

In 1978, he was appointed by then-Governor George C. Wallace as Baldwin County's coroner. He went on to win seven consecutive elections and remained in the post until his retirement in 2006. In addition to serving as county coroner and owning the funeral home, he ran a commercial real estate business and a small cattle operation.

Former Baldwin County District Attorney David Whetstone said "[Mr. Mack] was probably one of the best coroners in the history of Alabama . . . And he is one of the best friends you could have." Jim Small, who was elected county coroner following Mr. Mack's retirement said, "He was a person who worked hard and diligently."

Mr. Mack was a founding member of the Central Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce and had served as its president. He was also past president of the Alabama Funeral Director's Association, the Robertsdale Rotary Club, and past board member of the Selected Independent Funeral Homes. He was a devout member of Robertsdale United Methodist Church.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering a beloved friend to many throughout southwest Alabama. Huey Alfred Mack Sr. will be dearly missed by his family—his wife, Jean Marie Mack; his daughter, Linda Lou Mack, his son, Huey A. "Hoss" Mack Jr.; his sister, Judy; his brother, Arnold; his five grandchildren; and his great grandchild—as well as the countless friends he leaves behind.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them all during this difficult time.

#### HONORING MRS. PATRICIA HECK

#### HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Patricia Heck, an exemplary public servant who is retiring as a teacher at Red Mountain High School in Mesa.

In 1988, Pat launched a program at Red Mountain through Reading Is Fundamental that promotes a love of reading for all ability groups through fun and entertaining activities. Pat's commitment and deep passion for literacy encourages students of all reading levels to unlock the mystery that each book holds.

Fueled by Pat's drive and determination, the program flourished. The club currently consists of 1,800 teen members; representing more than half the student body. Members organize an annual carnival, and produce year-round reading displays, assemblies, and read-a-thons. Every year, they collect over 2,500 books to distribute to their own high school and in other areas of need. Since the school opened in 1988, the club has given away \$3 million in donated books. At the core of Club RIF are the one-on-one reading buddies that work directly with 150 second graders at the Salk Elementary School and the tutors who read to 1,375 children each week.

Pat's dedication has been recognized numerous times over the years including national recognition in 1991 as President Bush Sr.'s 432nd Point of Light and in 2000 as the recipients of President Clinton's Student Service Award.

After more than 20 years of service to Club RIF and 30 years in education, Pat is retiring. Through her leadership, vision and passion, she excelled as a charismatic advocate for literacy and provided a shining example of how students can positively influence children in their communities through education and reading. Her energy and enthusiasm for Club RIF and its mission will continue to inspire students to get excited about reading.

I take particular pride in Pat's contributions and accomplishments because she was one of my first students when I began my own 28-year teaching career.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Patricia Heck on her energetic contributions to Club RIF, her upcoming retirement, and the lasting legacy she will leave with the community.

#### RECOGNIZING BETTE MIDLER AND THE NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

#### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Bette Midler and the New York Restoration Project who for the last 14 years has been revitalizing underserved parkland and community gardens in my Congressional District and throughout the City of New York. Restoration of our beloved parks and gardens has promoted in my community a sense of ownership and civic pride leading residents to preserve their beloved recreational areas.

Bette Midler first got the attention of this Congress when she took to national syndicated television in 1994 and confessed that if she had not gone into entertainment she probably would have pursued a career as an urban planner, and she certainly has moved to the forefront in promoting livability with her personal advocacy and investment.

This was most apparent when she spearheaded the rescue of 112 parks and community gardens in New York City when then Mayor Rudolph Giuliani threatened to auction these small gardens to the highest bidder for redevelopment. Had Bette not stepped in, along with the Trust for Public Land and the New York Restoration Project (NYRP), a great number of New Yorkers would have lost their sprawling parks and adored gardens.

New York Restoration Project was founded by Bette Midler in 1995 as the "conservancy of forgotten places." NYRP reclaims, restores and revitalizes neglected parks, community gardens and waterfronts throughout New York City—focusing especially on underserved neighborhoods. NYRP is also the lead non-profit partner of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC MillionTreesNYC, the most ambitious public-private initiative in the country, dedicated to planting one million new trees in New York City by 2017.

For 14 years, NYRP has recognized that the challenges facing New York City's natural environment are significant. Dramatic increases in population, shortage of green spaces, insufficient tree canopy, and unsatisfactory environmental education are some of the compelling obstacles facing our great city, especially in low-income neighborhoods. As a result of

these pressing issues, the City is facing dangerously high rates of obesity and diabetes; dramatic climate changes with rising temperatures and sea levels; devastatingly poor air quality and growing asthma rates; and lack of knowledge of, and respect for, the natural environment among younger generations. NYRP is able to combat the negative effects of these concerns through five core initiatives: Park Reclamation and Beautification, Community Garden Design Excellence Program, Community Outreach, Environmental Education Programming, and MillionTreesNYC Tree Planting and Stewardship.

As a permanent operational partner with local communities and city agencies, NYRP supplies labor, materials, project design and management, and environmental educational programs throughout the city's green spaces. NYRP has removed more than 1,900 tons of garbage and debris from New York City parks and public spaces; created Swindler Cove Park on the Harlem River, on the site of what was once an illegal dumping ground; planted more than 200,000 trees as part of MillionTreesNYC, a public-private partnership between the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and NYRP; undertaken the care of Fort Washington Park, Fort Tryon Park, Highbridge Park, Bridge Park, and Roberto Clemente State Park; saved 114 community gardens from commercial development; and served thousands of youth and families with after-school and school-day outdoor learning and public programs.

So Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing my good friend Bette Midler for all her contributions to our parks and such a remarkable and impressive organization like the New York Restoration Project who, under the leadership of Executive Director Drew Becher, has transformed and beautified the parks and community gardens of my district and the city of New York.

#### PRESIDENT MA OF TAIWAN

#### HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, President Ma of Taiwan will celebrate the one-year anniversary of his taking office on May 20th, 2009. In just one year, the Harvard-educated President has accomplished so much to improve Taiwan's standing on the world stage.

The latest of these accomplishments is Taiwan's acceptance as an official observer at the World Health Assembly that will take place later this month in Geneva. The World Health Assembly, which is part of the World Health Organization, will finally give Taiwan's 23 million citizens a voice at this forum. This is possible because of President Ma's blossoming relationship with mainland China.

In April, officials from China and Taiwan participated in the Chiang-Chen Talks. The talks resulted in the signing of the following agreements: (1) "Agreement on Joint Cross-Strait Crime-fighting and Mutual Judicial Assistance" (2) the "Cross-Strait Financial Cooperation Agreement" and (3) the "Supplementary Agreement on Cross-Strait Air Transport." All of these agreements will result in improved coordination between the Taiwan