

Buck O'Neil's accomplishments off the field that demonstrate his love for the game of baseball and his commitment to the essential role that the Negro Leagues played in the integration of both American sport and American society. In 1990, O'Neil was a leader in the effort to create the Negro League Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. The Museum, located in the historic 18th and Vine district of downtown Kansas City, has excelled for nearly a decade in its mission of educating all Americans about the rich and important history of the Negro Leagues. Buck served as the Board Chairman for the Museum and actively promoted its messages of understanding and triumph over adversity. In addition to his work with the Museum, Mr. O'Neil served as a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame Veterans Committee from 1981–2000, working hard to ensure that many of the Negro League players who had been denied entrance into the Major Leagues because of segregation were able to gain a deserved entrance into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

After devoting so many years of his life to promoting the accomplishments of others, many believed that the time for Buck's recognition had finally arrived in the spring of 2006, when he was on a special ballot for entry into the Hall of Fame. Shockingly, the Committee chose not to induct Mr. O'Neil, to the dismay of many—but not Buck. Unaffected by the Hall's decision, he took the high road and offered to speak at the induction ceremony on behalf of those selected, because many of them had passed on. On June 30, 2006, Buck selflessly honored all 17 individuals related to the Negro Leagues who were inducted, giving an inspiring speech and instructing all audience members to hold hands and join him in song. The ovation he received was the loudest and longest of the ceremony.

At the time of his death, Buck O'Neil's efforts were focused on the John "Buck" O'Neil Education and Research Center. Scheduled for completion in late 2007, the Center will be an expansion of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum devoted to teaching people of all ages many different aspects of the Negro leagues and baseball. The 45,000 square foot facility will house extensive archives and promises to devote much of its space and funding to state-of-the-art technology and programs that will teach many different things to many different people.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to honor the life of Buck O'Neil, because of his accomplishments while playing and managing in the Negro and Major Leagues, because of his work with the Negro League Baseball Museum, because of his devotion to those who shared in his struggle, valuing their legacies more than his own, and most of all, because of his immense contributions to the game of baseball and American society. When acclaimed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns made his film *Baseball* in 1994, he chose Buck O'Neil as the narrator, because no other individual better captures the history and legacy of our American pastime. He was truly the game's ambassador, and his spirit will be sorely missed.

A TRIBUTE TO PAUL DE LA  
GARZA

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Paul de la Garza, a hard charging newspaper reporter for The St. Petersburg Times with a generous heart of gold who died on October 29, 2006.

Many of our colleagues worked with Paul as he reported on stories affecting our national security and the health care of our country's veterans. Paul was an outstanding investigative reporter who mined his many sources to effect necessary changes in the way in which we deliver medical care at our Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers. He also spent time earlier this summer in Iraq as he did extensive reporting on the war there and the role U.S. Central Command plays in managing our troops on the ground.

Paul was more than a reporter though. He was first and foremost an outstanding husband to his wife Georgia and a loving father to his two children Monica, 12, and Carlos, 11, both of whom he adopted from Mexico.

His is the story of the American dream, growing up poor in a small Texas town. He worked 40 hour weeks as a fourth grader to help out his family. Later he delivered newspapers and waited tables to put himself through college at the University of Texas. He was a reporter with the Associated Press and Chicago Tribune before becoming a regular on the front pages of The St. Petersburg Times as a reporter in the Washington and Tampa bureaus.

Following my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to include tributes to Paul from The St. Petersburg Times, The Tampa Tribune and The Chicago Tribune. They speak to Paul's success as a reporter but more importantly his compassion and love for his family, his friends, and for those most in need of help.

Mr. Speaker, I knew Paul de la Garza as a reporter, but I will forever miss him as a very special friend who always kept life's priorities in order. My prayers go out to Paul's family, especially to Georgia, Monica and Carlos, as they deal with the loss of a great man, a great husband and a great father.

