

COMMEMORATING MARLA RUZICKA FOR HER OUTSTANDING DEDICATION AND ADVOCACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Marla Ruzicka, who was killed last Saturday, April 16, 2005, when a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of security contractors that was passing next to her vehicle in Iraq. The attack occurred on the Baghdad Airport road as she traveled to visit an Iraqi child injured by a bomb, part of her daily work of identifying and supporting innocent victims of the war in Iraq. Marla's outstanding contributions and dedication to human rights around the world are truly appreciated and will be sorely missed.

Although just 28, Marla lived a full life. She began a door-to-door survey of civilian casualties in Iraq the day after Saddam Hussein's statue was toppled in April 2003. She founded a non-profit organization, Campaign for Innocent Victims In Conflict (CIVIC) and formed survey teams that gathered first-hand accounts of civilian casualties in Iraq.

Marla traveled repeatedly to danger zones in Afghanistan and Iraq to locate and document people who were killed or injured and then worked to secure compensation for them or their families.

A native of Lake County, California Marla graduated from Long Island University. After college, she returned to California, where she worked for Global Exchange, a San Francisco-based human rights organization. This led her to Kabul, Afghanistan, shortly after the Taliban fell, where she focused her attention on the plight of war victims.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, Marla Ruzicka earned the respect, friendship and admiration of all of those with whom she came in contact. She will be greatly missed both personally and professionally. Her compassion and commitment to human rights were unquestionable. For these reasons and countless others, it is most appropriate that we honor her life's work and we extend our condolences to her family.

RECOGNIZING CHARLES DAVID HEVALOW FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Charles David Hevalow, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 633, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout. C.D. received his Eagle Award on March 5, 2005 at an Eagle Court of Honor in Platte Woods, Missouri.

C.D. has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years C.D. has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous

merit badges, but the respect of his family, peers, and community. He is truly an exemplary scout.

For his Eagle project, C.D. remodeled the ceiling of the VFW basement. His work included taking down old lighting, ceiling outlets, as well as other miscellaneous items. When this was completed, C.D. installed a suspended ceiling, diffusers, and new can lighting. The project provided the VFW with a nicer looking space which has more light, and which is better insulated from outside noise.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Charles David Hevalow for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SAMANTHA KNOLLHOFF, WEINERT ELEMENTARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the many accomplishments of Samantha Knollhoff, Weinert Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Knollhoff has 8 years of teaching experience, 4 of which have been with the Seguin Independent School District. She acts as Weinert's counselor for kindergarten through grade five, helping students and their families deal with the adjustment to school, and begin their academic careers on the right track.

Ms. Knollhoff holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Texas at Dallas and a Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling from Southwest Texas State University. She also brings to the table previous experience with the New Braunfels and San Marcos Independent School Districts.

Samantha Knollhoff's work doesn't end at the classroom door; she is also a dedicated volunteer in her community. She is especially involved in her church: she teaches Sunday school, and assists with her church's youth activities.

Ms. Knollhoff always advises her students to have hope, saying, "Hope doesn't promise an instant solution, but rather the possibility of an eventual one." She is a credit to her community, and I am proud to have the chance to recognize her here today.

TRIBUTE TO RODOLFO "CORKY" GONZALES

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the extraordinary life of an eminent citizen, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. This remarkable man merits both our recognition and esteem as his impressive record of leadership, activism and invaluable service has moved our community forward and thereby, improved the lives of our people.

Corky Gonzales lived life on the front lines of progress and is known as the father of the

Chicano movement in the Southwest. He was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1928 and spent his early life as a professional boxer. He became a national boxing champion and was later inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame. But for Corky Gonzales, his boxing career proved to be a metaphor for a life of social and political activism. Corky Gonzales was a fighter and he became a true champion in the struggle for human dignity and cultural respect. He became a champion of La Raza.

Corky Gonzales entered the political arena in the late 1950's serving as the first Mexican American district captain in the Denver Democratic Party. He proved to be a skilled organizer and headed up the 1960 Viva Kennedy campaign. He was recognized for his efforts to increase political participation among Latinos and for bringing the social and economic challenges facing the Latino community into mainstream awareness. But the slow pace of social change within the political system set Mr. Gonzales on a new path of activism. He established the La Raza Unida party in Colorado and in 1965, he founded La Crusada Por Justicia—The Crusade for Justice—to further the cause of equality and justice for Chicanos, Latinos and Mexican Americans as well deal with racial injustice and advance the causes of civil liberty and human rights. He led a contingent to the Poor People's March on Washington, DC and in 1969, he convened the First Annual Chicano Youth Conference in Denver. Mr. Gonzales worked with city leaders to establish a health clinic on the North side and served on the Colorado Civil Rights Commission. He is credited for launching the Chicano literary movement and his writings and speeches have become an affirmation of pride in the Mexican American cultural heritage.

One of Corky Gonzales' most enduring accomplishments was the founding of Escuela Tlatelolco Centro de Estudios in 1970. It was established to ensure that Latino and Indigenous youth are educated and empowered to continue their human development in higher education. But more importantly, in establishing Escuela Tlatelolco, Corky Gonzales established a tradition of learning that helps students and parents both cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that gives individuals dignity and strength and thereby further empowers our communities and our nation.

Corky Gonzales touched our community in many ways that will endure. He gave us courage and dignity in the face of discrimination and economic injustice. He inspired us with his devotion and willingness to fight for the right that should be afforded to all people and the cultural expression that dignifies all people. I am reminded of the wisdom of Cesar Chavez—"What is at stake is human dignity. If (we) are not accorded respect, (we) cannot respect ourselves and if (we) cannot respect (ourselves), (we) cannot demand it of others." I would submit that Corky Gonzales understood this simple truth and his life is a testament to the activism that is guided by a deep and abiding respect for the intrinsic value of each and every human being.

Please join me in paying tribute to the life of Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, a prominent activist and civic leader. His service, accomplishments and leadership command our respect and serve to build a better future for all Americans.