

Between April and July 1970, the United States and North Vietnamese forces fought for control of Fire Support Base Ripcord in the A Shau Valley. July of that year saw the heaviest fighting for control of the base. This battle would mark the last major confrontation between U.S. ground forces and North Vietnamese forces in the war. Then-Captain Spaulding was tasked with planning and coordinating all air assets involved in the orderly withdrawal of the two U.S. Companies being besieged at the Base by elements of four North Vietnamese Army divisions.

Although our soldiers fought bravely they were significantly outnumbered by the North Vietnamese. By July 22nd, the United States' position became completely untenable; and due to heavy anti-aircraft fire from the enemy, extraction of U.S. soldiers had to be suspended. Throughout the night the U.S. troops hung on often being forced to engage in hand to hand combat to defend themselves.

On July 23rd—the last day of the battle—Captain Spaulding voluntarily left the safety of Camp Evans to provide direct aid to his besieged comrades and over the course of the day—at great personal risk—he helped safely extract the final U.S. personnel.

According to the official account, Captain Spaulding “took command of a Scout helicopter to locate, mark and direct fire from all available land and air assets against enemy positions. While taking intense fire, Captain Spaulding directly exposed himself to enemy fire while marking enemy positions with smoke grenades. . . . Once the grenades were exhausted Captain Spaulding fired his sidearm at the enemy until his helicopter was rendered inoperable by the mounting enemy fire. When the pilot refused to continue the mission, Captain Spaulding procured a second helicopter. The second aircraft was subsequently damaged by enemy fire, as was the third helicopter that Spaulding obtained. In a fourth helicopter, Captain Spaulding returned to the area of operations to successfully continue the evacuation of the two besieged companies by continuing to draw fire upon himself and the aircraft.”

Major General Benjamin L. Harrison who was Colonel and Commanding Officer of the 3rd Brigade 101st Airborne Division at the time of the Battle of Ripcord, described Captain Spaulding as: “. . . one of the most outstanding combat officers I have observed during my two tours in Vietnam . . . his battle skill was instrumental in saving many lives that day.”

Four years ago, with the support of some of Colonel Spaulding's old comrades, I petitioned the Army to recommend the Colonel for the Congressional Medal of Honor for his action during the Battle of Ripcord. Although the Army concurred that Colonel Spaulding's actions were extraordinary and worthy of suitable recognition, they declined to support the petition for the Congressional Medal of Honor. I personally believe that the Army is wrong in this instance. There is no doubt in my mind that Colonel Spaulding earned the Congressional Medal of Honor that day. Nevertheless, it is my distinct honor to congratulate Colonel Spaulding on his receiving the Distinguished Service Cross.

In addition to his military honors, Colonel Spaulding's leadership and mentoring abilities has been recognized by his peers through membership in the Army Ranger Hall of Fame,

the Officer Candidate School (OCS) Hall of Fame, Distinguished Member of the Regiment (506th Airborne Infantry Regiment), and the presidency of the 82nd Airborne Division Association.

Even after his retirement from the Army, and with the unwavering support of his wife Micki, Colonel Spaulding continued to serve his community, state and country. To his community he donated his time to coach the local high school golf team, and he frequently speaks at various school and association events about the value of military service. To his beloved state of Indiana, he has shared his extensive military experience and knowledge by helping to train the men and women of the Indiana National Guard. To his country, he was instrumental in launching a new company dedicated to national defense and the training of veterans.

Colonel Spaulding's life of service, and his unselfish heroism and acts of bravery while in combat, are an inspiration to all Americans. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing this outstanding Hoosier! Thank you and congratulations, Colonel.

IN HONOR OF THOMAS L.P.
O'DONNELL OF HINGHAM, MA

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Thomas L.P. O'Donnell, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to his hometown of Hingham, MA, and to commend him for over fifty years of dedicated service to his community.

Tom is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School. He was elected First Marshall of his class and has served as an elected director of the Harvard Alumni Association as well as an Overseer of Harvard University. He currently is a retired partner at Ropes & Gray LLP in Boston, where he has practiced law since 1949.

Tom and his wife Carol moved to Hingham in 1955, just three years after they were married. Tom served as a member and chairman of the Advisory Committee and of the Board of Appeals. Mr. O'Donnell was first elected Town Moderator in 1967, and he has been re-elected every year since then. Mr. O'Donnell served in the United States Navy during World War II, and was recalled during the Korean War, attaining the rank of Lieutenant.

Tom has been active in educational, charitable, and civic affairs. He helped in the effort by the Trustees of Reservations to acquire World's End in 1967. This is perhaps the most visited place in Hingham. In 2001, both Tom and his wife, Carol, were recipients of the Alexis de Tocqueville award from the United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

Mr. Speaker, Tom is known for his quick wit, his sense of humor, his loyalty to his friends, and his unquestioned integrity. He had the good fortune to marry Carol in 1952, and they were married for 58 years. They raised four children and have been blessed with nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to take the floor of the House today to join with Thomas L.P. O'Donnell's family, friends, and con-

temporaries to thank him for his remarkable service to his community of Hingham and to the United States of America.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND
LEGACY OF DR. LEROY T. WALKER

G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of my dear friend, American coaching legend and pioneer, Dr. LeRoy T. Walker or “Doc” as he was affectionately known. Dr. Walker's life touched countless athletes, students and loved ones worldwide before he entered into eternal rest on April 23, at the age of 93.

Born the youngest of 13 children and the grandson of slaves, Dr. Walker's inherent goodwill and tenacity catapulted him to unknown heights, breaking athletic records and color barriers. He excelled at Benedict College as an honor student and varsity tri-athlete in football, basketball and track. Initially, Dr. Walker sought to pursue a career in medicine, but due to extremely long wait lists at medical colleges that would admit African-Americans, he chose another path instead. With his heart set on service, he went on to earn a master's in health and physical education from Columbia University and a doctorate in exercise physiology and biomechanics from New York University.

Dr. Walker knew that his education was not only for his personal betterment, but would benefit his surrounding community as well. Instead of accepting lucrative offers upon graduating, he chose to use his skills in academia in hopes of extending the same opportunities afforded to him.

He began his coaching career in 1945 as the basketball and football coach for N.C. College for Negroes—now known as North Carolina Central University (NCCU). He later founded the college's first track and field team as a way to keep his athletes in shape during the off-season.

It was during his tenure at NCCU, I had the pleasure of meeting and befriending the man with a golden heart. Upon the news of his passing, many of his former athletes expressed condolences, referring to him as the smartest individual they've ever known and always “ahead of the game.”

At the Montreal games in 1976, Dr. Walker placed NCCU and Durham, North Carolina in the public eye, when he was named the first African-American U.S. Olympic track and field coach. The American team brought home 22 medals that year. In total, Dr. Walker coached and mentored 11 Olympic medalists, 30 national champions, and 100 All-Americans.

A man dedicated to both athletics and academics, he served as Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor of the NCCU. His relentless devotion to students in the classroom and on the sports fields compelled the NCCU to grant Dr. Walker the title of Chancellor Emeritus of the university.

In 1986, his dynamic leadership and knack for coaching athletes into medalists led to his induction into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. He later would be named U.S. Olympic Committee President in 1996, the first African-