[From the St. Petersburg Times, Oct. 30, 2006]

PASSIONATE REPORTER "NEVER MET A  
STRANGER"

Paul de la Garza, a hard-driving St. Petersburg Times reporter whose passion for the big story was matched by love of family, died Sunday (Oct. 29, 2006) after an apparent heart attack.

Mr. de la Garza, 44, who had survived a heart attack 2 years ago, collapsed at his Davis Islands home about 10 a.m. after complaining of chest pains. He was taken by ambulance to Tampa General Hospital, where he died about 1 p.m.

As a journalist, Mr. de la Garza was widely respected for mining sources and breaking big stories, most recently about VA hospitals and the Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base.

"He was a driving investigative reporter. This is very shocking," said U.S. Rep. C.W.

Bill Young, a frequent source for Mr. de la Garza, sometimes dinner companion and occasional target. "He was very respected by the folks I know. They trusted him."

Young's wife, Beverly, recalled tears running down de la Garza's face, as she led him through VA wards full of wounded soldiers.

"Paul is really compassionate. He really cares," she said Sunday. "He's the most wonderful Democrat I ever knew. I can't believe this has happened to him and Georgia and the kids. This is wrong."

TEXAS UPBRINGING

Mr. de la Garza was born in Port Isabel, Texas, near Brownsville, one of six children.

His father was a shrimper and his heritage was Mexican, though he sometimes pointed out that some ancestors lived in Texas before the United States annexed it. His given name was Jesus Pablo, but friends called him Jesus only when they wanted to annoy him.

By fourth grade, he was working 40 hours a week, collecting bait for fishermen, his wife, Georgia, said.

He waited tables and worked at the school newspaper to earn his way through the University of Texas. Then he worked his way up the ranks of the Associated Press, with stints in Chicago, Southern Illinois and Newark, N.J.

Mike Konrad, now Hernando Times editor, was managing editor of the Southern Illinoisan, in Carbondale, when Mr. de la Garza was posted there for the AP.

"This was a guy who could work sources like nobody I've ever seen in my life," Konrad recalled. "Within weeks of getting there, he was getting stories our reporters were missing, just because he had met so many people. And there was nobody in the world who would not talk to Paul."

Sometimes, boldness and charm was all it took. As the Chicago Tribune's Mexico City bureau chief, Mr. de la Garza interviewed Latin American presidents and rebel leaders alike. On assignment in Cuba, he ran into Milton Berle and asked him for a cigar-smoking lesson.

"I still have the cigar box that Milton Berle signed for him," said Georgia de la Garza. "They smoked Cohibas together."

Once, when Mr. de la Garza was vacationing in New Orleans, a limousine driver pointed out Fats Domino's house. Mr. de la Garza jumped out with a video camera and talked his way in, where Domino's band was practicing for a Jazz Fest performance. Fats, himself, stayed in back of the house.

"Paul never met a stranger," recalled Times colleague Tom Scherberger, who witnessed the scene. "He introduces himself and we are hanging out with Fats Domino's band. Finally, one of the band politely says that Fats won't come out until we leave. Only later, did we discover that Paul had pushed the button wrong on the camera and we never got any video."

Mr. de la Garza first worked at the Times from 1992 through 1994, where he covered Tampa police news, wrote a column, and helped edit the Tampa section.

Then he worked for the Chicago Tribune for six years, both in Mexico City and in Chicago, where he was a reporter and assignments editor.

He returned to the Times in 2000, in part, because he and his wife wanted a more stable environment for two orphans they had adopted in Mexico City—Monica, now 12, and Carlos, 11.

"The two things he cared the most about were his family and his work," said John Dunn, longtime friend and Tampa General spokesman. "Just about every conversation

we had sitting over pints were about Georgia and the kids.

"No matter how bad a day he had, that put him in good spirits."

It wasn't just the children. The de la Garza house often was opened to extended family. When Georgia's brother died, they took in her niece. When Paul's father had a stroke, they took in his parents.

