded leader not only in Arizona, but nationally, and someone whom I am proud to call my friend—Mr. Ronnie López.