

again, thank Stephanie Lyons for her participation and hard work.

HONORING PRESIDENT JOLENE
KOESTER

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary public servant dedicated to promoting the intellectual, economic and cultural contributions of the San Fernando Valley, California State University, Northridge President Jolene Koester. This year, the Encino-Tarzana Hospital Charitable Foundation is honoring Dr. Koester with the Tree of Life Award for her educational and civic contributions.

As a visionary leader in the San Fernando Valley, Dr. Koester has transformed California State University, Northridge into one of the State's premier higher education institutions. CSUN is a vibrant, diverse and accessible university community of nearly 34,000 students and more than 4,000 faculty and staff. This year, CSUN will celebrate its 50th anniversary as the only public university located in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley—home to about 1.8 million residents.

Dr. Koester began her appointment as the fourth president of California State University, Northridge on July 1, 2000. Prior to her appointment, Dr. Koester served as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at California State University, Sacramento. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Minnesota, a Master of Arts in communication arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a Ph.D. in speech communication from Minnesota.

An active member of the community, Dr. Koester has served on the boards of directors for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley, the Valley Industry & Commerce Association, the Southern California Biomedical Council, and the Los Angeles Economy & Jobs Committee. Dr. Koester is a recognized leader in higher education in the State of California, and has received numerous civic and business awards for her commitment to furthering the excellence of California State University, Northridge.

Dr. Koester was recently appointed as Chair-Elect of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. As Chair-Elect of one of the country's most prestigious higher education advocacy organizations, she will have the unique opportunity to represent over three million students at 430 public colleges and universities. Moreover, she will advocate on behalf of the association in support of public policies extending higher education to underrepresented and first-generation college students throughout the country.

Madam Speaker, I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Jolene Koester for receiving the Tree of Life Award from the Encino-Tarzana Hospital Charitable Foundation. Dr. Koester has exhibited strong leadership skills and a commitment to education that will benefit California State University, Northridge, the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles region for years to come.

HONORING SHANNON HARPS—ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, my colleague NORM DICKS and I would like to pay tribute in remembrance of Shannon Harps, one of Washington's finest young environmental advocates. She was killed on December 31, 2007 by an unknown assailant as she was returning to her Capitol Hill apartment in Seattle from the grocery store. Shannon's death is a tremendous loss to our community and the many issues to which she devoted her life. We join with Shannon's family, friends, and colleagues in the Sierra Club in mourning the loss of this wonderful person and fine community organizer. Though her life was cut short, she was able to make a large impact on the quality of the Northwest environment.

Shannon came from her home State of Ohio to Seattle, Washington in February 2004 to join the staff of the Northwest Office of the Sierra Club. This move joined two of Shannon's strongest desires—to work to protect our environment and to live in the Northwest where she could more vigorously pursue her strong love for the outdoors.

Shannon had a wonderful sense of humor and a style of working with people that immediately put them at ease and made it easy for them to join her in protecting our environment and quality of life. Shannon particularly enjoyed working with high school and college students to help them develop their interests and talents in working to create a better world. While Shannon's work was directly focused on protecting our environment, from wilderness to global warming, her values were deeply embedded in a strong sense of fairness and justice for all people.

In the four years that Shannon lived in Washington State she helped to protect some of our finest lands. Shannon worked with several groups in a local coalition effort with Congressman NORM DICKS to add key lands in the Carbon River drainage to Mt. Rainier National Park. She worked with Sierra Club volunteers and staff from the many groups to help move the Wild Sky Wilderness proposal through the various steps of its arduous journey through the congressional process. She was a leader in the State of Washington, and worked with colleagues around the country, to help thwart the various ill-considered efforts to open up America's Arctic Coastal Plain to oil and gas drilling. She was a lead organizer in the successful effort in 2006 to pass the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard for Washington State assuring that Washington will be a leader in developing a clean energy future and creating good jobs. And, in the recent two years, much of her work focused on building relationships with local officials and creating public support so they too would endorse the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement making sure we are stepping up to the challenge of global warming.

In her all-too-short life, she made contributions that benefited our community, State, and world. She lived her life as an example of living lightly on the planet, and engaged the people and world around her with grace, humor,

kindness, and respect. Everyone who worked with her admired her style, tenacity, and sense of purpose, along with her sparkling smile and laugh.

Shannon loved living and working in the Northwest. She reveled in the outdoors and nothing made her happier than to participate in a competitive run or to hike the Northwest's high mountain trails. Her death is a loss for us all but her spirit still resides with all of those with whom she worked and walked the trails. We will remember her as we continue the struggle to protect our lands and environment and to create a more just and fair world for us all.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JOHN SMOOT

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA—

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Chief John Smoot who dedicated his life to serving and saving others. He died on January 20, 2008 after a long illness in Kanawha County, WV where he was a lifelong resident.

John served in the U.S. Army during World War II and continued his military service for 32 years in the Army Reserves and in the West Virginia National Guard. He also worked for DuPont Chemical and retired after 37 years of employment.

He is most remembered for his extraordinary service to the citizens of Kanawha County, through his 57 years of involvement with first responder services and 50 years as chief of the Cedar Grove Fire Department.

He was a champion of emergency services in Kanawha County and in the State of West Virginia. He created the Cedar Grove Ambulance Service and helped establish county wide ambulance services. He is also the original founder of the Kanawha County Fireman's Mutual Aid Association.

He is survived by his wife, Lois Robinson Smoot; his son, John R. Smoot; his grandsons, Jonathan and Cody, and his brother; George Smoot. Area fireman paid tribute to Chief Smoot by including trucks from all Kanawha County Fire Departments in the funeral procession.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in honoring the life of John R. Smoot, whose dedication and service is truly admirable. He will be sadly missed.

RECOGNITION OF MERCER AND MONROE COUNTIES AS BEST COMMUNITIES FOR YOUTH

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of two counties in my district, Mercer and Monroe, which have again received the honor as two of the Nation's "100 Best Communities for Youth 2008" by the Alliance for Youth. This is the third such award for Mercer County and the second award for Monroe County, both of whom were also honored last year.