

water development for fiscal year 1999, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All points of order are reserved on the bill.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CHICAGO BULLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate some of the most outstanding citizens of my congressional district, namely, the Chicago Bulls basketball team.

I have the good fortune of representing the champions not only of the 7th Congressional District, but indeed the champions of the world. The world has never seen the magnificence of an athletic dynasty such as that displayed and put together by Jerry Reinsdorf, which is now the Chicago Bulls' 6th championship, a performance that has revitalized interest in basketball.

As a matter of fact, with due respect to all other sports, baseball, soccer, football, right now the United States of America is basketball country as a result of the Bulls' accomplishment and achievement.

But more than that, not only are they superstars on the basketball court, but they are also superstars in the community. The franchise has caused revitalization of an area of the City of Chicago. The James Jordan Boys' Club provides opportunity for young people to come and grow and develop, play and be nurtured.

Just recently, high school students from throughout my Congressional District had an opportunity to participate in our art competition at the United Center, where they could display their art and at the same time walk the same ground that Scottie Pippen, Michael Jordan, Dennis Rodman, Phil Jackson, all of the Bulls players, Randy Brown, a young fellow who was taught by my wife. When we watch him on television, we know that her teaching skills were vindicated.

So I commend and congratulate all of the Bulls for providing the United States of America and all of the world with a year never to be forgotten and always to be remembered.

And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, in the same community, in the same neighborhood, there is another superstar in town for the Jefferson awards, Major Adams, who, along with other Americans throughout the country, are being cited for their outstanding community services.

Major Adams has no peer when it comes to volunteerism. For the last 50 years he has been an active volunteer on the near West Side of Chicago, organizing the Henry Horner Boys Club, the

Henry Horner Drum and Bugle Corps, the Mile Square Federation.

Now 76 years old, Mr. Adams is just as involved today as he was 25, 30 years ago. And so, on one hand, while we have the Bulls, a superstar team, on the other hand we have Major Adams, a superstar individual, humanitarian, who has brought countless years of joy and development into the hearts of thousands of young people and their family.

We commend and salute him.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOLOMON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1800

TRIBUTE TO CORRESPONDENT ALAN EMORY ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to add my praise to the lifetime's work of correspondent Alan Emory, whose life and service was addressed so eloquently by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH). Mr. Emory is a reporter of humor, intelligence, talent, and, perhaps most important, longevity, 50 years of service.

While Alan is no doubt most thankful for the last of those qualities, I want to say the others have been invaluable to both readers and those of us who are written about in upstate New York.

It is often said that we in public life are adversaries of the Fourth Estate, that there must be a war footing of sorts between our two worlds, that there must be a sort of tension in order to bring about good performance all the way around. If that is true, Mr. Speaker, the best way to describe Alan's mission is a notable adversary, a friendly foe.

He has done justice to our institution in his reportage, mostly for the *Watertown Times* of New York. He has served readers, as I have mentioned, who depend on accuracy and insight of reliable news people. He has been a faithful advocate for his region, and his perspective will be missed by many of us.

I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) for this opportunity and wish Alan Emory all the best in his retirement.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOUSTON PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for a great cele-

bration and a tribute as well. This week in Houston, Texas, under the leadership of former President Jimmy Carter, 6,000 volunteers from around the Nation are participating in the 1998 Carter Work Project of the Habitat for Humanity resulting in 100 homes being built for the needy citizens of our community.

President Carter, before the building began, said, "We are destined in Houston to see a miracle, one that we will never forget." I can assure my colleagues that he is now and will be when we conclude 100 percent correct.

I was delighted to be able to join the 6,000 volunteers at the George Brown Convention Center on Sunday in the 18th Congressional District where we were able to celebrate their visit, volunteers from Arizona, Indiana, California, Pennsylvania and so many other places around this Nation.

It was particularly a special time, because as many of my colleagues know, we have had some troubling times in Texas. Yes, we have had the tragedy that occurred in Jasper, Texas. I am so very pleased that that healing has begun. But yet the day after funeralizing Mr. Byrd and paying tribute to his life and to that of those who wanted to make sure that we live in harmony together, 6,000 Americans of all different colors and creeds and religions joined together to come and build a house. Their challenge was to build a house for the comfort and unity of a family and to bring a community together. I was delighted to join them on Sunday not only to celebrate but to uplift. For these 6,000 souls are like the Good Samaritan. They are not too busy to stop by the wayside and help someone.

The story of the Good Samaritan was that every single person that passed this battered and bruised person had something else to do, had somewhere else to go. But yet the Good Samaritan took his time and stopped. These 6,000 souls are like the Good Samaritan.

In Houston alone, with some 1.7 million residents, we have over 150,000 who are marginally homeless every night. We need housing. I was very gratified with volunteers who will come from my office throughout the week to have been able to join the volunteers yesterday on the first day and to work alongside of them in the sweltering heat, some 98 degrees, but none of us really felt it, for the joy of doing something for someone else.

We worked alongside the Gibson family, not unlike many families, Mr. and Mrs. Gibson with two children and one on the way. For the past few years they have lived in a small apartment in a dilapidated building, the whole while looking for ways that they could better their living situation. Like many families, they searched for options that would help them make a way and to also take their hard-earned money and to invest in something other than a landlord, paying rent. They wanted to own their own piece of the pie, if you

will, their own piece of this great Nation.

I am so very delighted that Wade and Shalina Gibson spent their time yesterday along with the rest of us bending and lifting and pulling and nailing and placing what we call styrofoam boards, the blue boards, and working alongside of so many different people.

I think their work answers the question, because I would not even want to address it but I have heard people say, is the Habitat for Humanity giving people something?

