

his legs up by delivering newspapers on bicycle. Irons found his leg strength could come in handy.

"I lived in Tuscaloosa on Queen City Avenue," he said. "They blew a whistle in those days to start class. They would take roll 10 minutes after the whistle. I found I could eat my pancakes in time and still get to class for roll call after they blew the whistle.

"Also in those days, the upperclassmen would haze the freshmen. They would wait around Woods Hall—that was the center of campus because that's where the Post Office was—and grab a freshman and carry him upstairs for a paddling. There were two things a freshman could do—lie or run.

"I'd rather not comment on the lying, but that's where I started my running. I found that running was a fun thing to do. I just gradually worked my way up to cross-country."

By the end of his four years at Alabama, Irons had made his name as one of the best, some said the very best, distance runners of his day. Known as "Alabama's Shining Knight of the Cinderpath" (track events were then run on cinder courses), Irons competed all over the South against the best amateur and, occasionally, professional runners around.

"I mostly ran the mile, two miles and three miles. I ran cross-country over hill and dale and streams and meadows. Sometimes they would even throw me in the half-mile to pick up a point in a meet," he said.

After his freshman year, Irons won every cross-country and road race while competing for the Tide. That led to his being named captain of the track and cross-country teams his junior and senior year. In addition, in Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association competition after his freshman year, Irons never finished worse than second in any race, including shorter-distance races that he ran to help the team score points.

As naturally as the slight 6-footer took to the sport, he did not begin running without some skepticism. "That first race I didn't know that I'd be running so much," he said, "and I asked myself, 'What am I doing this for? This hurts!' So I decided to pick it up and start passing people to get it over with, and I came in first."

And running around town in a track suit in those days attracted more attention than it does today.

"When we'd run down Greensboro Avenue, some of the sweet old ladies would call the police to come arrest these men running down the street in their underwear. The police were understanding, and they asked us to run back another way and not let the ladies see us again," Irons said.

One race that stands out in Irons' memory is his final run in the Birmingham Athletic Club Road Race in 1923. In that race Irons broke the course record by over 20 seconds, and his record has never been broken. And as the three-mile event is no longer run, his record may stand forever.

"I'd been running that race all along," he said, "and I believe I'd won it twice, but for this race I'd bought a pair of kangaroo leather running shoes. All the other runners were wearing tennis shoes, but I had brought these that wrapped around your feet.

"It was raining very hard, and it was a big handicap for them to be wearing tennis shoes, because they kept slipping. It ruined my shoes, and I was never able to wear them again, but I won that race, and the record still stands."

Irons likes to recall the big races that were part of the halftime shows of big football games. The biggest was the one held at halftime of the Auburn-Georgia Tech game every year in Atlanta.

"They'd have the big race over there between the halves," he said. "This was before

they had the bands and the 'honey-watching' that they have now, so we were the only halftime entertainment. We'd leave before the half and finish at the middle of the field with everyone standing and cheering us on. I ran three of those, and won two of them."

After coaching at two high schools and earning his doctorate at Duke, Irons went into the teaching profession. Now 82 years old, he retired a few years ago after teaching history for 43 years at Samford (formerly Howard) University in Birmingham.

In 1978, Irons was recognized as one of the state's outstanding athletes by being inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. The drive was spearheaded by his son, William Lee Irons, a Birmingham lawyer (George Irons, Jr., Irons' other son, is a doctor in North Carolina).

"It means a great deal to me," Irons said of the induction. "I never expected to get that. In 1978, I never expected to be heard from again as a track man. There's only one track man in the Hall of Fame from Alabama, myself, and I think there will be a great many more in there, because they've got world-class people competing in the state now. I hope maybe I've opened up the door for some of them."

HONORING SYLVIA MARTINEZ

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary young person who has recently been named the Junior Carpenterian of the Year: Sylvia Martinez.

As a student attending Carpinteria High School, Sylvia has had many successes. In addition to her class ranking and impressive 3.8 grade-point average, she was the recipient of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Scholastic Achievement Award last year, and a recipient of the Golden State Exams Awards in 1995 and again in 1998.

At school, Sylvia is a leader in the Interact Club, the Director of Elections in the Student Body Association, a varsity player in Track and Field, and was voted Most Valuable Player in Basketball last year. She is a strong role model to other Latina students and an inspiration to many.

Most impressive however, is Sylvia's commitment to her community. Before she was ten, Sylvia was a volunteer at Main and Aliso Schools as a teachers aide and was active in numerous summer Migrant Education programs.

One of her advisors has described Sylvia as a "bright, inquisitive, compassionate person who has dedicated her young life to fulfilling a dream of becoming a successful humanitarian." I believe that someday she will be.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Sylvia Martinez for her hard work, vision, and commitment to her community and world.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNE WYNNE

HON. JIM TURNER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the dedicated public service and accom-

plishments of a good friend and great Texan, Ms. Anne Wynne, as she completes her term as a member of the Texas Transportation Commission. As the first woman on the Commission, she has served our state in one of the most demanding of all appointed positions in our state's government. Anne tackled her tasks with more common sense than East Texas has pine trees and a compassionate heart bigger than Big Bend National Park. Her sense of humor became her trademark throughout the Texas Department of Transportation as she visited with employees throughout the state.

During her term, Anne was instrumental in developing a spirit of partnership between the Texas Department of Transportation and the contractors who do much of the actual highway work throughout the state. She encouraged the department to move toward a diversified workforce and she worked with the legislature to create innovative ways to respond to the ever increasing costs of transportation projects. She also continually challenged the department's managers to operate the government agency like they would their own private business.

Those of us fortunate enough to be close to Anne Wynne know that at the core of her philosophy regarding her responsibilities on the Commission has been her great love for the State of Texas. The Commission and TxDOT will miss her deep commitment and dedication to the Texas Department of Transportation's mission.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all of my fellow Texans join me in this expression of thanks to Anne Wynne for her exemplary performance of duty. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating her and wishing her all the best in her future endeavors.

IN HONOR OF LECH WALESZA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 2, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Lech Walesa, 1983 Nobel Peace Prize winner, former President of Solidarity Union and the former President of Poland, on his visit to Cleveland.

Mr. Walesa has been fighting for democracy in Poland since he assumed the leadership of the independent trade union Solidarity in 1980. His rousing speech to striking workers from the top of a bulldozer began a social revolution and prompted talks with the government which resulted in legal recognition of Solidarity. After a military crackdown eighteen months later, which resulted in his spending a year in prison, Mr. Walesa continued his leadership of Solidarity underground. After his release, he returned to his mission of a Democratic Poland. He was awarded the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. Mr. Walesa was also named Man Of The Year by Time magazine, The Financial Times, and The London Observer.

In 1990, Mr. Walesa became the first democratically elected President of Poland. His leadership planted the seeds of freedom and democracy in Poland and ended Communist rule. After a term in office in which he set a path to secure Poland's commitment to a free