

was given the name Nana Yaa Serwaa II and she is now an official elder of the township of Pankese in Ghana, West Africa. She and her husband, Johnnie Ray, have six children and they are the proud grandparents of five grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in saluting Freddie Hamilton for her dedication to her family and her community.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH COMRIE

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to recognize the career of one of Los Angeles' leading public officials. After 35 years of public service, Mr. Keith Comrie is retiring as the City Administrative Officer for the City of Los Angeles. During his illustrious career, Mr. Comrie served both the City and the County of Los Angeles, making significant contributions to both governments.

Mr. Comrie grew up in South-Central Los Angeles and first entered public service with the City of Los Angeles in 1963, after earning a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Southern California. He moved to the County government in 1969 where he rose to become the Director of the Department of Public Social Services receiving statewide recognition from Governor Ronald Reagan for saving County taxpayers \$120 million per year and for making the welfare system one of the most responsive and efficient in the state.

In 1979, Mr. Comrie returned to the City of Los Angeles at the request of Mayor Tom Bradley to serve as the City Administrative Officer. He has served in that position for 19 years, including one year as interim Administrator of the \$200 million Community Redevelopment Agency. During Mr. Comrie's tenure of service, the City of Los Angeles has seen its economic base expand to keep pace with population increases that have made it not only the second largest city in the nation but a city of world class status.

Today, Mr. Comrie can look with pride at his role in successfully steering the City through the recession of the early 1990's with balanced budgets. During this time, he helped maintain the City's position as one of the best managed cities in the nation. Additionally, he played a key role in most of the major developments in the City, including such landmark projects as the renovated Central Library, the Los Angeles Convention Center, and the Staples Center Arena. He also played a central role in rebuilding the City after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake and oversaw over \$3 billion in capital improvement projects such as libraries, fire and police facilities, and sewer system reconstruction.

Many of these projects are in my Congressional District, which includes much of the central business district of the City of Los Angeles. Therefore, I can attest to the significance of these projects, many of which were started under Mr. Comrie's watch.

Mr. Comrie oversaw a staff of more than 100 and worked with over 30 council members during the terms of two mayors. Mr. Comrie's accomplishments on behalf of the City of Los

Angeles have been recognized by his peers. Of his many prestigious awards, he is very proud of being named the "Best City Administrative Officer in America" by City and State Magazine.

At 59, Mr. Comrie and his wife Sandra McNutt-Comrie can look forward to many productive years in retirement during which he can pursue his interests in cars and auto racing while taking satisfaction in a job well done for the City of Los Angeles.

TRIBUTE TO AMANDA CHRISTINE DRESCHER OF GIRL SCOUT TROOP 395

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to salute an outstanding young woman who has been honored with the Girl Scout Gold Award by the Cahaba Girl Scout Council in Birmingham, Alabama. She is Amanda Christine Drescher of Girl Scout Troop 563. She has been honored for earning the highest achievement award in U.S. Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Gold Award symbolizes outstanding accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service, career planning and personal development. The award can be earned by a girl aged fourteen through seventeen, or in grades ninth through twelfth.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.5 million girls, has awarded more than twenty thousand Girl Scout Awards to Senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the program in 1980. To receive the award, a Girl Scout must earn four interest project patches, the Career Exploration Pin, the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, as well as design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling these requirements is created by the Senior Girl Scout and carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout Volunteer.

As a member of the Cahaba Girl Scout Council, Amanda Christine Drescher began working toward the Girl Scout Gold Award on February 12, 1998. She completed her project, Art Day Camp, and I believe she should receive the public recognition due her for this significant service to her community and her country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday when the House was taking rollcall vote No. 39, an amendment by Representative GEORGE MILLER to the Education Flexibility Partnership Act, I was unavoidably detained and unfortunately missed the vote. Had I been present I would have voted "yea."

72ND ANNIVERSARY BANQUET OF YESHIVAH OF FLATBUSH

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to the Yeshivah of Flatbush and its honorees on the occasion of its 72nd Anniversary Banquet.

The Yeshivah of Flatbush has long served as a pillar of strength for my constituents by providing our children with the tools they will need to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Dr. Mayer Ballas, recipient of the Keter Shem Tov Leadership Award, has dedicated himself to helping members of the community as an advocate and spokesperson for Jewish people in need. He is the founding President of the Council of Rescue of Syrian Jews and has served as a member of the Federation Oversight Committee, the arm of Operation Abraham concerned with the resettlement of the most recent wave of immigrants from Syria. At the Yeshivah of Flatbush, Dr. Ballas sits on the Board of Directors and Board of Education and is a member of the Tuition Assistance Committee. He participates in all school functions and generously gives of himself and his time to the Yeshivah.

