

work each day confident they could put their lives in Colonel Swart's hands. Through Colonel Swart's leadership, four separate multi-functional organizations housed in four separate buildings were consolidated under one roof, therefore increasing effectiveness, productivity and communications.

Colonel Swart's guidance has also been instrumental in providing community service to North Alabama. Over 40 community and family service organizations that enhance the overall quality of life of soldiers, civilians, retirees and their families have benefited from Swart's leadership. The beneficiaries range from a bowling center that received a \$750,000 renovation, to a significant upgrading of the Child Development Center, to drastic assistance given to the neighborhood child rearing center.

Colonel Stewart also took strides during his tenure at AMCOM to advance an environmental program. Swart improved relationships with surrounding communities affected by the Redstone Arsenal Environmental Restoration Program. Additionally, he spearheaded a ground breaking water treatment program which eliminated large quantities of hazardous substances from the water.

Colonel Swart's family is from Clay County, Alabama, the same county in which my family has resided for several generations. During his 26 years of service to the Army, Colonel Swart has made Clay County and all of Alabama proud. We thank him for serving our Nation during his career in the Army and wish him well in retirement.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES A. AHRENS

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 8, 2002

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that a long and exceptionally distinguished career has come to an end. Lt. Col. James Ahrens has retired as Director of Institutional Research from Wentworth Military Academy and Junior College in Lexington, MO.

Lt. Col. Ahrens has led a life of serving his family, community and country. In 1962, he graduated from Grinnell College, Iowa, with a history degree and entered the United States Air Force as a radar controller and public affairs officer. While in the United States Air Force, James received a master's degree in Public Relations from the School of Public Communications at Boston University. He retired from all military service in 1995.

Lt. Col. Ahrens arrived at Wentworth in January of 1982 to teach social science courses in the junior college division. While at Wentworth, he joined the 418th Civil Affairs Company in Grandview, MO, after receiving a direct commission in the United States Army Reserve as a Civil Affairs Officer. Lt. Col. Ahrens mobilized and commanded this unit as it served in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Turkey during Operations Desert Storm and Provide Comfort in 1991. He served as a detachment commander, company executive officer and commander before the end of his tour.

During his years at Wentworth, he served as Assistant/Associate Dean, managing the Junior College from 1989 through academic

year 1994. He served as acting Dean of Continuing Education until January 1995. He was also assigned as Director of Institutional Research from 1995 through May 2001. Lt. Col. Ahrens also coached soccer, track, was a sponsor of the Civil War Living History Club and assisted with academic competition for high school students for a number of years.

Lt. Col. Ahrens is an accomplished historian who has completed a history of Wentworth Military Academy and Junior College from 1947 through 2000. He is also published in Vertical World magazine, which is a history of the United States Air Force Helicopter School.

Lt. Col. Ahrens has distinguished himself as a husband, father, grandfather, teacher and soldier. He has and continues to make his friends and family proud. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in wishing Lt. Col. Ahrens and his family all the best.

SENSE OF HOUSE THAT NEWDOW
V. U.S. CONGRESS WAS ERRO-
NEOUSLY DECIDED

SPEECH OF

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2002

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 459, a resolution condemning the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for ruling that the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional.

The ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals flies directly in the face of Thomas Jefferson's reasoning for the formation of our Nation. In writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson reasoned that all men have been endowed with inalienable rights by God and to defend these rights governments are instituted among men.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Goodwin and Judge Reinhardt do not understand the irony of their decision: without God, according to Thomas Jefferson, there is no American government and thus no 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Judges are supposed to interpret the Constitution and laws passed by Congress: not revise the wisdom of our founding fathers to their own liking. If this harmful judicial attitude is not soon corrected, we may find ourselves condemning judicial decisions to delete text from the Declaration of Independence.

I would like to assure my colleagues and the American people that, although the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals exercises appellate jurisdiction over the State of California, this decision is not indicative of the sentiment of the people of California. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is notorious for the fact that its decisions are overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court more often than any other circuit. I am confident that this decision will, like many others this court has made, be overturned.

The Senate has acted swiftly to condemn this decision. I urge them to back up their rhetoric with action and expedite their approval of the President's Judicial nominations for the five existing vacancies on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals so that similar decisions may be avoided in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak and I urge all my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution.

ON NAMING THE DEER PARK, NEW YORK POST OFFICE FOR RAY DOWNEY, A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 8, 2002

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, on June 30th, I was honored to attend a ceremony where the Post Office in Deer Park, New York was renamed for New York Fire Department Chief of Operations Ray Downey, one of the many firefighters lost in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2002. In fact, Chief Downey was the most senior member of the Fire Department killed that day. As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, this House voted in December to rename the Post Office. I wanted to share my remarks from that day with the House:

Our country has been reunited with the tragedy of September 11th. And we should be. But I want to tell you about something that I experienced on September 12th. Something that has stood out in my mind, above everything else that occurred that week.

It was a unique week in American history—unprecedented tragedy, unprecedented heroism. For me, one moment stands out even more than the evening of September 11th, when I stood with my colleagues on the steps of the Capitol, that we were told was a target of terrorists only hours before, holding hands and singing God Bless America as the sun descended over the dome and over one of America's most horrific days.

A moment stands out even more than September 13th, when I sat with President Bush in the White House Cabinet room and we talked about the battle to come. More than September 15th, when I went with the President to the site of the World Trade Center, where we lost Ray Downey and 3000 innocent victims of terror.

It stands above that evening, when I cast the proudest vote of my career: the vote authorizing the President to do what had to be done for the protection of our children and survival of our values and our way of life.

Of all those extraordinary experiences, one really stands out . . . from September 12th.

I was on the Floor of the House. And we had just heard from CNN or AP that Ray Downey didn't make it. I went to a phone, and I called Ray's daughter, Marie Tortorici. It would be the very first of what turned out to be over 100 condolence calls I would make as a Member of Congress to the families of my constituents who died from terror on September 11th.

"I'm sorry," I told Marie.

And here's what she said: "We still have hope. We still have faith. We are praying and we want you to pray also."

And so, I went back to the floor of the House, and addressed the Congress, and asked them to say a prayer for the Downey family.

In their darkest hour, the Downey family still had hope, still had faith, still had prayer. And this is what Osama bin Laden and those who live in the darkness of nature don't understand about our country, who we are, what are our values, and where we summon our strength.

When I visited with the President on September 14th I saw the destruction the terrorists caused: the twisted metal and the shattered glass and the smoky, acrid ruins. But I also saw the signs of the true America. Rescue workers who had planted tiny American