

TRIBUTE TO NATIONAL TAP
DANCE DAY

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, tap dancing is widely recognized as America's only original form of dance, yet for years it has been in danger of becoming a lost art. I introduced a resolution that established each May 25, as National Tap Day on September 15, 1988. As a result, people have been coming together to celebrate tap through both performance and study and examine the incredible contributions made by legendary dancers such as Howard "Sandman" Sims, the Nicholas Brothers and contemporary dancers such as Gregory Hines.

I chose May 25, as National Tap Dance Day because it is was the birthday of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. Mr. Robinson is credited with bringing this unique art form to perfection. Moreover, he was genuinely talented and well known worldwide for his work in movies and contributions to the art of tap dancing on both stage and film.

Tap dancing has had an influence on other types of American art, including music, vaudeville, Broadway musical theater, and film as well as other dance forms. Presently, Savion Glover is the new young star of the tap dancing profession. He is the youngest man ever to be nominated for a Tony award for his performance. Savion has appeared with Gregory Hines and Tommy Tune on television in *Dance in America: Tap!* He was also served as an inspiration for other young tap artist like the actor Dulé Hill. However, if tap is not encouraged, it runs the risk of losing its popular support. Unless we continue our efforts to preserve tap, we are in danger of losing an art form that is a uniquely American creation.

By passing the resolution designating May 25 as National Tap Dance Day, we in Congress have focused national attention on this great art form. Moreover, people around the country have come to better appreciate tap as an important part of our cultural heritage. I am pleased to know that the enactment of National Tap Dance Day and its annual celebration has served to increase public recognition, and support not only in this country but internationally as well.

EMILY CIAK HONORED FOR ESSAY
ON FREEDOM

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Emily Ciak, a senior at Northwest Area High School in my district, for an essay on freedom that she composed for the VFW's Voice of Democracy program. For this outstanding essay, Emily placed first at the local level in VFW Anthracite Post 283 of Kingston, first place in the District 11 competition and fourth overall in the Department of Pennsylvania finals held in Harrisburg.

I would also like to thank Al Long, a member of Post 283 and chairman of the legislative committee of the Pennsylvania VFW, for bringing Emily's essay to my attention.

I am pleased to call Emily's fine work to the attention of the House of Representatives, and I wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to insert a copy of this essay into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that others may read and be inspired by it as well:

I wake up in the morning to an alarm clock. I will then proceed to shower, eat breakfast, and go to school. After school I usually attend an athletic practice, drama practice, youth group band practice, youth group, or even a club meeting. On weekends I work as a grocery store cashier, and I attend church. If I have time throughout my week, I will hang out with friends, talk on the phone, or go on the Internet. What, you're probably asking, is my point?

Well, the big problem with my life and the life of most young Americans today is that we simply take our lives' freedoms for granted. I don't think about school as a privilege. I don't think about athletics as something that I'm blessed to be involved in. I don't even always think of church as an example of freedom. Why is this?

According to Webster's dictionary, "price always implies that an article in for sale; what a man will not sell he declines to put a price on." Think about that for a second. A price is only on something that is for sale. Well, if it's for sale it must be bought, right?

This is our problem. This is the missing link. We tend to forget that our freedom was bought for us. We tend to disregard the importance of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We forget that freedom is not something that every human being is given automatically at birth. Freedom is something that needs to be bought, most times by lives. Freedom is for sale, but it is something that is not easily placed on the market.

As I go through each day, I hardly ever stop to think why I am privileged to be an American. I take it for granted that I have food on the table, a public education, and the freedom to do what my life as I choose. I think this is something I should change. It is something that Americans need to change. We need to stop our busy lives for a second and start thinking about this price of freedom.

Men and women served our country to make it into the place it is now. They fought for our country, and won for our country. Even today we still have veterans alive that have gone through the war. They know what it's like to be a true patriot, loyal to our country. They know what it's like to see their friends dying in battle next to them. They know what it feels like to have their freedom at risk. We, as the ones who do not know of a life without freedom, need to start appreciating our veterans and start appreciating our war heroes of both the past and present. We need to recognize how precious our freedom is and how at any given second it could be snatched from our hands. We need to give credit where credit is due and stop forgetting that life is a gift.

Now if our freedom was bought for a price, and this price was war and death, then wouldn't it be great if our freedom was forever? If something is bought for a price, it can just as easily be given away or re-sold. Considering that our freedom could be snatched away from us brings up an important responsibility issue. We, as citizens of the United States of America, have the responsibility to make sure our freedom will last. We need to make every effort to stand up for ourselves in the times of danger. We need to take action when our freedom is in jeopardy and we have to remember how precious our freedom really is.

Just as easily as a priced item can be re-sold or given away, it can also just as easily

be preserved and kept by one owner for a very long time and passed on from generation to generation in his/her family line. This, America, correlates with our own duty regarding freedom. We must pass on this gift of freedom that our previous generations have fought for and that our present generations are now preserving for us and for our future generations. We need to teach the younger generations about the importance of our freedom and about the importance of its preservation. Just as freedom is not a birthright, it is also not something that American babies being born today, or at any other time, automatically recognize as a gift to keep. We are the ones that need to pass on this torch of freedom and loyalty to our country. We need to set the precedent and be the example. Freedom does have a high price, and all must know about this.

Yes, I will still wake up to an alarm. I will still attend school. I will play in my youth group's band. However, I have now realized that I must appreciate the fact that I can freely participate in such activities and show others the value of freedom. Thank you, servicemen and servicewomen for allowing me to live a life of freedom; and thank you for paying the price for this freedom.

CHANCE C. MELTON, JR., HERO OF
THE PACIFIC THEATER

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, as Memorial Day draws near, I want to remember one of my constituents, Chance C. Melton, Jr. of Gaffney, South Carolina, whose valor helped save hundreds of sailors from dying in the Pacific.

Chance Melton served in the United States Navy aboard the *USS Pittsburgh* during the latter stages of World War II. During his duty in the Pacific theater, Chance Melton helped rescue survivors of the aircraft carrier *USS Franklin* after it was bombed by the Japanese.

The *Franklin* was attacked early on the morning of March 19, 1945, in enemy waters, shortly before it was to launch an attack on the Japanese mainland. The attack killed 725 men, injured 200 more, and forced roughly a thousand overboard into the Pacific. Chance Melton, as a crew member on the *USS Pittsburgh*, helped pull dozens of sailors out of the water, and later helped as the *Pittsburgh* towed the *Franklin*, which miraculously was still afloat, for three days to get the carrier out of Japanese waters. Melton and his crew mates were under enemy attack throughout their operation, but they achieved their mission. They started the *Franklin* on its long but successful journey back to the Brooklyn Naval Yard. This was the first rescue in naval history to pull a disabled ship out of enemy waters.

For his service, Chance Melton was awarded the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Medal with three Silver Stars, and World War II Victory Medal. He served four years in the Naval Reserve before leaving military service. Chance became successful in textiles, and remains a leader in his community. He helped establish the Cherokee County Veterans' Museum, and has served as Commander of American Legion Post 109 since 1995. At age 85, Chance Melton is one sailor who is still going strong. I am pleased to