Hon. Steven Cohn, recipient of the Keter Shem Tov Community Service Award, is staunchly committed to both the Yeshivah and his community. For the past sixteen years, Mr. Cohn has served as the Democratic State Committeeman for the 50th Assembly District. He is the Vice-Chair of the New York State Democratic Party, Secretary of the Democratic Party of Kings County and has served as Parliamentarian to the Democratic National Convention. Working side by side with community leaders, elected officials and neighborhood residents to protect the environment, improve homeless shelters and maintain quality medical care in his district. His affiliation with the Yeshivah of Flatbush parallels his children's education and has strengthened over the years. In addition to working on the Banquet Journal, Chinese Auction and Building Committees, Steve is currently an Associate Treasurer on the Executive Board of Officers and sits on the school's Board of Trustees and Board of Education.

Dr. Cheryl Fishbein, recipient of the Alumna of the Year Award, is an alumna of both the Elementary School and the Joel Braverman High School. Throughout her adult life, Cheryl has focused her efforts on serving the community. She is President of the Jewish Community House in Bensonhurst and is currently overseeing its capital building campaign. She serves as the Metro Chair of the Institutional Trustees Campaign for UJA and sits on the organization's Planning and Allocations Committee. Additionally, Dr. Fishbein devotes much of her time to the Board of Jewish Education and serves as a Vice President of its Board of Directors. She also sits on the Boards of Geshet and the National Board of the Jewish Community Center Association.

Each of today's honorees have long been known as innovators and beacons of good will to all those they come into contact with. In recognition of their many accomplishments on

behalf of my constituents. I offer many congratulations on their being honored by the Yeshivah of Flatbush.

SALUTE TO A. LEON
HIGGINBOTHAM

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as I witness attacks on affirmative action in education and a legal system that overlooks police brutality among African-Americans, I realize that our country is experiencing a huge gap in fairness and equality under the law with the passing of Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Higginbotham spent his life vigorously protecting and championing the causes of equality and opportunity for African-Americans.

The French philosopher Montesquieu once said that "In the state of nature, indeed, all men are born equal, but they cannot continue in this equality. Society makes them lose it, and they recover it only by the protection of the laws."

In confronting racial injustice, violence and inequality through the legal system, Judge Higginbotham recovered and secured equality for countless African-Americans. His life long commitment to eliminating discrimination forced our society to recognize the equality inherent in all men and women, despite their race or ethnicity.

In his capacity as special deputy attorney general of Pennsylvania, judge of the U.S. District Court for the eastern district of Pennsylvania and judge of the U.S. Third-Circuit Court of Appeals, many men and women regained their rights taken away from them by society.

His zeal in tearing down the walls of injustice and erecting the walls of opportunity began after he earned his law degree at Yale Law School by working in Philadelphia as an assistant district attorney. Six years later after becoming a special deputy attorney general for Pennsylvania, President John F. Kennedy named him to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). This appointment was notable in the fact that it made him the FTC's first black commissioner and its youngest as well.

In 1977, after serving as a district court judge in Philadelphia from 1964 to 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed him judge of the U.S. Third-Circuit Court of Appeals where he served with distinction as judge, chief judge and senior judge until his retirement in March 1993.

Throughout the years, U.S. Chief Justice Warren, Burger and Rehnquist appointed Judge Higginbotham to various judicial conferences. In addition, the Congressional Black Caucus benefitted from his excellent legal mind in a series of voting rights cases brought before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Current South African President Nelson Mandela also called upon his knowledge and wisdom during the country's historic 1994 national elections where Judge Higginbotham served as an international mediator.

Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned feats and accomplishments mark this important fact:

when he was called upon by presidents, world leaders, Members of Congress and citizens to defend civil rights, Judge Higginbotham answered with vigor and passion.

Millions of Americans saw him protect the tenets of the Constitution during the recent House Judiciary Committee impeachment hearings. This was just two weeks before his passing on December 14, 1998.

Like so many times during his stellar legal career, he was a steadfast advocate and defender of the true meanings and intents of the law and our Constitution. During the hearings, it was not partisan winds that steered his testimony that the President should not be impeached. Rather, it was scholarly and intellectual interpretation of the Constitution and the separation of powers between the Judicial, Executive and Legislative branches of our government.

