

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY POLICE OFFICER MELVIN SANTIAGO

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when danger occurs, when disaster happens, when 911 is called, it is the first responders who heed the emergencies.

While most of us flee danger, the men and women who are the thin blue line head toward danger.

They are America's finest.

They are the peace officers.

Officer Melvin Santiago was just 23 when he was gunned down and assassinated for sport by a fugitive, an outlaw.

Santiago was going about his duties as a Jersey City, New Jersey police officer responding to a disturbance at a local drugstore.

When he arrived he was shot multiple times before even exiting his patrol car.

The name of the cold blooded killer who murdered rookie Jersey City police officer, Melvin Santiago shall not be mentioned.

This cowardly murderer thought he would become famous by killing a cop.

The gunman was lying in wait to murder a peace officer.

The criminal was killed by police.

He has gone to meet his Maker.

I doubt the meeting will be pleasant.

Officer Santiago wanted to fight crime and protect the citizens in the toughest neighborhoods.

He wanted to make a difference.

The west section of the city was where he thought he could do that best.

This was not just a job for Officer Santiago; it was a goal he had worked toward.

He excelled in his entrance exam with a score of 98.

This first responder wanted to be like his Uncle Frank, a retired detective.

Santiago looked up to his uncle and often sought his advice.

Officer Santiago graduated from the police academy in December, patrolling the area that he knew he could help turn around, when his life was stolen from him by a worthless criminal.

Law enforcement officers are a special kind.

They put their lives on the line every single day to ensure the safety of their communities.

There aren't many other professions where a person willingly puts themselves at risk on a daily basis in order to protect others.

Mr. Speaker, as a former prosecutor and criminal court judge in Texas for over 25 years, I have known a lot of men and women who have worn the badge—the shield—or the star over their heart.

These are symbols of their willingness to put our safety above theirs.

Unfortunately, I have known and attended funerals of first responders like Santiago who gave their lives in an effort to make our communities safer.

We as a society should never forget the true sacrifice first responders and their families make for our nation.

Officer Santiago went above and beyond to make his hometown of Jersey City, the state of New Jersey, and his country a better place.

Over a thousand officers joined Officer Santiago's family and friends to honor his life and lay him to rest on July 18th, where he was posthumously promoted to detective and given the Jersey City Police Department Medal of Honor.

In his short time on the squad, he quickly gained the respect of many.

We remember his hard work and commitment to family and community.

I commend Detective Melvin Santiago for his service to the people of New Jersey.

Our thoughts and prayer are with Jersey City Detective Melvin Santiago's family, the local peace officers, and the community of Jersey City.

Peace officers stand between the law and the lawless.

Peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence between the fox and the chickens.

Mr. Speaker, peace officers are a rare breed.

Melvin Santiago was one of those individuals.

General George Patton said it quite appropriately when talking about his young troops killed in battle: While we mourn the loss of these men. We should thank the Good Lord that such men ever lived.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF STEPHEN BERO AND HIS OUTSTANDING IMPACT IN THE WARREN-NEWPORT COMMUNITY

HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor Stephen Bero, an exceptional public servant who, for more than 20 years, worked in library administration and for the last nearly 10 served years as the Executive Director of the Warren-Newport Public Library District (WNPLD) in Gurnee, IL.

When Steve formally retires at the end of July, he will complete what has been a truly remarkable career in service to his community. During his tenure as Executive Director, Steve presided over the WNPLD during a period of remarkable growth and financial stability. Steve successfully shepherded an \$8.7 million expansion and renovation project, securing a AA+ bond rating from Standard & Poor's as well as favorable financing options that made the project possible.

In addition to his many noteworthy financial accomplishments, Steve fostered an incredibly positive environment at the library that earned the recognition and appreciation of his colleagues and the surrounding community. Steve's colleagues noted his successful leadership during the construction, along with his decision to reinstate the Youth Services department.

Under Steve's stewardship, WNPLD has become one of the most popular public libraries in all of Lake County.

In a fitting conclusion to Steve's tenure at WNPLD, the Illinois Library Association named him the 2014 Librarian of the Year. The entire Warren-Newport community is lucky to have enjoyed Steve Bero's service.

IN TRIBUTE TO JENNY CONTOIS

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep gratitude to pay tribute to a colleague, a friend, and a trusted deputy, Jenny Contois, who retired last month after serving seven and half years as my District Director in Connecticut's Second District.

Even more than a traditional District Director for a Member of the House, I considered Jenny to be a Co-Member of Congress. Whenever I was called to Washington for legislative duty, I had unshakable confidence in Jenny's abilities to handle all challenges in Connecticut. Jenny's executive experience, honed over 15 years as First Selectwoman of Colchester prepared her to lead my Connecticut office and to expand her area of responsibility from one town to 64 towns of the Second District.

Jenny combined a passionate commitment to public service with an unshakable determination to solve problems that lay before her. When it came to finding a loan for a struggling small business, securing a rural development grant for a town in need, badgering a recalcitrant federal agency to fulfill a previous obligation, or begging and borrowing to get an Army Corps boat to dredge a coastal harbor, Jenny's tenacity was unparalleled and her success rate unmatched.

At no time did Jenny shine brighter than during a crisis. Whether in the aftermath of a winter storm that left residential and commercial power lines down or in the wake of a summer storm that brought extensive flooding to our shores, Jenny rose to the challenge time and time again. Immediately after a blizzard or tempest hit, Jenny would work by my side to rally fellow municipal leaders and emergency responders to expedite the assessment and repairs. After the storms subsided, she worked painstakingly with families and businesses to help them secure the recovery funds and assistance they so desperately needed.

She accomplished all of this with a winning smile and a hearty laugh. By the time that her seven and a half years as District Director had concluded, Jenny in many ways had evolved from the First Selectwoman of Colchester to the First Selectwoman of eastern Connecticut.

This weekend, Jenny's many colleagues, friends, and family will celebrate her service to the Second District of Connecticut at a gathering in her hometown. Jenny will spend her duty earned retirement with her beloved husband Frank, her daughter Amy, and her latest arrival, her grandson Jack.

I will miss Jenny's day-to-day counsel and friendship in the future, but I am heartened and grateful to remember her invaluable assistance in launching my new office almost eight years ago and achieving the success we had together.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting one of eastern Connecticut's finest, Jenny Contois.