

TRIBUTE TO KANSAS PROFESSOR  
OF THE YEAR TAMARA AGHA-  
JAFFAR

**HON. DENNIS MOORE**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2004*

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Tamara Agha-Jaffar of Kansas City Community College, who today is receiving the Professor of the Year Award for Kansas from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, CASE, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Since 1981, the U.S. Professors of the Year program has rewarded outstanding professors for their dedication to teaching, commitment to students and innovative instructional methods. It is the only national program to recognize college and university professors for their teaching skills. The program is sponsored by CASE and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which hosts the final round of judging and sponsors the cash award given to U.S. national winners. CASE works with Carnegie and 26 other higher education associations to direct and promote the program.

The primary characteristic the judges consider is an extraordinary dedication to undergraduate teaching, which should be demonstrated by excellence in the following areas:

Impact on and involvement with undergraduate students;

Scholarly approach to teaching and learning;

Contributions to undergraduate education in the institution, community, and profession; and Support from colleagues and current and former undergraduate students.

Tamara Agha-Jaffar, Ph.D., has been a full time faculty member in the English Department of the Kansas City Kansas Community College since 1987. A graduate of the Beirut College for Women and the American University of Beirut, with a Ph.D. in English literature from Washington State University, she previously was an instructor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Johnson County, Kansas, Community College. During the most recent academic year she has taught courses in composition, world mythology, introduction to women's studies, world literature, and women in literature. She also has been active in organizations serving our community, including: the LULAC/USD 500 Latino Task Force; the Joyce Williams Shelter and Safehome, both serving battered women; the Kaw Valley Children's Center; and the Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault.

I am proud to represent Dr. Tamara Agha-Jaffar in Congress and I commend to my colleagues the personal statement which she submitted to CASE as a part of her nomination process for this award. I include it in the RECORD and I hope that all who read it will be as inspired by it as I was.

PERSONAL STATEMENT OF TAMARA AGHA-  
JAFFAR

It was some time in 1994. I was in my office with one of my Composition 2 students. She had been very distraught during class, so I did what I am prone to do: I invited her to my office to talk. I listened as this young, intelligent, articulate female sobbed quietly

and blurted out her story. Her boyfriend had woken her up at dawn that morning, placed a loaded gun in her mouth, and threatened to pull the trigger. He had terrorized her in this manner for several hours before allowing her to leave. Then, to my utter amazement, this young, intelligent woman proceeded to find ways of blaming herself for this horrifying experience. My jaw dropped.

I teach at Kansas City Kansas Community College, an urban college located in an economically distressed community. Over 60% of our students are female. Many of our students have to contend with previous or current drug abuse, single parenthood, sexual abuse, gangs, violence, and economic hardship. I have yet to experience a semester in which I haven't had at least one student in some sort of social, psychological, emotional, or economic crisis. But that morning in 1994 was different. I experienced an epiphany of sorts. I realized that as an educator, I have a moral, social, and ethical obligation to do more than just offer compassion and a Kleenex to my students as I hear their heart-wrenching stories. I didn't know what I could do, but I was determined to find out. Several months and a labyrinth of procedures and committees later, Women's Studies at KCKCC was born. I have been teaching the course since 1995. Students who successfully complete it tell me it is a transformative experience. They leave the class armed with knowledge, voice, a greater sense of empowerment, and increased self-esteem. My immersion in the subject matter of Women's Studies and subsequent volunteer activities inform my life and influence the pedagogy and content of all the classes I teach.

I include service-learning as an optional assignment in my Women's Studies class. Because I wanted to increase my effectiveness as a teacher, in 1998, I embarked on my own extensive volunteer training program. I learned to respond to crisis situations at the Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault, at two local shelters for battered women, and at the Kaw Valley Children's Center for abused and/or neglected children. My volunteer work at the battered women's shelter prompted me to seek and establish a two-year scholarship for tuition and books for eligible shelter residents. I taught survival skills classes at the shelter and to homeless women at a local church. Students in all my classes are demonstrably impacted when I share stories that I have heard through my volunteer activities.

Student testimonials and evaluations of Women's Studies reinforced what I already knew to be true: the empowering impact of its subject matter. My desire to make this material available to others served as the catalyst for initiating a new form of collaboration with an area high school. In 2002, as a result of my efforts, KCKCC started offering two women's studies classes for college credit at the high school location. Although tuition is comparatively modest at the college, I knew it would be an issue for these students, most of whom would be the first generation in their families to take a college class. So I successfully authored a grant to cover the cost of their tuition and books. My goal in this venture was fourfold: to expose high school students to material that is empowering and immediately relevant to their lives; to encourage them to continue with their education after high school; to demonstrate that their community college faculty care and are eager to work with them should they decide to pursue their education; and to impress upon them that they can succeed in an institution of higher learning.

As a faculty member at a community college, I am called upon to perform many roles. Through them all, I try to impress upon my students the benefits, importance,

relevance, and transformative power of a good education. I listen to their voices; offer support, encouragement, and compassion; provide course material that is empowering and relevant to their lives; and continuously seek new ways to extend means, access, and opportunity to those who have been historically marginalized.

A lot has happened since that day in 1994 when I first heard that young woman's story. I have changed. The college has changed. And my students have changed. Over the years, I have seen an increase in the number of students in crisis. Or maybe it is because they seem to flock to my classes and office in increasing numbers. As always, I listen to their stories. But now I do more than just offer compassion and a Kleenex. I am better trained and better equipped to provide the guidance, direction, resources, encouragement, and support they need to move forward with their lives.

As for that young woman who served as the catalyst for my personal and professional odyssey—I convinced her to phone her parents before she left my office that day and to tell them what had transpired. She was smiling the next time she came to class. Her father and older brother had helped her to move back home, and, with their support, she was pressing charges against her former boyfriend.

HONORING G. WILLIAM CADDELL

**HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2004*

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Doctor G. William Caddell upon his retirement after 23 years of service to the citizens of Oakland County, Michigan.

A chiropractor by profession, Doc heeded the call to public service and was elected to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners in 1979. As a county commissioner Doc served on the Board's Finance Committee and served as its chairman.

In January of 1993, Doc was appointed Deputy Clerk/Register for Oakland County by Clerk/Register Lynn D. Allen. During his tenure as Deputy Clerk/Register, Doc supervised day-to-day operations and made a commitment to bring the latest technology to the office in order to better serve the citizens of Oakland County.

In 1998, Doc became the Clerk/Register of Deeds. The primary responsibility of this elected office is to record, store and retrieve documents for future use and to preserve them for historical purposes. Doc continued to introduce technology to enhance the efficiency and service of the Clerk/Register Office. Significant improvements include the scanning of legal documents so they are available to the public at the counter and to county prosecutors in their offices, thus saving significant staff time; the scanning of approximately two million birth, death and marriage records which may now be ordered by the public on the internet; the ability to apply for a passport at the county office, including photographs; the establishment of eRecording of land records; and the utilization of a geographic information system to accurately draw property lines. Because of Doc's innovation, the Oakland County Clerk/Register of Deeds Office is recognized throughout the state as the "model" office.