

successful appointment of the first Hispanic Associate Justice to the United States Supreme Court, the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor. The nomination and appointment of our fellow New Yorker to the Supreme Court earlier this year is one in which our nation should take pride—for it broke down ethnic and gender barriers that will forever open the doors to future generations of Americans. I congratulate Justice Sotomayor on her appointment.

As this year's National Hispanic Heritage Month comes to an end, please join me in proudly honoring Hispanic Americans for their countless contributions to our nation.

IN HONOR OF PATROL OFFICER
JAMES SIMONE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Patrol Officer James Simone, a Cleveland Division of Police officer, who is one of just 12 officers to have been honored at the 2009 Police Service Awards.

Officer Simone was born on Cleveland's Eastside and attended St. Thomas Aquinas Elementary School. His family later moved to Lakewood, Ohio in 1966 where Officer Simone graduated from Lakewood High School. In 1968 Officer Simone joined the U.S. Military's 101st Airborne Paratrooper unit during the Vietnam War and received two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars for his service. After returning to Cleveland, Officer Simone became an officer for the Cleveland Police Department at the age of 25.

Officer Simone has now served the residents of Cleveland, Ohio as a police officer for 36 years in the capacity of a homicide detective, member of the SWAT team, undercover agent and currently serves as a patrolman for Cleveland's second district. Throughout his career, Officer Simone has been shot, stabbed and run over numerous times, and despite it all, he continues to serve as a dedicated officer.

While it is not the first award for the decorated Officer Simone, it is his heroic actions on January 10th, 2009 that has earned Officer Simone the honor of being named one of America's Top Police Officers this month. On that night, a woman fell through the ice-covered Cuyahoga River and was unable to get out of the freezing water. Officer Simone arrived at the scene and when a life-preserver failed as a rescuing device, he risked his life and jumped into the water to save the victim. Both the woman and Officer Simone suffered from hypothermia but survived because of his selfless and heroic decision.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Patrol Officer James Simone who has been the awarded an honorable mention in the 2009 Police Service Awards. While his heroic actions on January 10th, 2009 have earned him this honor, the residents of Cleveland have been awarded with Officer Simone's 35 years of dedicated service.

HONORING JOSEPH C. WEEKS,
HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Joseph C. Weeks, Sr. This Friday Joe will receive the "2009 Great Brooksvillian of the Year Award". Created in 2002, this award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a sincere commitment to the history, culture, and economy of the Brooksville community.

Born and raised in Brooksville, Joe temporarily left his hometown to serve his country in World War II and to attend college at the University of Florida. In 1951, upon his graduation, he returned to Brooksville to help his brother run the family business, Weeks Hardware; which has been a Brooksville staple since 1916. To this date, Weeks Hardware is considered the oldest existing business in Hernando County.

Aside from running a successful business, Mr. Weeks is a founding member of two prominent Brooksville organizations; the Brooksville Rotary Club and the Brooksville Downtown Development Organization, the latter of which he served as Vice-President and Treasurer. He also served as Vice-President and Treasurer for the Jaycees and was an active member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. In recognition of his business successes, he was awarded the Independent Businessman of the year by the Republican Club. Additionally, he holds the unofficial distinction of being the oldest living member of the local American Legion Chapter.

Madam Speaker, Joseph C. Weeks, Sr. has demonstrated steadfast dedication to the Brooksville community. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating him on this momentous occasion.

TRIBUTE TO AMELIA BOYNTON

HON. PARKER GRIFFITH

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. GRIFFITH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Amelia Platts Boynton. Mrs. Boynton is member of the civil rights group that formulated strategies for nonviolent social resistance in Alabama and is most widely known as an activist and organizer for the march over the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL.

Mrs. Boynton was a proud supporter of Dr. Martin Luther King and used her home in Selma as a center for Selma's civil rights battles, which was used by King and his lieutenants, Congressmen and attorneys from around the nation, to plan the demonstrations known as the "Selma to Montgomery Marches".

On March 7, 1965, during a march which later became known as Bloody Sunday, Boynton was viciously attacked. Following that event, her character and courage helped lead to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Mrs. Boynton is Vice Chairwoman of the International Schiller Institute. She is a 98-

year-old author, playwright, speaker and organizer, speaking out publicly for justice, and inspiring people of all ages, nations, and backgrounds.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate Amelia Boynton on a remarkable career and a heroic life and wish her the best as she continues to be an influential civil rights pioneer.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, I was not present for 3 recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: roll No. 772—"yea"; roll No. 773—"yea"; roll No. 774—"yea."

