

projects, hosting weekly community discussions to address littering, drug use, gang activity and the importance of community involvement.

Ms. Haywood's sense of obligation to improve her community and educational opportunities for others led her to tutor her peers after school. Her philosophy is, "knowledge is power and the more you know the more power you have." She participates in various school activities including the Alpha Kappa Alpha Bolivar County Community Humanity Involvement Club, Coahoma Community College Tr-County Workforce Job Shadowing Program, and other civic organizations.

After completing her Bachelor of Science degree, Kendra has plans to pursue a professional degree in Clinical Psychology at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Ms. Haywood has expressed a desire to become part of Teach for America as a way of giving back to a rural community and inspiring youth, because Teach for America has had a profound impact in her education.

Ms. Kendra Haywood has three siblings, Kenneth Jr., Darius, and Jarvis. She says they, along with her parents, had a positive impact on her desire to reach for the stars in life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Kendra Haywood as the valedictorian of Broad Street High School Class of 2012.

IN HONOR OF THE CONEJO VALLEY CHAPTER OF MILITARY ORDER OF THE WORLD WARS, THE SGT. MICHAEL A. DIRAIMONDO CHAPTER OF MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART, AND THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE BALL

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2012

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of the Conejo Valley Chapter of Military Order of the World Wars, the Sgt. Michael A. DiRaimondo Chapter of Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Red, White and Blue Ball.

For 27 years, the Military Order of the World Wars has presented its Red, White and Blue Ball to perpetuate the spirit of patriotism. This year, the Conejo Valley Chapter is joined by the Sgt. Michael A. DiRaimondo Chapter of Military Order of the Purple Heart. Army Sgt. DiRaimondo was Ventura County's first casualty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was 22 years old.

I did not know Michael, but I have become close friends with his exceptional family.

Each year, the Ball honors an individual who has demonstrated exceptional patriotism and who has made significant contributions to the community.

The U.S. Navy will be honored at this Saturday's event. This is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Navy SEALs and Captain Jason Ehret, USN SEAL, will be the honorary chair. The 2012 Patriotic Citizen of the Year is Colonel John Fer, who served in the U.S. Air Force for 28 years.

It is fitting that the Ball will be held at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. It will

start with an open reception followed by a formal opening ceremony. Dinner, dancing to music of the Harry Selvin Band, and silent and live auctions will round out the evening.

It is a festive affair, with military personnel—active, reserve and retired—wearing dress uniforms. Civilian men wear dark suits or tuxedos and civilian women wear formal or cocktail dresses.

Auction proceeds will support activities such as Ventura County and Thousand Oaks Veterans Day ceremonies, Conejo Valley Memorial Day ceremony, Thousand Oaks Youth Leadership Conference, Junior ROTC awards, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.

Mr. Speaker, I attended the first Red, White and Blue Ball 27 years ago and am proud to have been presented the Gold Patrick Henry Award at the 1989 Ball.

I am leaving Congress at the end of this session, which will change my relationship with the Military Order of the World Wars and the Sgt. Michael A. DiRaimondo Chapter. I am confident, however, that the relationship will remain strong and grow in the coming years.

I am equally confident that my colleagues join me now in honoring the Conejo Valley Chapter of Military Order of the World Wars, the Sgt. Michael A. DiRaimondo Chapter of Military Order of the Purple Heart, Captain Jason Ehret, the U.S. Navy SEALs, and the Ball's 2012 Patriotic Citizen of the Year, Colonel John Fer. Thank you all for your service.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CITY OF SAN MATEO'S ADOPTION A COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, 327TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 1ST BRIGADE, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION.

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2012

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the City of San Mateo for its adoption in 1968 of A Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

In 1967 a soldier in Vietnam named Sgt. Joe Artavia wrote a letter to his sister, Linda, asking her to convince the City of San Mateo to adopt his company. He thought an adoption would lift troop morale "as high as the sky." Linda rallied the community to support her brother and his comrades. Within three months the San Mateo City Council passed a resolution to adopt the company.

Tragically, Artavia was killed three weeks later rescuing a fellow soldier, and the people of San Mateo joined together in mourning. Artavia's death solidified San Mateo's commitment to its adopted company and, in fact, in 1972 San Mateo was the only city in the United States to hold an official homecoming parade honoring Vietnam veterans.

Since that time the city has continuously supported A Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, visiting them in peacetime, establishing pen-pals and sending care packages. The city has served as a model for other towns, cities or counties to adopt individual military units throughout the country.

San Mateo's adopted company has recently returned from a 12-month tour of duty in Af-

ghanistan and will be redeployed for a third tour. In commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the welcome-home parade for the veterans returning to San Mateo, the city is holding another welcome home parade and festival to honor past and present soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division who have put their lives on the line for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House of Representatives join me in honoring the city of San Mateo for supporting A Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and its brave men and women who filled it ranks, especially those who gave their lives for our freedom.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE MUSCOGEE RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 21, 2012

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the members and supporters of the Muscogee Retired Educators Association (MREA) as they commemorate its 50th anniversary this year. A celebration luncheon will be held on Friday, June 22, 2012 at 11:30 a.m. at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center in Columbus, Georgia.

MREA was established as the Muscogee Retired Teachers Association (MRTA) in 1962 when Mr. Boyd B. Littlejohn and a small group of other retired Muscogee teachers decided to organize themselves in order to better attend to the needs and concerns of retired teachers in the area. Mr. Littlejohn, a retired principal who served St. Elmo, Clubview, and McIlhenney schools, became the first president before going on to serve as president of GRTA from 1965–1967.

In its early existence, members of MRTA would meet in their homes or in churches. Ms. Ruth Plumb and Mrs. Rex Lavender served as presidents until MRTA became inactive for a short period. In 1972, J. Zeb Morris, retired principal of Waverly Terrace and jazz pianist, became president. After this, MRTA began to grow in membership and was able to improve its service to retired teachers.

Throughout the years, the association has been led by distinguished retired educators such as Lucile David, Lyda Hanna, Nathan Hunter, Brice Carson, Jack Shepard, Laura Haygood, L.B. Hickson, Sumter Blackmon, John Little, O'Neal Hendricks, Kathryn Hunt, Esto Smith, Anita B. Walters, Dr. Jeanette Marshal and its current president, Diane Boss, among others.

Mr. Nathan Hunter also served as GRTA President from 1979–1980 and Mrs. Lucile Hunter, his widow and an MRTA member, presented his GRTA gavel to the MREA. The gavel is a treasured keepsake and is passed on to each succeeding MREA president.

In 1998, the GRTA changed its name to the Georgia Retired Educators Association to include all those who work in the field of education and are under the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia. MRTA followed suit, changing its name to the Muscogee Retired Educators Association (MREA), as it is called today.

In addition to having served as teachers, mentors, and role models throughout their career, members of MREA continue to serve the