

Words cannot express the sense of sadness we have for his family, and for the gratitude our country feels for his service. Sergeant Kassin died serving not just the United States, but the entire cause of liberty, on a noble mission to help spread the cause of freedom in Iraq and liberate an oppressed people from tyrannical rule. He was a true American.

We will forever hold him closely in our hearts, and remember his sacrifice and that of his family as a remembrance of his bravery and willingness to serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the House's remembrance on this mournful day.

#### HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2006*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4157) to amend the Social Security Act to encourage the dissemination, security, confidentiality, and usefulness of health information technology:

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I rise today disappointed that I must oppose the Republican Health Care Information Technology Promotion Act. Developing and implementing a health information technology system that reflects the needs of patients and providers should be a priority for Congress and should be an issue that can be handled in a bipartisan manner. Unfortunately, once again the Republican Majority has rejected common-sense and strong public policy and instead chosen to support a sham piece of legislation that even the Congressional Budget Office states will "not significantly affect either the rate at which the use of health technology will grow or how well that technology will be designed and implemented".

Information Technology (IT) reform would help decrease medical mistakes and would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our health care system. However, we must work hard to strike the delicate balance between increasing use of electronic medical records and maintaining individuals' privacy. It is critical that we ensure patients' personal health information is secure and confidential when they go to the doctor or check into a hospital.

The Health Information Technology Promotion Act would codify the Office of the Health Information Technology Coordinator within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—basically maintaining the status quo. This legislation fails to contain adequate funding for providers to implement EMR, it fails to provide for interoperability of system, it fails to address patient privacy protections, and could unfortunately open new opportunities for fraud and abuse by providing waivers for anti-fraudback laws.

Congress must find a way to move forward with the implementation of health technology and protect the American public. For this reason, I supported the Dingell-Rangel substitute. This amendment included grants for providers, opportunities to leverage private dollars, strong patient protections and it maintains our anti-fraud laws. In addition, this proposal is

nearly identical to the legislation that has already passed the Senate unanimously. Unfortunately, the Republican Majority is so unwilling to have a full and open discussion about our health care system on the House floor, that this amendment was not even allowed to be considered during today's debate.

I oppose H.R. 4157 and urge my colleagues to do the same. Lets reject this do-nothing legislation and have a real debate about the health care challenges facing American families.

#### ZULEYKA RIVERA MENDOZA WINS THE FIFTH MISS UNIVERSE TITLE FOR PUERTO RICO

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share with my colleagues the achievements of Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza, a young lady whose determination and perseverance have achieved the honor of being Miss Puerto Rico in the Miss Universe pageant and then the big prize, the Miss Universe 2006 title.

Born October 3, 1987, in Cayey, Puerto Rico at 3:47 p.m., this talented young lady of only 18 years of life, brought an incredible joy to the people of Puerto Rico the night of July 23, 2006, after winning the Miss Universe 2006 Pageant, held in Los Angeles, CA.

As a child growing up in Salinas, Zuleyka showed great interest in sports. At five she played football and by seven she was a member of a basketball team. But, her sporting days were over as soon as she won the title of "Queen of Hearts" in middle school. Her mother quickly recognized the talent given to her child and enrolled her in an academy for aspiring models. At fourteen, she was the first runner-up in the Miss Puerto Rico Teen Pageant, the same year she became the image of a local fashion magazine.

Zuleyka graduated from high school in Guayama, Puerto Rico, where she was president of the 2004 graduating class and part of the honor roll. Up until the pageant, she lived with her parents, Carmen M. Mendoza and Jerry Rivera, and her younger siblings, Jerry Jesús (12) and José Alberto (10), in Parcelas Vázquez, a small community in Salinas, Puerto Rico. Prior to winning the Miss Universe 2006 Pageant she was a freshman at the University of Puerto Rico, majoring in communications.

600 million people in 180 countries around the world witnessed the moment in which Miss Puerto Rico, Zuleyka Rivera Mendoza, was crowned with 120 pearls and 800 diamonds as Miss Universe 2006. She will now live in New York and travel the world in an effort to eradicate AIDS, these being part of her duties as Miss Universe 2006. After the pageant, Zuleyka wishes to fulfill her dream of becoming an actress, while always making the Puerto Rican community proud of her achievements.

#### TRIBUTE TO EUGENE THOMAS KENNEDY

**HON. MARK R. KENNEDY**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, as my father approaches his 80th birthday, I would like to share with my colleagues how he has brightened the lives of so many with his conversational Irish wit, passion for life and genuine interest in other people.

