

SALUTE TO DR. FRANK AND ELSIE
WITMAN

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Dr. Frank Witman and his wife Elsie for 28 years of outstanding service to the United Methodist Church and the community of Simi Valley, CA.

Dr. Witman, along with his wife Elsie, have dedicated their lives to helping others. Ordained in the United Methodist Church in 1957, Dr. Witman served in several congregations before being appointed pastor in charge of the Simi Valley United Methodist Church in 1969.

His involvement in the community extends beyond the doors of the church. He has been actively involved in Rotary International for over 35 years and has achieved a perfect attendance record. Dr. Witman has been a police chaplain with the Simi Valley Police Department since 1978 and a volunteer chaplain at the Simi Valley Hospital and Care Services since 1983.

In 1992, Dr. Witman began to coteach a weeklong church administration and finance class for students and pastors at the Claremont School of Theology. In addition to his practical experience, Dr. Witman was uniquely qualified to teach the course because of his role as both a member of the board of directors for the United Methodist Federal Credit Union and eventually as its chairman.

After his wife of 44 years, Dr. Witman's second love is his local church. He has served his church and community tirelessly for 28 years. He is an inspiration to all and I wish he and his wife much happiness in their retirement.

A TRIBUTE TO EDWARD CLARK

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, there are three things that are of the utmost importance to Pennsylvanians: family, religion, and work. I would like to note that amateur wrestling could be added to that category. Wrestling's zealotry and fervent following in Pennsylvania is unlike any place else. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to a Pennsylvanian who has dedicated his life to the sport and its participants, Ed Clark.

He was recently described by a colleague as being, "A beloved and highly competent teacher, coach, and athletic director." Ed Clark graduated from Bedford High School in 1944, having been a district champion wrestler. He entered the U.S. Army and after World War II, matriculated to the Pennsylvania State University where he was a member of the wrestling team. Upon his graduation from Penn State, he returned to his boyhood home of Bedford to begin his teaching career at Bedford High School in 1950. Once there, he rejoined his old high school wrestling team, this time serving in the capacity as an assistant coach to his old mentor, Hall of Fame coach Francis "Whitney" Koontz.

By 1957, Ed Clark had become the head wrestling coach at Bedford, and served in that capacity until 1974. The teams he led as head coach compiled an incredible record of 129 wins versus only 24 losses and 1 tie. His success has contributed greatly to the legacy of Pennsylvania wrestling. Ed Clark coached Bedford to five undefeated seasons, another five seasons with only one loss, won 10 district titles, and never coached a losing team despite having consistently competed against the top teams in the region.

He also found the time to coach football and golf at Bedford High School during his career, while he retired in 1992 after teaching physical education and health for 42 years. Ed Clark's accolades as coach were duly noted when he was recently elected to the Pennsylvania Wrestling Hall of Fame. I would also like to recognize the fact that at a time when the special needs of the physically handicapped were largely ignored, Ed Clark made it a point to make the necessary adjustments and accommodations to meet the needs of those special individuals in his physical education classes.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by thanking Ed Clark for his outstanding service to the area in which he and I live. He is a true community role model and his efforts as a teacher, coach, and mentor are a testament to his firm commitment to those whose lives he has touched.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 1997

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today we solemnly commemorate the massacre of Armenians in Turkey during and after the First World War. We mourn the dead, and express our condolences to their living descendants. During that terrible tragedy, an estimated 1.5 million people were killed in what historians call the first of this century's state-ordered genocides against a minority group.

While the tragic events leading to the deaths of millions of Armenians occurred at the beginning of this century, their impact on the psyche of the Armenian people, and indeed the entire world are still apparent. The effects of such atrocities on a people are never overcome. Many can still testify to the deportations and massacres of family members and friends. Others can read or view pictures of the abominations, and all Armenians, young and old, live with the knowledge that their people's existence was seriously jeopardized during the last years of the Ottoman Empire.

Mr. Speaker, the world must be reminded over and over of the brutal crimes perpetrated against the Armenian people. Unfortunately, history's lessons are not easily learned and put into practice. This century has been witness to unparalleled human suffering and unmatched human cruelty. The Armenian genocide was the first attempt to wipe out an entire people. The failure to recognize it gave Hitler confidence. Since then, we have seen the killing fields of Pol Pot, the horrors of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and the tragedy of Rwanda.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that each of us work to ensure that our generation and future

generations never again have to bear witness to such inhuman behavior and feel the pain and suffering of an entire people. The crime of genocide must never again be allowed to mar the history of humankind, and today we stand with our Armenian brothers and sisters, not only to remember and share in their grief for those who died, but to celebrate those who are living.

VETERANS' BENEFITS CLAIMS
ADJUDICATION

HON. DAN SCHAEFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, as in past Congresses, it is crucial that veterans' issues remain at the top of the agenda. Serving on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am constantly impressed by the bipartisanship that is demonstrated. This is due to the leadership of Chairman BOB STUMP and Democratic Ranking Member LANE EVANS.

One of the most pressing problems that both sides of the aisle are concentrating on is that of adjudication of veterans' benefits claims. The publication of a General Accounting Office report in September 1995, closely followed by issuance of the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission's report in December 1996, has brought this issue to the fore. Some of the findings are truly troubling.

As of May 1995, over 450,000 veterans were waiting on decisions for their appeals for pension or compensation claims. A veteran waits, on average, 2½ years for a decision to finally be rendered.

This is unconscionable. When times are tight, an almost 3-year wait for benefits can seem like a lifetime. Especially considering that these benefits were earned through dedicated and oftentimes hazardous service to our country.

What is being done? The House Veterans' Affairs Committee has prepared a schedule to adequately address this issue in the 105th Congress. A full committee hearing to review the Adjudication Commission's report is planned for later this spring. This will allow members of the committee to further investigate the work of the Commission and to debate possible means of rectifying some of the concerns that have been raised.

An active oversight plan is also on the agenda. In fact, the committee has a list of 58 programs, agencies, and issues to follow up on. The goal of oversight is to bring any deficiencies to light so that solutions can be found to ensure that veterans' benefits are not unjustly interrupted, and to guarantee the integrity of all Veterans' Administration Programs.

The House in the 105th Congress has already taken action on H.R. 1090, a bill to allow for revision of veterans' benefits decisions based on clear and unmistakable error. This represents a minor step to ameliorating the negative impact of the backlog in adjudication claims. Cases involving clear and unmistakable errors are few, but any eliminations from the docket will be welcome. I would urge the Members of the Senate to act expeditiously on this matter.

The adjudication process for veterans' benefits claims has been recognized as an area of