A TRIBUTE TO THE VISION OF
CHILDREN FOUNDATION

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the Vision of Children Foundation. The Vision of Children Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the funding of innovative clinical and translational research into vision disorders and creating effective therapies. The Foundation supports scientists at top universities and academic medical centers worldwide who are involved in the most advanced and promising research.

According to the World Health Organization, globally more than 161 million people are visually impaired, including 1.4 million blind children below age 15. In the United States alone, over 1 million children suffer from vision impairment, a loss of vision that makes it hard or impossible to perform daily tasks without specialized adaptation, and which cannot be corrected to a "normal" level. These children face technological and socially-imposed obstacles that make it difficult to succeed in life.

The challenges of living with visual impairment are all too real for Sam and Vivian Hardage, founders of the Vision of Children Foundation. Their son, Chase, now 20 years old, was diagnosed with ocular albinism (OA) as an infant. OA is an inherited disorder in which the eyes suffer from deficient amount of melanin and pigment, resulting in reduced visual acuity, or Nystagmus, and sensitivity to sunlight. The Hardages were told that there was no cure, and that their son would never be able to play sports or live a normal life. Although Chase's original diagnosis was dire, the reality is that all children with visual impairments have different visual acuities and developmental potential. Many of these individuals, such as Chase, have learned to compensate for their disability and have functional and productive lives.

The Hardages were also stunned to find that no one was doing research into understanding OA, much less treating it. Hereditary vision disorders such as OA, retinitis

pigmentosa, and Ushers syndrome belonged to a group of diseases that were underrepresented and under-funded. It was clear that if there was any hope for finding a cure, funding was needed. In 1990, the Hardages established the Vision of Children Foundation (VOC), with a mission to cure hereditary childhood blindness and vision disorders, and to improve the quality of life of visually impaired individuals and their families. It is the only international, non-profit foundation that funds genetic vision research into ocular albinism and connects affected families all over the world.

Until there is a cure, the VOC works hard to provide educational support and services. Families of the visually impaired often feel isolated and confused, and need support to face day-to-day life. The VOC believes communication between families, educators, healthcare professionals, and researchers who care for these children is critical, and the VOC does all that it can to facilitate the process. The Foundation maintains a worldwide Family Network that provides information and support via constant communication, a biannual newsletter, and an informative Web site. Joining the Family Network enables parents to contact other families who face similar challenges in their geographic region to offer support, and share experiences and local resources and programs. Hundreds of families around the world belong to the VOC Family Network.

The VOC strives to enable thousands of children to have a clear image of the world around them. The foundation continues to gather and share information and tools available to ease the daily challenges that the visually impaired face. For example, VOC developed a computer monitor system designed to accommodate students and adults with low vision. This system works to alleviate the stress and strain that individuals with low vision face when using computer technology. The Foundation donates monitor systems to schools and individuals nationwide.

VOC also partners with book publishers to provide educational books to eye clinics, schools, libraries, doctors' offices, and families, such as the illustrated storybook, "All Children Have Different Eyes." These books help to raise awareness, reduce emotional stress, develop social competencies, improve academic performance, and increase confidence in low vision children.

These efforts to provide support, education and needed assistive resources to children diagnosed with OA have enabled Chase and many others like him to have a more normal and functional life. Chase played varsity football on a championship team and was his high school's first CIF wrestling champion in 28 years. Today, he is a sophomore studying business at Southern Methodist University.

To foster scientific communication and collaboration, VOC hosts a biennial World Symposium on Ocular Albinism and genetic vision disorders. In this forum, the Foundation brings together top vision and genetic eye researchers from around the globe to present and discuss the latest discoveries and research efforts involving OA and related genetic conditions.

This year's World Symposium theme: "Understanding the Pathway—Discovering a Cure" was reflected in each of the presentations. The symposium was highly successful, with researchers agreeing to openly discuss

their latest discoveries and research efforts. Updated results from the successful recent human gene therapy trials provide continued hope for a cure. One of the most important outcomes of the symposium resulted in the formation of an informal, web-based forum for attendees to continue the collaborative relationships that were formed. The Vision of Children Foundation is a leader in fostering these kinds of relationships and helping move science forward.