Eugene Thomas Kennedy descended from immigrants who came from Ireland at the time of the potato famine. They settled for a period in Kentucky and Illinois before pioneering Minnesota in 1863. The Kennedy's originally settled in what today is called Savage, Minnesota, then called Hamilton Falls, later settling in Decorah Township near St. Clair, south of Mankato, before moving to Murdock at the turn of the century.

Eugene was born August 22, 1926 to Charles, a businessman and longtime mayor of Murdock, Minnesota and Rose, the daughter of a Swift County Commissioner Joe Cannon. Joe Cannon's name is inscribed on the 1890's Swift County Courthouse in Benson, Minnesota that issued the birth certificates for both my father and me. Eugene grew up and initially raised his own family in the home that his parents built right across the street from the Sacred Heart Church in Murdock, where I was baptized. His family sat every Sunday near his grandfather Francis Kennedy's stained glass window just across from the front pew at Sacred Heart. Eugene graduated from Murdock High School in 1944, took some courses at the University of Minnesota and a junior accounting course at Mankato Commercial College.

His father and grandfather taught Eugene to face adversities head on. His grandfather became blind when he was my age, but kept informed by having his son, Charles, read him the paper every day and later, even though blind and in his 70's, moved his family to Murdock, Minnesota for more land for his children. His father Charles took over the livery stable in Murdock. During the pneumonia epidemic of 1918 that killed more people than any war, as liveryman he courageously transported and assisted Murdock's doctor to aid the ill. When the automobile put his livery out of business, Charles did not seek a government handout, he started trucking livestock instead. Later in his life, Eugene tackled adversity head on himself.

As the youngest of four sons, Eugene was a self-proclaimed momma's boy. He learned to cook a few dishes growing up in the kitchen with Rose. The country wisdom he gained participating in many kitchen table conversations with the neighbors shaped his life. Rose was a woman of action. She went to see her Maker in action—weeding her garden, something she loved to do, but not before instilling in her descendants a belief that it is noble to tend not just your own garden, but also your corner of the world, so the community's flowers might also blossom. Eugene took up his hoe to cultivate a more bountiful harvest in the community he adopted to raise his family—Pequot Lakes.

On September 21st of last year, commemorating my mother's 75th birthday, I spoke of

my parents meeting and raising their children and will not repeat that today, but I will share with you the many things that my father taught his children and grandchildren.

Eugene built on his parent's commitment to service. He served on the Pequot Lakes Public School Board for 27 years, including the period when it built an entirely new K-12 campus. He helped lead the committee to build a new church building for St. Alice Catholic Church. He helped my mother found what became the largest 4-H Club in the county. As a member of the Chamber of Commerce's 4th of July Committee, he helped build Pequot's Independence Day celebration into one of Minnesota's best.

He instilled in us a love of work. In 1947, he began working at the First State Bank of Murdock, where he remembers emptying the spittoons and posting the daily numbers in pen and ink in a general ledger as big as the Guttenberg Bible perched on a high desk. Later he worked at banks in Golva and Hunter, North Dakota. Moving to Pequot Lakes in 1961, Eugene joined the independent insurance agency of Farmer's State Bank, later Lakeland State Bank. The six employees there shared one telephone and one typewriter. The employees, just like in an old western movie, were barricaded behind bulletproof glass and metal framing. The bank and agency grew rapidly in this resort community.

He taught us to give work your all. You got more than insurance when Eugene was your agent; you got conversation and advice. The president of a large Minnesota company fondly remembers getting car insurance as a kid from Eugene. Eugene patiently explained why the insurance on his old beater of a car cost more than the car itself. He really appreciated the way Eugene was genuinely interested in him and took the time to simplify the mysteries of insurance for a teenager.

He exhibited to his own children the need to meet adversity head on. Just before his retirement from the bank insurance agency in Pequot Lakes, the FDIC came in one Friday afternoon, shut the bank down, and reopened it on Monday as a different bank. Having lost his pension and with three of his seven kids still at home and two more still in college, he started anew. At age 65, he took his experience of inspecting properties for insurance purposes, became a Certified Residential Real Estate Appraiser and started a business as a real estate appraiser, where he still works today with two employees.

He taught us to listen. They say that everyone can brighten up a room, some when they enter, some when they leave. My father brightens up a room when he enters, and then never leaves. Some leave without saying goodbye, my father says goodbye without leaving. We were always the last to leave church every Sunday.

My father taught us his trademark handshake that he learned from his co-worker at his first job. He passes on his technique to all his grandkids—reach out your hand, lean forward, look them in the eye with a smile on your face and give a firm handshake. It is nearly impossible for a visitor to attend St. Alice Catholic Church in Pequot without meeting Eugene Kennedy. Whenever I met people in a three county area, the response often was, "Oh, you're Gene's boy."

