

played in this country throughout the course of history. Almost half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were of Scottish descent, as were Governors in nine of the original 13 states.

Scottish Americans have made invaluable contributions to America in the fields of science, medicine, government, literature, media, and architecture. Today in America more than 200 organizations honor Scottish heritage in the United States.

On this day, let us remember the contributions Scottish-Americans have made to our country and the loyalty and commitment they have shown to the United States throughout the history of our nation.

IN MEMORY OF JOHNNIE COCHRAN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise with much sadness, to mourn the passing of a great American, and one of my dear friends, Johnnie Cochran. At a time like this, I find myself very conflicted. On one hand I am deeply saddened by the loss of my dear friend and confidant, a man who I admired and respected before I came to know him well, and over the most recent years of our friendship as we worked together on the redevelopment of Harlem through the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, which Johnnie chaired, he is a man I would come to love.

On the other hand, I feel great pride and gratefulness in the fact that I had the opportunity to experience his friendship. Johnnie was one of the greatest legal crusaders of our generation, and hands down, one of the best lawyers I have ever known. Johnnie had a personality that could light up a room. Even his opponents had to acknowledge his charm.

He argued a case with a style and flare that many had never seen in a courtroom. Indeed, most may never see a persona quite like his again. However, Johnnie always remained true to himself. In the legal profession, lawyers often wear a mask. They adopt a sort of legal alter ego. Johnnie won cases being himself, and that is why he was able to connect with jurors, and the public at large, time and time again.

As we all know, Johnnie became recognized the world over through his participation in the OJ Simpson case. But anyone who knows the work of Johnnie Cochran knows that the case was simply a feather in his cap, just one more achievement in a remarkable career.

Anyone who looks beyond the surface would see that Johnnie was not about celebrity clients, he was about seeking justice for those who had been denied it. In his portfolio of clients, one does find the OJ's and P. Diddy's of the world, but much more than them you find the little guy: the accused person with no money, no voice, and no hope, and then you find Johnnie right there fighting for them. That was the Johnnie that I knew, and that is the Johnnie that everyone should know.

Johnnie Cochran was born in Shreveport, Louisiana in 1937, the grandson of a sharecropper. His family would move west to California in the late 1940's, where his determined father would work his way up from a shipyard

pipe fitter, to an insurance broker for California's leading Black-owned insurance company. The family would eventually settle in Los Angeles where Johnnie would spend the rest of his adolescence.

Although his family's migration to California removed him from the Jim Crow South, the repressive form of segregation and discrimination that Johnnie witnessed as a young child in Louisiana never left him. Instead it instilled in him a deep seated commitment to seek justice for all people.

Johnnie grew up wanting to be a lawyer, and he would see his dream through to fulfillment. After graduating from UCLA, he earned a degree from Loyola Law School in 1962. In the fall of 1961, during his last year in law school, he became the first Black law clerk in the Office of the City Attorney. In early 1963, he became a Deputy City Attorney.

Though he enjoyed his work, he came to realize that most of the people he was prosecuting were Black men who had been severely beaten by police authorities during their arrests. He soon came to believe that something was gravely wrong with the way the justice system related to African American citizens, and he set out to do something about it.

He would leave the City Attorney's office in the late 60's to set up his own practice. He would there begin his crusade of defending those who had been the victims of police brutality and misconduct, who in most cases happened to be minorities.

Along the way he obtained justice for dozens of every day people, who had nowhere else to turn. He would also be the first attorney to get the city of Los Angeles to financially compensate victims of police misconduct. Without question, Johnnie's personal crusade against police violence brought about changes in the law enforcement systems of both Los Angeles and the entire United States.

Johnnie's preoccupation with justice was not confined to situations where the victimization was based on race; he wanted to see justice done in every case. In 1992 he represented Reginald O. Denny, the white truck driver who was brutally beaten by a mob during the Los Angeles Riots. Johnnie argued that the LAPD's reluctance to enter the riot zone cost many people their lives, and put citizens like Denny in harm's way. Indeed, many argued that the riots would never have escalated to the level they did if police had responded sooner.

Though everyone speaks of OJ, as far as Johnnie was concerned, it was the case of Geronimo Pratt that was most meaningful and important to him. He defended Pratt in 1972, but lost the case due to police and prosecutorial misconduct. However, he never gave up on Pratt.

Though he had been elevated to celebrity status, representing rich and famous clients, he never wavered in his quest to get Pratt's conviction overturned. He would ultimately prevail. Pratt's murder conviction was overturned in May 1997. Johnnie also got the state to compensate Pratt \$4.5 million, for the 27 years he wrongly spent behind bars.

Many people were opposed to the legal arguments that Johnnie used in the OJ case, regarding police corruption and misconduct. However, Johnnie was ultimately proven right in the late 1990's when the LAPD was rocked by a department wide corruption scandal.

So systemic were the problems in the LA Police Department that the U.S. Department of

Justice would have to take over the department for some time. This exemplifies why Johnnie was so important. In his quest for justice, he revealed to society serious problems that they were unable or unwilling to address on their own. This is why we will miss him so. We in the Harlem community will especially miss the leadership and contributor he gave to us in his final years.

In this time of loss however, I am heartened by two things. First is the fact that Johnnie's family is still here with us. His wife Dale has been Johnnie's loving and dedicated partner through all the highs and lows. Indeed, her love may have been the only thing that could render Johnnie defenseless, which was no easy task. He loved his children Jonathan, Tiffany, and Melodie dearly, and seeing them grow and become successful adults made him prouder than any victory he ever achieved in court.

The other thing that heartens me at this time is the knowledge that Johnnie's legacy grows every day. In Los Angeles and in cities around the country, Johnnie has become something of a mythic hero, a sort of legal Robin Hood, and a real role model. Kids across America now not only dream of being like Michael Jordan, or Puff Daddy, they dream of becoming successful lawyers, and being like Johnnie.

There are several young people working in my office right now. One is a lawyer already, and many others aspire to become one. There is no question in my mind that Johnnie in some way has something to do with that. In the end, the unseen influence Johnnie has had on the next generation of passionate advocates may be his greatest legacy.

Johnnie, we will never forget you, and I know we will all meet again. In the meantime, we will continue the fight, for as long as justice reigns, so too, will your spirit live.

HONORING THE LIFE AND
CONTRIBUTIONS OF YOGI BHAJAN

SPEECH OF

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Yogi Bhanjan, a leader, and friend to me, the State of New Mexico and many others ranging from America to his native country of India. Yogi died peacefully in his sleep at age 75 surrounded by his family in Espanola, New Mexico.

Upon his arrival to America in the 1960's, Yogi immigrated to northern New Mexico and founded the Sikh Dharma in Espanola.

By 1971 Sikh Dharma was officially recognized as a religion in America due to Yogi's determined efforts. Through Yogi Bhanjan's non-profit 3H, Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization, he touched the lives of millions throughout the world.

Yogi's name has been a staple throughout New Mexico for decades through his many business endeavors throughout the State. Among his many businesses, Akal Security, founded in 1980 by the Sikh Dharma, now thrives in multiple States and throughout the country by providing security to numerous military installations as well as private corporations throughout the world.