For those viewers of the hearings, that was their first contact with the great judge. However, I have constantly been a witness to—and a beneficiary of—Judge Higginbotham's passionate and eloquent defense of justice.

On behalf of the constituents of the 30th congressional district of Texas, I would like to tell his family what a great equalizer in this society he was to us. He served an extended family of poor, powerless and downtrodden individuals in this society. His advocacy for their causes meant a great deal to them and strengthened our principles as a country.

In particular he leaves his wife, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham; two daughters, Karen and Nia; and two sons, Stephen and Kenneth. I would like to thank them for allowing the country to share and benefit from his mind, heart and soul.

STATEMENT ON THE SUPPRESSION OF RIGHTS IN SERBIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as we have debated today the issue of American participation in any NATO peacekeeping effort in Kosovo, I urge my colleagues, regardless of their views on that matter, to focus on what is happening in Serbia itself. Slobodan Milosevic, President of an unrecognized Yugoslav state of which Serbia and Montenegro are part, is using Kosovo to perpetuate his regime, to rally Serbia's public opinion around him, and to label as "traitors" not only his opponents but anyone who thinks independently.

Last year, Milosevic imposed draconian laws which curtailed the independence of journalists to report news freely, and threatened the academic community's ability to maintain its intellectual integrity. In response, the Helsinki Commission which I chair, held a hearing appropriately entitled: "The Milosevic Regime Versus Serbian Democracy and Balkan Stability."

As an example of what is happening right now in Serbia, I would note for the RECORD what has happened to three of the witnesses at the hearing.

On December 28, 1998—less than three weeks after the hearing—Boris Karajic, a leader in the university student movement "Otpor" (Resistance), was attacked and beat-

en on the street in front of his Belgrade home by masked thugs with bats. As they fled, their comments indicated the political nature of the attack.

During the first week of February, Milan Panic, the Serb-American pharmaceutical executive who is a leader of the Alliance for Change, the main coalition of political opposition to Milosevic's ruling Socialist Party, has had his Serbian subsidiary company taken over by the authorities. The purpose was likely two-fold: to intimidate Panic and to gain hard-currency assets.

On March 8, Slavko Curuvija, the chief editor of newspaper Dnevni Telegraph and the new magazine Evropljanin, was sentenced along with two of his journalists to five months in prison by a Belgrade court for "spreading false reports with an intention to endanger public order." They remain free on appeal.

Mr. Speaker, these assaults on freedom demonstrate that Milosevic feels vulnerable to democratic forces which do, in fact, exist in Serbia, forces which may indeed be growing. Indeed, the Serbian Government undertook to make a paper prepared by the hearing witness from the United States Institute for Peace and openly circulated at that same hearing into an alleged confidential CIA document which showed, they alleged, that the U.S. Government was plotting to overthrow the Belgrade government.

Despite his insecurity at home, Milosevic does feel sufficiently secure in a U.S. policy which seemingly needs his presence for implementation for the Dayton Agreement in Bosnia, and to get an agreement in France on Kosovo. Our dependence on him, he reckons, means we will not seek to undercut his dictatorial power. The clear lack of attention many senior Administration officials have paid to Serbia's democrats has only reinforced this feeling in Belgrade.

Mr. Speaker, this must change. The actions against Karajic, Panic, Curuvija and countless other advocates of a democratic Serbia must be condemned not with words alone. The United States must stop dealing with Milosevic directly. The United States must protest his assault on innocent civilians when they occur. The United States must encourage democratic change in Serbia, and assist those who promote this change from within, the true Serbian patriots.

One way in which the Congress can help in this regard is to move quickly on the legislation I have just introduced, H.R. 1064, the Serbia and Montenegro Democracy Act of 1999. This Act would ensure adequate attention is paid to democratic forces in Serbia and Montenegro by those allocating U.S. democratic assistance. The legislation has bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about developments in Serbia generally, and the incidents involving Helsinki Commission hearing witnesses in particular. As Chairman of the Commission, I am committed to making sure that the people in Serbia have the same rights and freedoms which so many other Europeans enjoy and take for granted, the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and defined in subsequent OSCE documents. The suppression of these rights in Serbia is unacceptable, it ultimately will prove untenable, and it must change sooner rather than later, not only for the sake of the people in Serbia but all people in south-central Europe.