

clusters, the Air Force Longevity Award with four oak leaf clusters, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, NCO Professional Military Education Ribbon with oak leaf cluster, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Service Long Tour Ribbon with oak leaf cluster, Air Force Overseas Service Short Tour Ribbon with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Training Ribbon, Vietnam Service Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with two oak leaf clusters, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm and device, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Mr. Acree and his family returned to Chowchilla, California after he retired. He was employed as the Utility Systems Supervisor for the City of Chowchilla. Mr. and Mrs. Acree have four sons and six grandchildren. Their two youngest sons currently serve in the Air Force. Mr. Acree is a Life Member of Chowchilla Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9896. He is serving as the vice-president of the "Sons of Thunder" bike club and is a member of "This Ain't Your Mamma's Church" biker church.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Robert Acree upon being named as a "Distinguished Life Member" by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 9896. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Acree many years of continued success.

HONORING COAL MINERS FROM UPPER BIG BRANCH MINE IN WEST VIRGINIA

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1236, which honors the coal miners who perished in the Upper Big Branch Mine—South in Raleigh County, West Virginia, extends condolences to their families, and recognizes the valiant efforts of emergency response workers at the mine disaster.

On April 5, America witnessed the worst coal mining disaster in 40 years when an explosion occurred at the Upper Big Branch—South Mine. Twenty-nine miners were killed in this tragedy, and my thoughts and prayers go out to their families, friends and colleagues during this difficult time.

I also would like to commend the rescue teams who bravely risked life and limb to search for missing miners after the disaster, and thank the volunteers who supported the community through this tragedy.

I feel strongly about the concerns of the mining industry because I was born and raised in West Virginia, where my father as a U.S. Senator, was known as one of the best friends a miner ever had. There is no question that mining has been a dangerous job. Today, coal mining is rated among the most dangerous jobs in America. It does not have to be that way.

Chairman MILLER has assured me that the Education and Labor Committee will be investigating any possible health and safety violations at the Upper Big Branch—South Mine to see if laws were circumvented and miners' lives were recklessly put at risk. If that was indeed the case, those responsible must be held accountable.

Too many families have suffered the loss of a loved one in a mining disaster. We in Congress need to fully investigate the factors that led to these tragedies. We need to investigate the deficiencies in laws, regulations and enforcement that may have contributed to these disasters.

We owe it to the families of miners lost in these disasters and the miners that work every day to take action to prevent these accidents from happening again. I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1236.

HONORING THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S MEN'S GYMNASTICS TEAM ON WINNING FOURTH NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Michigan's men's gymnastics team on winning the 2010 NCAA national championship.

Michigan won the championship with a score of 360.500, edging defending champion Stanford, 359.800, and Oklahoma, 357.050. This is the program's fourth national championship, and Michigan's first varsity team championship since 2005.

The national championship capped a successful season for the team, as well as individuals. Chris Cameron won the NCAA men's all-around championship and Mel Anton Santander finished third. Michigan swept the high bar, with Ryan McCarthy, Ian Makowske, and Mel Anton Santander finishing first, second, and third, respectively. In all, Michigan finished with the team championship, all-around championship, seven individuals earning all-America honors, and the Elite 88, an award given to the competing student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade point average, which went to Ben Baldus-Strauss, a chemistry honors student.

In addition to its considerable athletic achievements, the team serves as a model of community service and academic excellence. The 20-member team is comprised of individuals from 13 States and Singapore. Members study topics as diverse as American culture, English, economics, political science, biology, and aerospace, biomedical, and mechanical engineering. The program also consistently has one of the highest team grade point averages at the University and is a leader in community service and volunteerism.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the student-athletes and coaches of the 2010 NCAA national championship-winning Michigan men's gymnastics team: Ben Baldus-Strauss, Syque Caesar, Kent Caldwell, Chris Cameron, David Chan, Devan Cote, Steve Crabtree, Phillip Goldberg, Adam Hamers, Garrett Hamers, Evan Heiter, Douglass Johnson, Jr., Thomas Kelley, Torrance Laury, Joe Levine, Ian Makowske, Ryan McCarthy, Mel Anton Santander, Rohan Sebastian, Andrew Vance, and coaches Kurt Golder, Geoff Corrigan, Xiao Yuan, and Ralph Rosso.

62ND ANNIVERSARY OF ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 62nd anniversary of Israel's independence. I have always been deeply moved by the duality of Israel's independence celebration, at once both sorrowful and triumphant.

On one day—Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day—Israel honors those who gave their lives defending their families, their neighbors, their communities, their people, and their country. Israel today recognizes even those who died before the state was officially declared in 1948. This year Israel honors 22,684 soldiers killed in the line of duty, and another 1,750 civilian victims of terrorism. These brave men and women died in service to the foundational belief of Israel: That in their ancient homeland the Jewish people can live in freedom.

But by the dawn of the morning following Yom Hazikaron, Israel exchanges tears of sadness for tears of joy, celebrating their official day of independence—the declaration of the State of Israel by David Ben Gurion in 1948. I know of no other country that combines such deep sadness with such unrelenting delight.

For 62 years now, Israel has stood as a vibrant democracy and a symbol of hope for millions of people around the world. For 62 years Israel has modeled a society where determination and passion, and an emphasis on social progress and education, can build a productive nation.

Madam Speaker, I have been to Israel 14 times as a Member of Congress, and every time I go I encounter ordinary citizens and government officials alike who are genuinely dedicated to living up to the ideals of Israel's independence. I am always impressed by the Israelis' intense desire to persevere. Israel deserves to be secure and prosperous, to live in peace with its neighbors, and to live free from fear and violence.

I look forward to returning to Israel in the near future, and on congratulating Israel again on its 63rd birthday . . . and its 64th, and 65th, and all the years after that.

HONORING DARWIN CREQUE AND HIS BROTHER, DR. LAURITZ CLUDGEMANN CREQUE

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of two distinguished native sons of my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, who during their productive lives distinguished themselves in the fields of medicine, education, literature, history, and public service. It is my honor to remember the lives of Darwin Creque and his brother, Dr. Lauritz Cludgemann Creque who attended Morehouse College and who are being honored there this week with the establishment of a memorial