During his second stint at the Times, Mr. de la Garza covered the Pentagon, the military and veterans affairs. Last summer, he wrote a detailed, insider's look at Army Gen. John Abizaid, head of U.S. Central Command, as he toured Afghanistan and Iraq.

"This is a heartbreaking loss. He really went after stories because they would make a difference in the lives of goodhearted folks," said Paul Tash, Times editor, chairman and CEO. "He had so much to offer both as a father and husband and also as a reporter."

#### CANCER SURVIVOR

In 2001, Mr. de la Garza was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease and underwent extensive cancer treatments. After 2 years with no recurrence, he and his wife rented a B&B in his beloved New Orleans and celebrated with about 40 friends from around the country. One photograph shows him in a colorful hat, a Jazz Fest scarf around his neck and sunglasses.

"Paul the journalist was very different than Paul, the regular guy," recalled Sandra Gadsden, the Neighborhood Times editor.

"The journalist was a stickler for detail. He would hang on every sentence. Paul the man was just a fun-loving laid-back guy."

Mr. de la Garza is survived by his wife; daughter Monica and son Carlos; mother, Jesusa de la Garza and sister Via Camacho, both of Austin, Texas, and brothers Eduardo of Houston and Alberto of Galveston, Texas. Funeral services have not been set.

[From the Tampa Tribune, Oct. 30, 2006]

#### TIMES' MILITARY REPORTER DIES

(By Mark Holan)

TAMPA.—Paul de la Garza, military and veterans affairs reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, died Sunday of an apparent heart attack. He was 44.

A cancer survivor, de la Garza was described by his friend and editor, Pat Farnan, as a strong reporter who enjoyed spending time with his family.

He is survived by his wife, Georgia, and two children, Carlos and Monica.

For a September profile of Army Gen. John Abizaid, de la Garza spent five days traveling in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Paul was definitely among the more assertive, if not industrious, journalists who had the military beat," said Lt. Col. Mike Escudie, media affairs officer for Central Command. He said the Abizaid profile got good reviews from the military.

"It was a testament to his professionalism," Escudie said.

"He had tremendous passion for his work," said Farnan, the Times' interim metro editor who supervised de la Garza in recent years.

De la Garza joined the Times' Tampa bureau in 1992 after eight years of reporting for The Associated Press. He left to work as a Mexico City correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, then rejoined the Times in August 2000 in Washington, DC, as the national security and foreign affairs reporter. He later returned to Tampa and lived on Davis Islands.

De la Garza earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas in Austin.

In June 2002, de la Garza was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer.

Soon he was physically and mentally worn out by his chemo treatments.

A five-minute meeting at the White House that September with cancer survivor and Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, a fellow Texan, led the reporter to an unexpected inspiration for his recovery.

"I don't have to turn to the rich and famous, to the heroes of the sports world, to get me through the anxiety, the depression, the fear of the what-ifs," de la Garza wrote in the Times. "My heroes are right in front of me, ordinary folks who every day make my life better."

[From the Chicago Tribune, Oct. 30, 2006]

#### JOURNALIST KNOWN FOR EMPATHY

(By Flynn McRoberts and Tonya Maxwell)

Paul de la Garza, the son of a shrimper who rose from the poverty of south Texas to become a columnist and foreign correspondent for some of America's top news organizations, died of a heart attack Sunday in his Tampa home.

Mr. de la Garza, 44, drew on his modest circumstances to bring an empathy to his stories for the Chicago Tribune, the St. Petersburg Times of Florida and the Associated Press. Whether it was revealing computer-system fiasco at the Department of Veterans Affairs or chronicling the ragged life of a street vendor on Chicago's West Side, Mr. de la Garza cared intensely about the people he wrote about, said his wife, Georgia.

Mr. de la Garza spent more than two decades in journalism, working as a police reporter, a wire-service editor, a columnist and a foreign correspondent. Most recently, he was a reporter for the St. Petersburg Times, where his stories about the VA's troubled computer system resulted in the massive project being shut down.

