

District of New Jersey, Ms. Millie Gatto. This hard-working and dedicated woman has served the community of Passaic with distinction for more than 35 years.

Millie was a member of the Passaic City Democratic Club from 1958 through 1986. During that time, Millie served as treasurer, vice president, and president of this organization. While fulfilling her term as treasurer, she also served as treasurer of the Passaic County Democratic Women's Division, of which she later became second vice president.

Today, Millie continues her exemplary work for the people of Passaic. She is currently the municipal leader of the City of Passaic, as well as the vice chairperson of the Passaic County Democratic Committee. Millie is also presently the Passaic County Democratic Commission secretary. Millie has been a virtue to the Democratic Party of New Jersey, but her service to our community extends far beyond her party loyalties.

Born and raised in Passaic, NJ, Millie has taken pride in the preservation of the history of Passaic as a former member of the Aquackanok Landing and Historical Development Commission and a former member of the Passaic Historical Commission. Millie has also reached out to help those less fortunate in all of Passaic County as a former member of the senior advisory council on aging, a former member of the Passaic Human Relations Commission and a former Commissioner of Camp Hope. Millie is currently a member of the Passaic Heart Foundation, fervently trying to raise funds to cure all heart-related diseases.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have such a wonderful woman dedicating so much time to the betterment of our community. I would like to thank Ms. Millie Gatto for representing the Democratic Party of Passaic, as well as for her selfless contributions to those in need in our community. I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Millie for her accomplishments and wishing her the best for the future.

TRIBUTE TO BELLEVILLE SHOE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 1993

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Small Business Week. Small businesses across our Nation deserve to be recognized and honored for their contributions to the economy. Small companies create 2 of every 3 new jobs, produce 40 percent of the gross national product and invent more than half of all our country's technological innovations.

I would like to call my colleagues' attention to a company in my congressional district in Illinois, Belleville Shoe Manufacturing Co. Belleville Shoe was recently named Prime Contractor of the Year for 1993. They were also the recipient of the Defense Quality Excellence Award in 1991.

Belleville Shoe is a family-owned Illinois manufacturing company that was founded in 1904. The company's principal product is U.S. specification combat boots and in fact is this country's oldest continual manufacturer of military footwear. During the gulf war, the com-

pany shipped newly designed desert footwear to U.S. forces faster than any other manufacturer. In the post-cold war era, safety footwear is Belleville Shoe's newest product line.

I would like to congratulate Eric Weidmann and all employees of Belleville Shoe on their hard work and dedication. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing their accomplishments and the achievements of small businesses nationwide.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT

HON. SAM COPPERSMITH

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 1993

Mr. COPPERSMITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

This law will protect America's most fundamental liberty, the first of our freedoms articulated in the Bill of Rights: the free exercise of religion.

In *Employment Division versus Smith*, the U.S. Supreme Court abandoned 30 years of precedent that required the Government to demonstrate a compelling interest before it could restrict the free exercise of religion. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act restores the compelling state interest test to free exercise jurisprudence.

The Court's startling rereading of the free exercise clause in *Employment Division versus Smith* disregarded the importance in our society of religion and our primary need for freedom to practice one's faith. The first amendment to the Constitution provides that every citizen can believe and practice his or her beliefs without fear of casual or unnecessary governmental interference. The new doctrine, recently announced by a divided Court, makes the exercise of religious belief subject to reasonable regulation. Rights so personal and fundamental should not be subject to the whim of the majority—which is exactly the reason why the Framers protected these rights in the Constitution.

The Framers recognized that religious freedom means more than the freedom to believe. It also means the freedom to act upon one's faith as well. This act ensures that neutral laws of general applicability cannot become direct or indirect vehicles to suppress the expression of religious belief.

This act restores the longstanding comprehensive and robust reading to the free exercise clause, which we need now more than ever to protect citizens from the power of the modern state. Many Federal, State and local laws and regulations that can affect religion, such as zoning, historical landmarking, prisons, mandatory autopsies, discrimination, and minority rights, which can become pervasive. Such laws can burden not only small minorities but also many so-called mainline denominations. With this act, laws that burden religious freedom must meet a higher standard, the strict scrutiny test.

With this legislation, the congress will take an important step to restore our first freedom, the free exercise of religion. After *Smith*, not only was our first freedom no longer first, it was scarcely a true and full freedom. This act

brings renewed life to the promise of religious freedom of the first amendment.

TRIBUTE TO WILBUR AND MARY WIRE

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 1993

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur E. Wire who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, last Christmas Eve marked the couple's golden anniversary. It was celebrated by their three children, Jimmy Wire, John and Carole Wire, and Barbara Stacy. The couple's four grandchildren, Keith Wire, Brooke Wire, Gary L. Stacy, and James H. Stacy also joined in the festivities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of how Wilbur and Mary Wire persevered through 50 years of ups and downs, including World War II. I believe it is faithful couples like the Wires that provide a paradigm for their future generations. I would like to take this special opportunity to congratulate them on their anniversary.

MIKE LACROSS HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN HUDSON FALLS

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 1993

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, as you know, I like to single out people who should get a lot more recognition than they do. In fact, they don't really seek recognition. They simply do their job and do it well without a great deal of fanfare. And they add something to the communities in which they live.

Such an individual is Mike LaCrosse of Hudson Falls, NY.

Mike lived for 10 years in New Mexico but returned to his hometown. He's spent the last decade authoring children's fiction, much of which is set in our area. One of his biggest contributions is his role in founding the Feeder Canal Alliance in 1987, a group dedicated to preserving the canal as a park.

Several years ago Mike came to Washington to interview me for the *Moreau Sun*, for whom he worked as a reporter. I was impressed with the way he conducted himself and with his grasp of the issues. The resulting story was fair and thorough. It was rather typical of his work for the *Sun*. It was Mike who broke the story of the Washington County Board of Supervisors revising its weighted voting system in 1992.

Those of us who have looked forward to his articles in the *Sun* were sorry to hear that health problems will force Mike to leave the *Sun* and return to New Mexico. We all hope his health improves enough to allow Mike to return home once again.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all Members to join me in wishing Mike LaCrosse good health, a speedy recovery, and best wishes in whatever he dedicates himself to in the future.