For eighteen years, the Vision of Children Foundation has been a driving force in the worldwide quest for a cure for genetically caused childhood blindness. Progress and problems are discussed on a regular basis as VOC researchers gather for an invitation only Symposium sponsored by the Vision of Children Foundation. In October 2006, Dr. James Bainbridge of Moorfields Eye Hospital in London attended VOC's European Symposium and described his lab's plan for a human gene therapy trial to cure Leber's Congenital Amaurosis. In March 2008, his team achieved the world's first successful gene therapy trial on a human. Their success was quickly followed by the University of Florida and Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, successfully restoring the vision of nine young adults who were nearly blind. These young people can now see and some can even read lines on an eye chart. All nine patients had the treatment in one eye and all have volunteered to have their other eye treated. I am told that the medical community is equating this discovery to the first heart transplant.

The Vision of Children Foundation is one of the largest sources of non-governmental funding in the world for genetically caused childhood blindness research. The urgent mission of the Vision of Children Foundation is to drive the research that will provide preventions, treatments and cures for children affected by ocular albinism and the entire spectrum of hereditary childhood blindness and vision disorders. The Foundation has invested millions of dollars to support scientific research of diseases of the retina, which cause blindness. I commend the steadfast support of and determination of the Vision of Children Foundation to eradicating genetically caused vision disorders and blindness in children.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SPECIALIST PAUL E. ANDERSEN OF SOUTH BEND

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Specialist Paul E. Andersen of the 855th Quartermaster Company based out of South Bend, Indiana, for his dedication and service to the United States of America. A 24-year-veteran of the armed forces, Paul was completing his second tour of duty in Iraq when he was killed in action on October 1, 2009, by indirect fire of enemy forces. Paul risked everything in service to America, and for that we are eternally grateful.

Paul devoted his life to serving our country. He graduated from Buchanan High School in Michigan in 1979 and enlisted in the Army Reserves in 1985. He worked to better our

armed forces, and was prepared to answer the call for duty whenever his country needed him. In 2003 that time arrived, and Paul served his first tour in Iraq.

Upon his return home, he met his beloved wife Linda at the home of a friend. They fell in love and enjoyed listening to country music, watching old movies, and savoring strawberry milkshakes together. Within months, he proposed to her. Three weeks later they were married. Linda fully appreciated and understood the commitment that Paul had to his country. Paul had recently re-enlisted for six more years of duty, but only with the consent and blessing from Linda. When he asked her how she would feel if he opted to redeploy, she told him, "Go ahead." "I knew I married an Army man," Linda said. Her love for Paul was unwavering, as she said of Paul, "He's my world, my life, my friend."

After beginning his second tour in November 2008, Paul had the honorable duty of serving his country with the 855th Quartermaster, QM, Company, from South Bend, Indiana. Paul's mission in Iraq was to provide both shower and laundry services as well as operating a clothing repair, SLCR, shop supporting Coalition forces based in 10 different locations throughout the Iraqi theater. These locations are often dangerous, but despite the adversities the 855th QM Co. successfully accomplished their SLCR mission. Services of the SLCR team provided great contributions to the welfare and morale of the Soldiers they supported. Without their support, the Soldiers would not have been able to perform their duties and accomplish their own combat missions. It was a necessary job that his family and friends admired. Linda was in constant contact with Paul, and he was even allowed to take a leave in August to celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary. Paul had recently been informed that he was due to come home November 4, 2009.

Paul will be remembered as a devoted husband, father and grandfather. As a civilian, Paul worked at a tube and bending company. He loved to tinker with machines, and was notorious among family members for going overboard on the Christmas lights every year. He lived a life full of love and joy. He is survived by his wife; three biological children; three step-children; one biological grandchild; and eight step-grandchildren.

It is my somber duty to honor and remember Paul and a life cut tragically short. I am saddened by the loss to his family, our community and our country. We were all blessed by his presence and diminished by his passing.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, on October 13, 2009, I was unable to cast votes, due to personal reasons. I was not present for roll-call votes 772 and 773. Had I been present, I would have cast a "yea" vote for final passage of H.R. 3689. Also, I would have cast a "yea" vote on final passage of H.R. 3476.