

Martha's progressive politics encompassed much more than women's rights, however. She was concerned about the welfare of all Americans. In the 1970's, she recognized the need for reforming our health system to provide universal health coverage and became an original co-sponsor of the landmark Kennedy-Griffiths Bill; she worked on regulating pension funds, closing tax loopholes and conducted a massive study of welfare, resulting in major overhauls to the system.

Martha Griffiths was, at once, ahead of her time and just right for her time. Her contributions to the evolution of human rights and dignity in this nation will be always remembered.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker and Congresswoman NORTON, thank you for the opportunity to support women's issues and to acknowledge the contributions of former Michigan Congresswoman Martha Griffiths to the cause of equal rights for women.

As the U.S. Representative from Michigan's 1st District, I am particularly proud of the example set by this dynamic, fiery woman, who was elected to the U.S. House in 1954 and served here for twenty years, including a term as the first woman on the House Ways and Means Committee.

Before her service in the U.S. House, Martha Griffiths served from 1949 to 1952 in the Michigan House, followed by two years as the first woman Detroit Recorder's Court judge.

Martha Griffiths was still in Congress when I began my career in public service as a police officer in Escanaba, Michigan in 1972. By the time she re-entered public life as Michigan's first elected female Lieutenant Governor in 1982, I was serving as a Michigan State Trooper.

In all that time, and later when I was elected to the Michigan State House of Representatives, I had Martha Griffith's example to follow.

While she was one of America's greatest women leaders, she was also at the top of the list of consummate politicians and public servants of either gender.

In her work reinvigorating the fight to pass the Equal Rights amendment and in adding language banning sex discrimination in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Martha Griffiths set the stage for later generations of women in politics.

My own wife Laurie, who is the elected mayor of our hometown of Menominee, is one of the thousands of women who benefited from Martha Griffiths' trailblazing work in politics and public life.

Martha Griffiths added influential roles in business to her resume after she retired from the U.S. House, serving on five major corporate boards, including two—Chrysler Corporation and Consumers Power Company—which had up to that time been all male.

A Detroit Free Press editorial on the occasion of Martha's death April 24 of this year summed it up beautifully.

The Free Press said, "Her very presence wielded power, especially when accompanied by her famously sharp tongue. Of course, her unabashed willingness to go toe-to-toe with the good old boys drew some detractors. An old man once wrote to Griffiths telling her to leave the political stage. 'All you've ever done is succeed in making women more insolent,' he wrote."

What this aging gentleman referred to as insolence we now applaud as assertiveness in such political leaders as Representative

NANCY PELOSI, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and the many women in state and local elected office like my partner in life Laurie. The thousands upon thousands of women who have climbed higher in business, community service and government in recent decades are also beneficiaries of Martha's efforts.

I do not have daughters.

But should I be lucky enough to have a daughter-in-law or granddaughters, I will be more than proud if they emulate even some of the self confidence, intelligence, perseverance and fierce effort that Martha Griffiths brought to all her causes.

We can best honor her legacy by continuing to work for equal pay and equal opportunity in the work force, continued support for widows and heads of households in Social Security and pension benefits, labor rights and a refusal to accept sex discrimination in any form.

I am happy to pledge my efforts to those goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this celebration of women's issues and Martha Griffiths' contributions to those causes.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the extraordinary life of former Congresswoman, and my dear friend, Martha Griffiths. Martha was the matriarch of Michigan politics and one of the nation's greatest advocates for women's rights.

She grew up as the daughter of a rural mail carrier in Pierce City, Missouri, where she excelled in the art of debate. Her intelligence and strong spirit carried her all the way from Missouri to the steps of the University of Michigan Law School where she and her husband became the first couple to graduate together in 1940. After graduating from the University of Michigan Law School, she and her husband founded the law firm Griffiths & Griffiths in 1946.

With a top notch law school education and the creation of a successful law firm under her belt, Martha decided to run for a seat in the Michigan State House, and like everything else she did, she succeeded. Martha Griffiths was one of two women who held a seat in the Michigan House from 1949–1952.

In 1954, Martha Griffiths was the first woman elected to serve the great state of Michigan in Congress, where she held the seat for 20 years. While in Congress, she became the first woman to sit on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, she served on the Joint Economic Committee and she was Chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Fiscal Policy.

During her tenure in Congress, Martha built her career fighting for equal rights for women. She fought to ensure the protections for women in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlaws discrimination in voting, public education, employment, public accommodations, and federally assisted programs. In 1970, she stalked the halls of Congress to obtain 218 signatures needed to file a discharge petition to demand that the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which had languished in a House committee for 47 years, be heard by the full Congress. Congress overwhelmingly approved the ERA in 1972. Unfortunately, it was ratified by only 35 states, three short of the number needed to add it to the U.S. Constitution.

She continued spearheading women's rights as Michigan's first female lieutenant governor in 1982. She also served on five corporate boards, two that had been all male and she

was the only woman to serve in all three branches of government in Michigan.

In addition to her great accomplishments for women's rights, Martha was also the driving force in helping me obtain my seat on the prestigious House Judiciary Committee. Being an advocate for civil rights herself, she saw the great importance of having an African American on the very Committee that handles many important issues, including civil rights. As a freshman in the House, having Martha Griffiths as a mentor and a friend was invaluable.

Without the leadership, strength and courage of Martha Griffiths, women would not be where they are today and neither would I. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give special thanks to Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON for bringing this tribute to the floor. A tribute to a woman of such stature is long overdue.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. CARSON of Indiana (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal matters in the district.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. PELOSI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STENHOLM, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ETHERIDGE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PASCRELL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STRICKLAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PENCE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HENSARLING, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, June 19.

Mr. KING of Iowa, for 5 minutes, June 18.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, June 18 and 19.

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, June 24.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, June 19.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire, for 5 minutes, today.