

confidence to ultimately win a congressional campaign.

Her kindness has stayed with me throughout these years, as I have grown closer to the Brandell family.

In fact, her son Jim is my Chief of Staff. Now a decade into service for this institution, Jim carries with him the sensibilities instilled by Mary Ellen: Family, faith, and true citizenship.

For far too many people, these are mere words, but for Mary Ellen, these were the pillars on which she built and lived her life. And they served her well. She was a constant presence in the Mt. Pleasant community. From continuing her work with the ever-growing Central Michigan University, to her extensive list of charities including most recently with the Isabella County Sesquicentennial Committee, Woodland Hospice, Access to Recreation, and the Rotary Club. In fact, her efforts were so well recognized that she was named Mt. Pleasant Citizen of the Year.

She was also a world traveler, taking yearly trips with Jim to see new corners of our planet. She valued the time she spent with her family, but also used these opportunities to meet distant relatives and make new friends. She was even utilized in her role as a community leader of Mt. Pleasant to reach out to sister cities.

Even with these public and global accomplishments, I know that Mary Ellen's proudest accomplishment was her family, which includes seven children and fifteen grandchildren. She has given them the love and nurturing they needed to grow and excel in their careers and she led by example, by returning to school and getting her master's, specialist and doctoral degrees, after her seventh child was born. And she put her family first, selflessly caring for her husband Dick at home for many years as his health declined prior to his death in 2004.

Mary Ellen was a remarkable woman, and one that cannot be replaced. She will be remembered for all of the lives that she had touched. I will be forever grateful for her kindness and generosity.

TRIBUTE TO PAT HEDGES

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a community leader, Pat Hedges, on his retirement after 33 years of service with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department, most currently as Sheriff-Coroner.

Sheriff Hedges grew up in San Luis Obispo County, graduating from Morro Bay High School in 1970, earning an associate degree from Cuesta College and later a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from California State University, Sacramento. After receiving his degree from Cuesta College, Sheriff Hedges went on to join the United States Coast Guard in 1971, went through boot camp in Alameda, California, and served in the Coast Guard until his retirement in 1997. He

went to work for Pacific Engineering in 1973 and then Thrifty Drug in 1974. In 1977, he began his career with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff Hedges was elected Sheriff of San Luis Obispo County in 1998, and served 3 consecutive terms. As Sheriff, he was responsible for law enforcement for an area in excess of 3,200 square miles, oversaw 400 employees, and oversaw a county jail that currently houses more than 500 inmates. Sheriff Hedges instituted many improvements and was instrumental in forging the modern Sheriff's Department. Among many things, Sheriff Hedges helped facilitate opening the new North Patrol Station in Templeton and a DNA laboratory for the department. He improved the efficiency of law enforcement in San Luis Obispo County by creating an Independent Sheriff's Narcotics Unit, forming the Rural Crime Task Force, and implementing school resource officers. Sheriff Hedges also was a founding member of the Anti-Gang Coordinating Council and established the Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement Unit.

Sheriff Hedges currently serves on the Board of Governors for the San Luis Obispo County Narcotics Task Force and has previously served in many community organizations including the North County Women's Shelter and the Sexual Assault Recovery and Prevention Center Board, San Luis Obispo Mental Health Board, California State and San Luis Obispo County Cattleman's Associations, and the Anti-Gang Coordinating Commission. Sheriff Hedges is a member of the Los Angeles Joint Terrorism Task Force Executive Board.

Dedicated to serving his community in a variety of ways, Sheriff Hedges' leadership at the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department will be deeply missed. I've known Pat for years and value his friendship and support, and while he may no longer be Sheriff, Pat will continue to be a leader in our community. I plan to continue to call on him for advice and counsel, and a good dose of his dry wit.

In this new chapter of his life, I'm sure Pat is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Sandy, and children. I commend his service to the County of San Luis Obispo, and I hope that Sheriff Hedges enjoys the next stage of his life.

HONORING BYRON LEYDECKER

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise with my colleague Congressman MIKE THOMPSON today to recognize the great accomplishments of our friend Byron Leydecker, who recently announced that he will conclude operation of Friends of the Trinity River, the organization he founded eighteen years ago and has led ever since.

The Trinity River flows through mountains in coastal northern California and is the largest tributary of the Klamath River. These rivers supported huge bountiful populations of both Chinook and Coho salmon, steelhead and

other fish that sustained native Americans for millennia and visitors from other continents for the past two centuries. The impacts of ill-advised and poorly managed development had devastated both the Trinity and the Klamath. Thanks in large part to Byron, the Trinity is on its way to recovery.

He pushed the Department of the Interior to develop and then implement the historic 2000 Trinity Record of Decision, he has worked tirelessly ever since to ensure that the Trinity restoration program goes forward as intended, and he has pushed the agencies to follow the science.

Byron has led an active and vigorous organization over the years, devoting his time, energy, and financial resources to make a real difference in the direction of the Trinity River restoration program, which is today one of the leading efforts of its kind.

Byron and FOTR have worked with the usual alphabet soup of government agencies, as well as tribes, fishermen, and water and power interests, to develop and implement the restoration plan. Byron has always been consistent and persistent, cooperative when possible and tough when needed.

Thanks to Byron and the work of FOTR, the Trinity River is now in better shape than at any time since the 1960s—we have seen increased flows, a healthier fishery, and a stronger scientific foundation for its management.

While there will always be snags and eddies in these undertakings, the successful restoration of the Trinity River will serve as a national model of a restored river below a federal dam. The Trinity River could have no better friend than Byron Leydecker. We are grateful to Byron for his leadership, and thank him for all his work on behalf of healthy rivers and sustainable fisheries.

TRIBUTE TO FORT DALE ACADEMY'S CHAMPIONSHIP EAGLES FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 17, 2010

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor my alma mater, Greenville's Fort Dale Academy, for its outstanding achievement in capturing the Alabama Independent School Association's Class AAA title.

On November 19, the Fort Dale Academy Eagles soared to victory over their rival, the Monroe Academy Volunteers, winning the state championship by a 49 to 21 margin.

Both teams were outstanding this year, and while I represent Monroe Academy in Congress, I hope they will allow me to express my pride for this unique achievement by my alma mater.

I wish to congratulate the Eagles' head coach James "Speed" Sampley, assistant coaches Daniel Autrey, Josh Beverly, Clint Lowery, Jason Taylor, Jimmy Gardner, Jimmy Phelps, Bert Rice, and Will McInvale; and, the Eagles varsity players, Taylor Windham, Matthew Bender, Eli Blackmon, Ryan Salter, Andrew Callen, Stephen Till, Stewart Matthews,