

the new members of this great democracy must have use of the English language in order to get ahead and become fully productive citizens. It is clear from the experience of Mr. Macchiaroli that the linguistic welfare of multilingual government is nothing short of a handicap to individuals entering our country. Regrettably, the handicap of multilingual government affects all Americans, resulting in severe social and monetary costs. I commend to you the story of Mr. Macchiaroli, as it appeared in an article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on September 3 of this year.

**I WORKED HARD—BUT IT NEVER HURT ME**

Tomorrow we pause to pay tribute to the workers who built this country. Many of those workers were immigrants, who came to America seeking a better life.

Anthony J. Macchiaroli is such a worker. The 60-year-old North Versailles resident quietly operates his New Eastland Mall store Valley Shoe Repair, where soles are mended Italian style—by hand.

"Tony," who came to the United States from Salerno, Italy, in 1953, says hard work has kept him in business at the mall since 1963.

Macchiaroli stepped off a boat in New York at age 17 with 35 cents. He went to live with an aunt and uncle in East Pittsburgh, and later opened a shoe repair shop, got married, and was able to send his two children to college. One of his sons is a physician in Johnstown, the other an electrical engineer in Florida.

He doesn't plant to retire but says instead he'll shorten his work week in coming years. "I really enjoy what I'm doing," he says. "I don't think I'll ever retire because I do enjoy talking to the people, and my customers need me too. It's a lost art—fixing America was a dream. It was like I could never come here. I used to pray a lot to God to let me see that I could go to America. My uncle and aunt used to send me letters with stamps of the Statue of Liberty on them. Whenever I'd get those letters, I'd wonder if I'd ever really get to see her.

I've been here 42 years, and America has been good to me. If you have ambition, you can do anything here. It truly is the land of opportunity—believe me. If people set a goal here, they can achieve it.

I came to America March 10, 1953. I was not quite 18 yet and was an orphan. My father died when I was 17 months old and my mother died when I was 3½. Before she died, my mother had written to her brother in Pittsburgh and said, "If anything happens to me, I'd like my son to come to America near you." I still have that letter today. She died in a hospital in Naples, and left me in a convent with nuns until my father's sister could take me out. She raised me until I came to the United States.

I wanted to come here because it was a new land and I had heard so much about the

country, that it was so great. But it wasn't like today where you can come right away or come as a tourist. You had to wait. Three times my papers expired before I could go. Finally my uncle and aunt, Vito and Anna Parente, were able to get me. They had to guarantee me a house and job, and they didn't have a house themselves and had to buy one because of me. It was almost like they were adopting me. I'll never forget them, that's for sure.

In the small towns like Bellosguardo in Salerno, where I grew up, you always learn a trade. I had bad feet from an accident where I was burned as a baby, so I wanted to be a shoemaker. In Italy, you sit while working as a shoemaker, but here you do the work standing up.

My first job here was in Homestead with a shoemaker. I got \$8 a day, six days a week, 12 hours a day. My boss justified my wage by saying, "You can't talk English and you can't run the machines." We made all hand-made shoes in Italy, so I didn't know how to operate the machines. But here I could still rip shoes apart, wash windows, shine shoes. . . I worked hard—but it never hurt me. I learned a lot.

Five years later, I opened my own shoe repair business in the Great Valley Shopping Center. I was there five years and moved to the Eastland Mall in 1963 when it was being built, and I've been here ever since.

I had difficult time at first because I couldn't speak English. But people were wonderful to me, I went to night school for five years to learn to speak English. I can read good English, but I still can't write good.

In 1957, I went to the hospital to have surgery I met a nice girl, a student nurse Rosemarie Billey, from United, near Mount Pleasant. And there was my fortune.

We got married in 1959 and had two sons. In 1969 I brought her and my children back to my hometown and traveled through Italy for three weeks. While we were there, my wife asked me if I ever wanted to go back there to live. I said, "No, No way." I'll never forget that I was born there, but America is my country now, and I'll fight for it.

In America there is so much opportunity. It seems everything I wanted came true. I wanted to get married, have a family and educate my children, and I did. I'm very appreciative. If I die tomorrow, I'll die a happy man.

THANK YOU, GERALD L. BOOMS

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 1995*

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the education of our young people is most vital if our Nation is

to continue its history of accomplishment into the future. And nothing is more vital to education than the people who are dedicated to providing the type of services that are essential to the successful operation of our schools. Ugly Community Schools has been blessed over the past 33 years with the committed service of Gerald L. Booms. He is being recognized on December 27 for his generous service to the young people of his community at a retirement dinner.

Gerald Booms started as a bus driver in 1962, which he continued until 1972. He also worked as a part-time custodian, making sure that not only would students arrive at school safely, but they also would have a safe and well-tended school to attend. For the last 20 years, he has served as director of transportation for Ugly Schools, again overseeing the effective operation of this system.

During his time with Ugly Schools, Gerald Booms has remained involved with several other activities. He has been a member of the Michigan Association of Pupil Transportation, serving as a regional representative for 10 years. He also holds membership in the Ugly Community Club.

He has been very involved with his religious convictions as a member of St. Mary Catholic Church of Parisville, and its men's club. He also was president of its parish council. He is a member of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church of Ugly, and the Ruth Knights of Columbus Council No. 3823.

Gerald and his wife, Georgeann know the importance of education to young people, being the proud parents of 7 of their own children, and the grandparents of 21 children. He has taken the care that he has for his own family, and extended it to the other children of his community who have benefited from safe transport to and from school.

Mr. Speaker, we need to remember and honor those who make it possible for our young people to receive the education they deserve and that our Nation needs. Gerald L. Booms has earned our thanks for his years of service. I urge you and all of our colleagues to join me in thanking him for his career of caring, and wish him and his family the very best in retirement.