

up of Europe. The European Union began as an institution for economic cooperation among six Western European nations in 1951, but it has evolved into a political and economic union that now embraces 27 European nations, including 10 former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The European Union has brought peace, stability and prosperity to almost 500 million people.

In 1951, Madam Speaker, the Treaty of Paris, which created the European Coal and Steel Community provided a minor rule for a Parliamentary Assembly. This body evolved and was institutionalized as the European Parliamentary Assembly in the Treat of Rome that was signed seven years later. the Assembly held its first meeting on March 19, 1951, under the leadership of its first president and one of Europe's great visionaries, Robert Schuman. At that time the parliament was only a consultative body composed of 142 members appointed by the national parliaments of the member states. The members conducted their business in four official languages.

In 1962, the body became the European Parliament, and in 1979, its members were chosen for the first time through direct elections. Over time, treaty revisions have expanded the powers of the European Parliament over legislation, the budget and executive oversight. The European Parliament now has 785 members who work in 23 official languages, and it represents the 492 million citizens of the 27 member states of the European Union.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted that the United States House of Representatives has a cooperative working relationship with the European Parliament. For the last three decades, delegations of our respective legislatures have met twice a year to discuss our common goals and have endeavored to bring the United States and the European Union ever closer together. Currently this exchange—the Trans-Atlantic Legislators Dialog, TLD—is led on the United States side by Chairwoman SHELLY BERKLEY of Nevada and Vice Chairmen CLIFF STEARNS of Florida and JIM COSTA of California. The European Parliament delegation is ably led by Jonathan Evans, a member of the European Parliament from the United Kingdom.

Over the last half-century, Madam Speaker, the United States has worked with our European allies to promote democracy, the rule of law, free market economies and human rights around the world. The 50th anniversary of the European Parliament provides an excellent occasion for all of us to reflect upon our friendship with our colleagues in the European Parliament and to celebrate with them this successful trans-Atlantic cooperation. The ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and the parliamentary elections in June 2009 should further reinforce the European Parliament's critical role in the European Union decision-making process. I congratulate the European Parliament on its first half-century and look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE LAURA HILL UPON BEING NAMED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR BY THE SOUTHLAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Honorable Laura Hill, a Southlake City Councilwoman, community and civic leader, as recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award presented by the Southlake Chamber of Commerce.

Laura Hill has been a tireless public servant with a strong sense of stewardship to the entire Southlake community. Ms. Hill's public service truly speaks for itself. She is not only a City Councilwoman, but the Founder and President of SPARKS (Students and Parents Against Risks to Kids in Southlake), Co-founder and Vice President of the Southlake Angel Society, a member of the Southlake Historical Society, and a graduate of Southlake's DPS Citizens Academy and Southlake's fire rehab team. Somehow, she finds additional time for involvement in numerous other community organizations, as well.

Of the many examples of Ms. Hill's selfless service, one story in particular stands out. Not long ago, a Southlake firefighter had a baby with significant medical problems. Due to the high medical costs, the firefighter's family was struggling to keep up. Upon hearing about the situation Laura immediately volunteered and created a fund raiser with her friends. The event raised approximately \$16,000 entirely for the family of the Southlake firefighter.

Whether it is creating fund raisers for those in need, preserving the city's history, solving zoning problems, caring for the children in the community, or volunteering for the city's emergency response team, Ms. Hill is always willing to go above and beyond to serve her community.

I proudly commend the Honorable Laura Hill for her tireless passion and commitment to the betterment of Southlake, Texas. Many community members are grateful for her service and I congratulate her for receiving this prestigious award.

TAMARA CASH

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Tamara Cash of Kansas City, Missouri. Tamara is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Tamara has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Tamara has completed all seven requirements that

promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commanding Tamara Cash for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scouts Gold Award.

HONORING SHEILA JOSEPH

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sheila Joseph, a native New Yorker, daughter of Haitian immigrant parents and raised in public housing, Ms. Joseph conducted her undergraduate studies at the University of California at Berkley where she double majored in psychology and legal studies, with a minor in education, earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in just three years. After graduating from Berkley in 1994, Sheila began her legal studies at Georgetown University Law School in Washington, DC. While a student at Georgetown, she worked as a student attorney handling juvenile delinquency cases in the District of Columbia Superior Court.

Upon completing her legal studies in 1997, Ms. Joseph returned to her native New York and spent the next four years working as an attorney for indigent clients, first as a staff attorney with the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, then as a law guardian with The Children's Law Center of New York. Based on her experiences as a law student and lawyer, she became increasingly frustrated by the limitations of the law as an instrument for empowering young people and communities. She determined that the best long term course was to be an educator and have a positive impact on children and impoverished communities.

In 2001, Sheila Joseph applied for, and was accepted into, the New York City Teaching Fellows Program and taught math and science at P.S. 40 in Queens while earning a Master of Science degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education from Queens College. In September 2004, Ms. Joseph began a one-year residency with Building Excellent Schools, a prestigious and rigorous Boston-based program that trains and supports aspiring charter school founders. She founded the East New York Preparatory Charter School in August 2005.

East New York Prep, ENYP, opened its doors to 100 kindergarten and first grade students in September 2006 to ensure that boys and girls growing up in East New York would have the same opportunity for a good life as children in wealthier communities. ENYP's mission is to address the specific needs and challenges of children in East New York to ensure that students achieve or exceed grade-level mastery of academic content, knowledge and skills.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Sheila Joseph and her impressive accomplishments in academia. Her passion and concern for inner-city children's educational needs is noteworthy indeed.