He demonstrated to us a love of family and those whom others ignored. Eugene had two

elderly first cousins, sisters who never married and lived together in St. Paul—Fran and Mugs Kenney. They both served in the military during World War II and both worked for West Publishing. My father made a special point of visiting them regularly and encouraged us to do so as well. With so many children in our family, major events sometimes were everyday occurrences. But, I will still never forget Debbie and I calling our parents to tell them that we were getting married. After talking with my mother, who was very excited, I ask my father if he had any comments. His only comment was, "Have you seen Fran and Mugs recently?" Clearly, taking time to spend with seniors and other often overlooked people was a key value he instilled.

He passed down a love our Irish heritage. Kennedys are generally descended from Brian Boru who defeated the Vikings in the Battle of Clontarf in 1041, becoming the first king to unite all Ireland. My father and I were both born in a rural Minnesota town made up almost entirely of those of Irish descent. Murdock's sports teams were called the Irish. It was a rare treat to be able to go in 1982 with him, my mother and my wife on the first trip to Ireland by a Kennedy since Francis Kennedy came to America from Ireland in 1848. Even though my children are less Irish than I, they and their generation still inherited Eugene's infectious love of the Irish.

He taught us to love America. Our family has two family days of obligation, when Kennedy's make every effort to return home—Christmas Eve and the 4th of July—the birthdays of our God and our Country. The 4th of July is a very personal holiday for our family. My father never made much money, but he was proud of his country, proud of his community, Pequot Lakes, in the heart of Minnesota's lakes country, and proud of his family. And the 4th of July, when tourists headed to Pequot area lakes, is a celebration of all three for our family. My father was in charge of the 4th of July celebration at Pequot Lakes for many years and we children were often roped in to help. A few years back, we all gathered to watch the parade and it was pouring rain, but the parade went on. I will never forget seeing my father sitting in his lawn chair after all the prep work was done, at our customary spot just down from the reviewing stand on the flat-bed trailer, with his cowboy hat on that my mother had tried repeatedly to take from him, sopping wet, surrounded by his seven kids and 27 grandkids, watching the parade go by—the bands, the beauty queens, and then standing up and putting his hand over his heart as the veterans came marching down the street carrying the stars and stripes with the biggest smile I can ever remember seeing on him. My father's infectious spirit taught us to live the spirit of the 4th of July every day—family, community, a strong America and Freedom.

He imparted on us the importance of prayer. We regularly knelt down as a family to say the Rosary, often upstairs by our family's shrine to the Infant Jesus of Prague. When my Hereford cows Priscilla and Modesty got out and could not be found, I distinctly remember praying with him to St. Jude, the patron Saint of lost causes, and thankfully they were found. You can often find my father praying a Rosary by his bed early in the morning when you wake up, or if left alone for any period of time riding in a car. I fondly remember him coming into

our bedroom when we were young and saying nightly prayers with my three brothers and me who shared a bedroom.

Eugene Kennedy has been recognized for his community service on a number of occasions, including receiving the Big Heart Community Award in 1988, where people voted at the Northern National Bank on their choice to receive the award and being named Outstanding Senior Citizen for Crow Wing County. This year he also received a statewide appraiser's award and recognition by the Minnesota Independent Insurance Agents for a lifetime of achievement. Eugene continues to be active in the community, starting a 50+ Club at St. Alice and serving on the advisory board for the Minnesota Board on Aging.

Finally, on a lighthearted note, my father taught us to love dessert. Every dinner had to have dessert, even if that meant sharing a can of pears. On the occasion of his 80th birthday, I would like to recognize that my father's life has indeed been dessert for so many people who upon meeting him get a break from having to eat their vegetables and relish in his rich sense of humor and focused attention on them. Happy Birthday, Dad!

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast vote on the following legislative measures on July 17 and July 18. If I was present for rollcall votes for the following bills:

375 On motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended H. Res. 3085—To amend the National Trails System Act to update the feasibility and suitability study originally prepared for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and provide for the inclusion of new trail segments, land components, and campgrounds associated with that trail, and for other purposes.

376 On motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended H. Res. 3496—To amend the National Capital Transportation Act of 1969 to authorize additional Federal contributions for maintaining and improving the transit system of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and for other purposes

377 On motion to suspend the rules and pass as amended H. Res. 3729—Federal Judiciary Emergency Tolling Act

378 On passage H.J. Res. 88—Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage

379 On motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 3504—Fetus Farming Prohibition Act

380 On motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 2754—Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act

381 On motion to suspend the rules and agree H. Res. 498—Supporting the goals and ideals of School Bus Safety Week

I would have voted "yeas" on Nos. 375, 376, 377, 379, 381.

I would have voted "nays" on Nos. 378, 380.