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I believe in giving to those who are in need. It is our challenge to help the least of our brothers and sisters. But let us set the record straight. Habitat for Humanity is a project where those who receive the benefits of this housing are right in there with the rest of them. They are there toiling and building and lifting. We in this Nation should not be so big that we cannot give to those who are in need. But in this instance the Gibson family and so many other families, the Beck family and so many that I could not call, were there working hard in order to ensure a better quality of life for their children.

Mr. Speaker, let me also thank the many corporate sponsors in my area. The Sakowitz area in the 18th Congressional District where I worked all day yesterday was an area that had been undeveloped and had been run down. How gratifying now that we will have homeowners with their own grass in the front yard and in the backyard, maybe a basketball court, the ability to go to the neighborhood park with their families, a community that will be developed and enriched because of their involvement. I want to thank those corporate sponsors for their support, and I want to thank this Nation and thank President Carter and the founders of Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Speaker, let me simply say, it was the best thing that I have seen in a long, long while. It was the true spirit of America. It makes me proud to be an American. And, yes, Mr. Speaker, we began it on Flag Day. I hope that we will see many more opportunities like that.

I rise to acknowledge the miracles wrought by Habitat for Humanity in my district, throughout this week.

Through the efforts of Former-President Jimmy and Mrs. Cater, the Founders of Habitat for Humanity, and 6000 miracle-working volunteers, 100 homes will be built for needy families this week in the City of Houston. The volunteers come from places like Arizona, Indiana, California and Pennsylvania.

President Carter, before the building began, mentioned that we were "destined in Houston to see a miracle, one that [we] will never forget". He was 100% correct.

I witnessed one of those miracles. For the better part of the day, yesterday, I and a few friends worked on the soon-to-be-home of the Gibson Family.

The Gibson Family is not unlike many families in the City of Houston. They have two children, both girls, under the age of ten, and an-

other on the way. For the past few years, they have lived in a small apartment in a dilapidated building, the whole while, looking for ways that they could better their living situation. Like many families, they searched for options that would keep them from having to send their hard-earned money to the landlord every month, knowing that they would never own a piece of that property. How pleased we were that they were able to be part of the Carter Project located on Sakowitz Street in my 18th congressional district in Houston.

When Wade and Shalina Gibson heard about the possibility that they could own their own home, through Habitat for Humanity, they took all of the necessary steps to ensure their candidacy. Needless to say, they were ecstatic to receive the news that their application had been approved.

Unlike many of the underprivileged families in Houston, the Gibson Family got their chance to better their status through homeownership. It would take a lot of elbow-grease and hard work, but they were more than happy to do it. They have worked hard for the opportunity to pay a mortgage instead of a rent bill. They have worked hard to own part of the American Dream. I was honored to work along side of them in helping to build their home. I will never be the same. I saw a miracle truly happening.

I worked along-side Wade and Shalina yesterday. Although the work was strenuous, especially under the hot sun, it was joyful and exhilarating. Shalina's passion for carpentry was particularly zealous, and occasionally, because she is pregnant, we had to force her to take short breaks. Colleagues, I hope that we can all adopt some of the Gibson work-ethic.

The Gibson home will be a modest one. However, it will be cherished, by the parents, by their children, and eventually, by their grandchildren.

You see, the Gibson home is a labor of love. Its foundation is poured from the concrete of community unity. Its walls are crafted by the goodwill and generosity of the human spirit. Its ceiling, and the ceiling for the Gibson Family, is limitless.

I congratulate them, and the 99 other families who will be receiving homes through the Habitat for Humanity Program this week. I congratulate President Carter, and his army of miracle-workers, for their fantastic efforts to bring hope to a community that desperately needs it.

I pledge my loyal support to Habitat for Humanity and the people that make it work—the volunteers. I ask that my colleagues do the same. These people truly embody the best of the human spirit, and I applaud their heroic efforts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BOEHLERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will

appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RETINAL DEGENERATIVE DISEASES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The gift of sight, Mr. Speaker, is one of our most precious. For those of us who are fortunate to have healthy eyesight, we often fail to recognize that there are those who suffer from debilitating diseases that impair their vision and that oftentimes may lead to complete blindness.

Retinal degenerative diseases are a group of diseases that affect the eye's innermost layer. They are inherited, the hereditary pattern varying from family to family.

The most common forms of the diseases are macular degeneration, which is the leading cause of blindness among seniors, retinitis pigmentosa, and Usher's syndrome.

Retinitis pigmentosa is an inherited disease that is usually diagnosed at childhood and is characterized by an increasing loss of peripheral vision. Usher's syndrome is also inherited and is accompanied by varying degrees of deafness and the development of retinitis pigmentosa. Macular degeneration is thought to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors and is characterized by a loss of central vision.

These diseases can be detected in routine eye exams; however, they are fairly difficult to diagnose in their early stages. Retinal degenerative diseases cause a loss of vision due to loss of light-sensing photoreceptor cells in the retina. They are responsible for the loss of sight of over 6 million Americans across our country. These diseases unfortunately have no treatment and no cure.

Last Wednesday, along with the Foundation Fighting Blindness and a very special family from my congressional district, the Lidsky family, we held a congressional briefing on retinal degenerative diseases. Three of the four Lidsky children, and they are the children of Carlos and Betty Lidsky, have been affected by retinal degenerative diseases. One of these wonderful children, Isaac, spoke at this briefing and detailed to us how he has been affected by this disease. Isaac, who aspires to be an attorney just like his father one day soon, has big dreams. One of them is to find a cure for this disease that is responsible for slowly taking away his eyesight.

Isaac and his sisters, Doria and Ilana, who also have this challenge, reminded us that this disease has overwhelming effects on the lives of those who are afflicted. He also reminded us about the bravery and the perseverance of the human spirit. He is not letting this disease conquer his dreams nor his hopes of someday very soon finding a cure.