"He always wanted to get to the truth. He was very passionate about it," his wife said. Of his VA coverage, he had recently told her: "I know I've made a lot of headway, but there's so much more to do—so much more to do."

Last month, the St. Petersburg Times published Mr. de la Garza's account of visiting Qatar in July with Army Gen. John P. Abizaid, Commander of U.S. Central Command. Mr. de la Garza had been trying to accompany the general for years, said Mike Konrad, an editor at the St. Petersburg Times and friend since 1986, when the men met as journalists in Carbondale, IL. "It was one of his coups," Konrad said. "He told me when he came back how the general told his staff to give him access to everything on the trip."

As a journalist, Mr. de la Garza was a master at cultivating sources and connecting with people, be they office workers, political figures or top generals, Konrad said.

"He'd been writing a lot about problems at the VA, it was so symbolic of the type of work he did. He really believed in the mission of journalism. When he saw wrongs, he really wanted to make them right. He wanted to expose wrongdoing."

Mr. de la Garza was born in Port Isabel, Texas, where his father was a shrimper and his mother worked as a hotel maid.

He began working in the 4th grade, selling bait to shrimpers along the Gulf of Mexico waters off South Texas. One of six children, Mr. de la Garza, known as Chuy to friends and family, first considered writing as a career in junior high school.

Intending to study political science at the University of Texas at Austin, Mr. de la Garza took a journalism class and loved it. He worked as a reporter and editor at the

student paper and then was offered a job in the Chicago bureau of the Associated Press.

"He had a nickel in his pocket when the AP offered him a job," his wife said. "His mom bought him a suit at Sears, and his brother gave him the money to fly to Chicago. When he first got there, he slept on his trench coat until he got his first paycheck. And some colleagues at the bureau gave him furniture."

Mr. de la Garza met his wife, a chef and artist, while he was working in southern Illinois for the Associated Press. She said she fell in love with him on their first date, Valentine's Day, when he serenaded her at a restaurant. In 1994, Mr. de la Garza came to the Chicago Tribune as a metro reporter, and later became a foreign correspondent in the Mexico City bureau, an assignment he relished, said George de Lama, then the associate managing editor for foreign and national news.

"Paul was someone who was always willing to do any story no matter where it took him. He was one of the first Latinos on our staff to be a foreign correspondent," said de Lama, now deputy managing editor, news. "Paul loved being a foreign correspondent, where the assignment is more of a life than it is a job. I think he was happiest when he was living that life on the road looking for stories." While serving as the Tribune's Mexico City bureau chief, Mr. de la Garza and his wife adopted two children in 2000—Monica, now 12, and Carlos, 11.

He left the Tribune in 2000 and moved to Washington, DC, to return to work for the St. Petersburg Times before moving to the newspaper's Tampa bureau.

A jazz music fan, Mr. de la Garza made an annual pilgrimage to the New Orleans jazz fest with a group of acquaintances. One of those festivals stood out for friends and family: the 2003 version, when loved ones converged from around the country to celebrate Mr. de la Garza's having beaten Hodgkin's lymphoma.

In addition to his wife and children, Mr. de la Garza is survived by his mother, Jesusa, two brothers and a sister. Services are pending.

#### TRIBUTE TO TANYA RAND

#### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Tanya Rand, a distinguished citizen of Brooklyn, New York. It behooves us to pay tribute to this outstanding woman and I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing her impressive service.

Born to Natalie and Caesar Campbell in Brooklyn, New York, Tanya Rand remains a part of the Clinton Hill community today. Ms. Rand is a product of the New York public school system and currently attends New York Technical College where she is working towards a Bachelor's degree in Technology.

In 1992, Ms. Rand joined the Health and Hospital Corporation as a part-time receptionist/clerk at one of Cumberland Diagnostic and Treatment Center's off sites. While with the Health and Hospital Corporation, Ms. Rand has enjoyed numerous promotions. She has worked in the Cumberland Diagnostic and Treatment Center Chemical Dependency Department, the Office of the Director of Community Affairs, and the North Brooklyn Health