

OLYMPIC GOLD FOR REFUGEES OF DARFUR: THANK YOU JOEY CHEEK!

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud an Olympic Champion Gold Medal winner speed-skater Joey Cheek. Joey Cheek won the Olympic Gold Medal in the men's 500-meter speed skating race in Turin, Italy on February 13, 2006. Minutes after he won the race while millions of Americans and almost a billion listeners from around the world were focused solely on him, Cheek used his "fifteen minutes of fame" to announce he was donating his prize money to child refugees from Darfur. Cheek, citing the U.S. government finding of genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan, said he wanted to sponsor programs for 60,000 children of Darfur forced into refugee camps in Chad.

For Joey Cheek, competing in the Olympics was a blessing and his way of saying thanks for his opportunity, was to help others. Before answering any questions about his winning race, Cheek announced he would talk to and challenge all Olympic sponsors and participants to match his gift.

When Mr. Cheek won the Silver Medal in the 1000 meter he donated his \$15,000 prize money. By the end of the Olympics, Mr. Cheek donated his total money from the US Olympic Committee, \$40,000, to victims of genocide in Darfur. By the end of the Olympic Games, ABC's announcer, Bob Costas reported that Cheek's challenge had brought in donations of \$300,000 for the refugees from Darfur.

Joey Cheek is an Olympic champion, but he is more; he is a citizen champion: a person who demonstrated the true American values of his country: generosity, compassion, kindness and goodness of heart. Mr. Cheek is not a rich man; he is 27 years old. He had already announced the 2006 games would be his last Olympics. In donating what might have been his one and only time to bask in triumph before a world-wide audience for his skating skills, Joey Cheek revealed his heart. He demonstrated something I believe lives in the hearts of all the compassionate people of this country; altruism, a pure selfless gift to men, women and children who, without our help, are destined to die.

UNICEF's website says 1.4 million Sudanese children, including 500,000 age five or younger, have been displaced from the Darfur region by militia groups, including the Janjaweed militia, that have destroyed villages, brutally killed men and children and raped women as the means of annihilating an entire people because they are non-Arab, black Africans. The Government in Khartoum has been complicit in these mass murders and slow starvation of at least 300,000 people. Two and one-half million people of Darfur have been displaced, their villages burned, their crops destroyed and their well water poisoned with the bodies of their children, spouses, brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers.

In February of this year, I signed a bipartisan letter to the President along with 80 of my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, in

the House of Representatives asking Mr. Bush to exercise badly needed leadership to stop the genocide in Darfur. This is the first genocide that can be stopped. The 7000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers protecting the people in Darfur are good, but they are not enough to save the tribes of Darfur. They need help. According to the experts, the genocide could be stopped, it would cease, if there were 20,000 peacekeepers to provide genuine security. My colleagues and I wrote the letter in February because for 28 days the United States was the President of the United Nations Security Council. We hoped the President would seize this moment to do what no other President has done: stop genocide. Although we are not now the President of the UN Security Council, it does not mean we cannot act to stop the genocide.

Not one other winner of any medal did a deed as great as Joey Cheek's. I am proud of every American Olympian who worked so hard and made us proud by winning gold, silver and bronze medals at the Olympics, but I believe what Mr. Cheek did is worthy of special recognition and celebration; he set an example, a standard for the people of America. He is one person who made a huge difference to children, many of whom are orphans, victims of genocide by the government of Sudan in Khartoum.

Joey Cheek told the media that he wants to help Darfur refugee children to live but he also hopes they will be able to learn and play sports. If more citizens would follow Mr. Cheek's example, his vision of the children of Darfur being children not victims, would not be out of reach.

There is a teaching from the Talmud: "He who saves one life has saved the world." Joey Cheek started what I hope will be a beginning for many who want to express their moral values as Mr. Cheek has done. Every citizen may not be able to give money for Darfur, but he or she can ask his pastor, priest, imam or rabbi to speak out at every service and remind their congregations that genocide is happening. It is a long slow genocide that has gone on for three years. Each citizen can also call on the Administration to stop the genocide now. It is within the power of this greatest country on earth to end the horrific suffering of people who are being murdered, starved, raped and mutilated because they are non-Arab Africans. Each person can do something to save a life in Darfur and to save the world.

REMEMBRANCE OF MARVALYNE HENRY: A REMARKABLE WOMAN

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay belated tribute to one of our community's unsung leaders, the late Marvalyne W. Henry, whose life was remembered and celebrated on January 9, 2006 at the Range Memorial Chapel in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Ms. Henry left a wonderful legacy for all of us, and she will be sorely missed, especially by those who looked up to her as a model of utmost benevolence and caring. I want to take this opportunity to honor her faithful stewardship over those who came to her for guidance

and understanding. The hallmark of her life's excellence and commitment was defined by her compassion, which evoked the ever-enduring presence of God in her life.

Born to the late J.C. Woodson and Margaret "Maggie" Williams on August 16, 1937 in Smithville, Georgia, Ms. Henry demonstrated an immense love and compassion for others, especially the less fortunate and the down-trodden. Despite the problems she had had with her health, her faith was unshakable and served her well in ministering to those who needed her help.

Her nurturing spirit transformed her home into an oasis of love and encouragement—not only for the immediate members of her family, but also for countless others who came to seek much-needed comfort and solace from her. Indeed, the genuine kindness she extended to others transformed a rather sad occasion into a celebration of her life when they could take comfort in memorializing the magnificent example of a life so nobly lived. Despite the sobering challenges of her health problems, Ms. Henry managed to exude a great soul and a beautiful spirit that evoked an unshakable belief rarely shown and tested amidst so much trial and tribulation.

Ms. Henry is survived by her children: Nedra Henry, Lynnette Mathis (Larry), Tammie Coney (Michael), Gidget McLean (Charleston), Tameka Benbow, Derrick Henry (Alisia), Gary Mays, and Sherman Henry; sister, Wendie Williams; brothers, Samuel Williams (Mary), Richard Williams (Vanessa), and Leon Williams (Ann); two aunts: Loraine Humphries, and Doll Calbert of Detroit, Michigan; a host of grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Buttressed by her unflinching faith, Ms. Henry's life has indeed been bountifully blessed. This is the celebration of a remarkable woman, and I know that my colleagues join me in honoring her.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF ELEANOR SLATER

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to Eleanor Slater, a great friend who recently passed away. Known as the grande dame of Rhode Island Democratic politics, Eleanor blazed trails for women in our state and will be greatly missed.

She began her distinguished political career in 1958 when she was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives where she served four terms. She then ran successfully for the Rhode Island Senate. While in the Senate, she championed what is believed to be the first Fair Housing Act in the country. Eleanor was also vocal on mental health and gerontology issues, and in 1969 became the chief of the former Division on Aging.

After 18 years in public service, Eleanor decided to pursue other interests, which included receiving a degree in political science from the University of Rhode Island at the age of 70. She remained instrumental in the Democratic Party and was a fixture at numerous Democratic National Conventions as a delegate.

Always thinking of the next generation, she was a great advisor for many former and current politicians, including myself. She had the