

TRIBUTE TO JOHN WILMER
PORTER

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 16, 1998

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of one of Virginia's first Civil Right's success stories, Mr. John Wilmer Porter. John Porter, a native of Dumfries, Virginia, because a beacon of progressive and enlightened through for Virginia during a time we now acknowledge as one of our darkest hours. In 1963, when most of the state was bearing the brunt of a storm of national outrage over its refusal to desegregate public schools, John Porter became the first African-American in Virginia to become an elected official since the era of post-Civil War Reconstruction. The people of Dumfries recognized an innate leadership quality in Mr. Porter that transcended any racial stereo type and in the fall of 1963, elected him to the position of Town Councilman.

John Porter began his life in Dumfries, Virginia in 1905 as one of fourteen children born to the late John and Laura Reid Porter. The family's history is irrevocably linked to Virginia and more specifically to Dumfries: The Porter family John was born into are all direct descendants of Betsy Bates. Betsy Bates, a slave born in Virginia sometime between 1795 and 1805, had gained her freedom by 1830 and her lineage and become so celebrated in Prince William County that the town settled by her heirs was named Batestown in her honor. I believe it is from this foundation of strength and honor that John Wilmer Porter was made.

Beyond his meritorious service to the people of Dumfries, Mr. Porter was and is a dedicated husband, father and now grandfather. In 1942 John married the late Mary Porter. Mary Porter became John's companion and confidante, but also distinguished herself through public service and her ability to transcend racial barriers as an educator. A native of Farmville, Virginia, Mary Glaze Porter began her career as a teacher in an all-black school just before World War II. A few months after her husband John's election, Mary Porter was selected to be one of four African-American teachers to participate in a pilot desegregation program in the Prince William County public school system.

John and Mary Porter are both true pioneers from the Civil Rights movement and dedicated public servants who have willingly given enormously of themselves (in one instance John personally co-signed for the loan to build the Dumfries Town Hall). John Wilmer Porter retired from public service in 1980, leaving behind a legacy that the people of Dumfries can reflect upon with pride. He was always regarded by supporters and detractors alike as a man of "common sense" and "superior wisdom", two traits he has instilled in his two daughters, Hazel Porter Sykes and Gwendolyn Porter Washington, and his granddaughter, Shannon Washington and three grandsons, Chad Sykes, Kevin Lewis and Troy Washington.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Eleventh Congressional District, I would like to thank John Porter for his years of dedicated service and willingness to become the role-model of equality for Virginia. Indeed, he is an

American of whom our entire nation can be proud.

SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING
MURDER OF MATTHEW SHEPARD

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 1998

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues and the good people of the state of Wyoming in mourning a young man whose life was senselessly and brutally cut short by hatred and ignorance.

Matthew Shepard had many fine qualities. He was thoughtful and idealistic. He had ambitions for public service. And had hoped one day to serve his country overseas.

He was also gay. And that is why he was beaten to death and left to die.

Matthew Shepard will never fulfill his youthful ambition. We will never know what he might have accomplished with his life. He is gone, and we can do nothing to change that.

But we can do something to help make sure that there are no more murders on the road to Laramie.

We can do something to help put a stop to racial killings in Jasper, Texas, where James Byrd was chained to a pickup truck and dragged to his death last summer.

We can send a message to the cities and towns across America where hate-motivated violence and harassment occurs every day. We can and must pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Over the last few days, we have heard some people deplore these incidents—while cautioning us not to pass new laws to deal with them. "New laws won't stop hate," they tell us.

They're right. No law ever stopped murder, rape, arson or other heinous crimes. Yet our society keeps these laws on the books. To punish those practices and express its disapproval of them.

Why do we need the Hate Crimes Prevention Act? Consider two vignettes from today's New York Times:

Last Saturday morning, while Matthew Shepard lay comatose from a beating, a college homecoming parade passed a few blocks from his hospital bed in Ford Collins. Propped on a fraternity float was a straw-haired scarecrow, labeled in black spray paint, "I'm Gay."

On Monday, hours after Shepard's death, two gay organizations [in Fort Collins] . . . received identical messages applauding Shepard's murder. The messages closed with the words: "I hope it happens more often."

That's why we need the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. For all the Matthew Shepards and the James Byrds who can still be saved.

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 16, 1998

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the most important and valuable resource we have in this

country is our children. Providing a safe environment for them to grow and learn has always been this country's number one priority. The people who dedicate their time and energy to making this possible are most deserving of our praise and thanks. Pamela LeVasseur is one of those people. She is being honored on October 21, 1998 with the Women's Recognition Award for Volunteerism for her outstanding work with the Bay County Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN Council).

The CAN Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. This valuable organization is comprised entirely of volunteers. Over the past eight years, Pamela LeVasseur has devoted her time and talent to the success of the CAN Council. Always one of the CAN Council's most energetic volunteers, Pam has served as the Council's Treasurer for the last five years.

Along with her duties as treasurer, Pam has also given countless hours overseeing the CAN Council's many service projects and fundraisers. Annually leading the CAN Council Bowl-A-Thon, she has turned this event into one the Council's most successful fundraisers. She has also played a vital role in the Council's Harry Parks Adopt-A-Smile Program, which provides dental care to children who would otherwise go without it, and the Babylonian Encounter, which teaches young children about the subject of "good touch and bad touch." The children of Bay County are better off because of programs such as these and these programs are successful because of the dedication of volunteers, like Pamela LeVasseur.

The work Pam does is largely behind the scenes and rarely allows her the opportunity to receive the accolades that she rightly deserves. Yet, that is what makes Pam the great volunteer that she is. She is not motivated by praise and recognition. Instead, she is motivated by protecting and improving the lives of the children in her community. From tracking donations and paying the bills to making the Bowl-A-Thon a striking success, Pam's behind the scenes work is a critical ingredient in the success of the CAN Council.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and all of our colleagues to join me in congratulating Pamela LeVasseur for receiving the Women's Recognition Award honoring her tireless dedication to the Bay County Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect and in turn the children of Bay County.

TRIBUTE TO LAURA ROBINSON
KUZNIAR

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 16, 1998

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the deepest sadness to memorialize the untimely passing of a member of my staff, Laura Robinson Kuzniar, whose life was cut short at the young age of thirty years.

My first contact with Laura was when she was a small girl and we had occasion to visit her home in Royal Oak. Our families had similar interest—my wife, Vicki, and Laura's mother, Rosemary, participated in the AAUW, and her father, Hal, was active in political life.