

IN HONOR OF MARY BOURDETTE

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, with a heavy heart, I rise to honor the life of Mary Bourdette.

On September 5th, America lost one of its great champions for children and families. Mary Bourdette was a passionate and dedicated advocate and had an extraordinary 30-year career. Mary's tireless efforts improved the lives of countless children and families across the country.

I will personally miss her friendship, and the Nation will miss her devotion to children's welfare.

I first met Mary in California when she was working on improving education in the state. Mary and I then worked closely together when I chaired the House Select Committee on Children Youth and Families in the 1980s here in the House.

She was a skilled advocate and negotiator and her vision and persistence were critical to my efforts on child welfare policy and numerous other issues. Mary advocated for children and families in many capacities here in Washington, D.C. over the past 30 years. She worked for the Legal Services Corporation to help ensure that our poorest citizens have access to the legal system that our Constitution promises. She later worked tirelessly at the Children Defense Fund on the first major expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the original enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant—programs that have made an enormous difference for America's poorest families.

Her work with the Child Welfare League of America as Director of Public Policy also proved vital for the well-being of America's children and families. And her 8 years with the Clinton Administration allowed Mary to play a central and critical role in the many federal policies that affect children.

Her untimely death is a tragedy. Her colleagues will miss her and her family and closest friends will mourn her loss. To them, I extend my profound condolences and empathy. But in honor of Mary, let not one of us ever forget the meaning of her life's work. Mary Bourdette believed that every child and family, no matter how poor or meager their existence, deserved the chance to live a better life. She was a model for those who wish to dedicate themselves to improving the lives of others. And for that I am grateful. Our nation is indebted to her for what she believed in and what she tried so hard to accomplish.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY KERR

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, Nancy Kerr, the founder of the first hospice program in Tennessee, was killed in a tragic accident on May 1.

I knew Nancy Kerr for a big part of my life. She was a staunch conservative and a strong supporter of both my late father and me.

She did not just talk about compassionate conservatism; she lived it.

She comforted more than 500 patients as they neared death and was doing this right up to the day of her death at age 80.

She was a wonderful woman, and this Nation is a better place today because of the love and kindness she gave to so many.

Sam Brown, a friend of mine, wrote a great article about Nancy Kerr for the August 27 edition of The Knoxville News-Sentinel.

I would like to call this article to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

NURSES'S WORLD WAR II WORK LAID
FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE HOSPICE CARE

(By Sam Brown)

It could have been a Hollywood movie.

She was a young, stunningly beautiful English nurse who cared for wounded British and American troops in World War II. Several dying soldiers called her an angel. Some said she looked like Katharine Hepburn. She was 18 and a student nurse when Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France. She remembers D-Day well, comforting many wounded and dying soldiers who were brought back from the front lines. After the war, she married Jim Kerr of Knoxville after saying she would never marry an American. She became the first hospice nurse in the state of Tennessee.

This is not a Hollywood script. It is the story of Nancy Wilkie Kerr.

She was born near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where she spoke Malay and Chinese before she learned English. Kerr was 13 in Southampton, England, when World War II started. She lived through German bombing raids and recalled when three British Spitfires flew up to meet 20 German bombers. The air raid sirens and the screams of the wounded were etched in her memory. She wanted to help, so she became a nurse. During the war, she worked 12-hour shifts for six weeks and got two days off. Kerr once said, "I look in the face of death every day."

It was invaluable experience for what was ahead in her life.

In 1979, Kerr helped establish the first hospice program at Fort Sanders Hospital. It was also the first program of its kind in Tennessee.

I was anchoring television news for Channel 6 in 1979 and heard about the hospice program. It intrigued me. I had never heard of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, who founded the concept in England. Hospice is a medieval term meaning a stopping-off point for weary travelers.

In 1969, Kubler-Ross wrote the book "On Death and Dying." She presented the premise that the terminally ill go through various stages from denial to acceptance as death closes in. Hospice allows them to face death with dignity. Hospice tries first and foremost to relieve pain with medication, to prepare the patient for death both mentally and physically and, if possible, to let the patient die peacefully at home.

Kerr felt the terminally ill should not die in a sterile hospital room. In a span of 25 years, she comforted more than 500 families as their loved ones went through the stages of death with dignity. Shortly after the Knoxville program started, I did a two-part TV series on hospice with Kerr.

She told me, "You become a definite part of each family with which you work. Of

course you get emotionally involved, but we try to aim for what we call a 'good death' where they are tranquil and accepting. Not joyous or euphoric but rather accepting."

Kerr died in May at the age of 80, just before her death, she was still doing what she did best—nursing the sick and terminally ill. And comforting their families. The tributes poured in at her funeral.

Patty Loveday wrote in the guest book, "She helped us through two long months of Mother's illness. We could never have brought Mother home without her. She was truly a wonderful nurse. We felt like she was part of the family."

Nancy's number three son, Chris and his wife, Karen, carry on her legacy with their company, Tender Hearts Support Services, which provides companionship for the elderly with a hospice approach. "We are trying to keep Mother's mission alive. She was truly a remarkable woman," Chris Kerr said.

Ironically, Nancy Kerr did not die in a hospice environment. On the afternoon of May 1, 2006, she was killed instantly in an auto accident on Alcoa Highway.

A friend at her funeral perhaps said it best. "Heaven has gained a new angel."

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF
SARCOXIE, MISSOURI

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 175th anniversary of the City of Sarcoxie, located in Jasper County, Missouri.

The region where Sarcoxie is located was acquired by the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. One of the first known inhabitants of the area was Chief Sarcoxie, head of the Turtle Band of the Delaware Tribe of Indians. Thackery Vivion became the first permanent settler to Jasper County when he built a log cabin and began farming near Sarcoxie Spring in 1831, and Sarcoxie soon became the first town in Jasper County. Gene Taylor, who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1973 until 1989, was born near Sarcoxie, and the Gene Taylor Library and Museum is located on the town square.

I am proud to congratulate the City of Sarcoxie and its citizens on the 175th anniversary of this historic city.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK GREEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from Washington on Wednesday, September 6, 2006. As a result, I was not recorded for rollcall votes Nos. 427, 428, and 429. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall Nos. 427, 428, and 429.