

HONORING BELLAIRE HIGH
SCHOOL'S MERIT SCHOLAR
SEMIFINALISTS

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 45 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists at Bellaire High School in Bellaire, Texas. This is the most of any school in Texas and more than all but seven in the Nation.

Every year, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation awards approximately 7,000 scholarships worth \$28 million for undergraduate study. Becoming a National Merit Semifinalist is an extraordinary accomplishment. Some 1.2 million high school juniors enter the competition by taking the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. To become a semifinalist, a student must score high enough on the PSAT to be in the top one percent of all scores in Texas.

Next, the students will compete to become National Merit Finalists. If selected after a rigorous application process, these students will be eligible for one of 2,400 National Merit Scholarships, worth \$2,000. The Merit Scholar winners will be announced next spring.

Having more National Merit Scholar semifinalists than every public and private school in Texas underscores that Bellaire High School is a premiere institution of learning, where students work hard and take pride in their accomplishments. The teachers, school administration, parents, and community are doing an extraordinary job preparing these young men and women to take their place in the world. This is what is possible when teachers demand excellence and parents and students place a high value on academic excellence. Bellaire High reflects a level of academic success that is becoming Houston Independent School District's trademark.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the National Merit Scholar semifinalists at Bellaire High School: Ramsey Ashour, Averille Asprec, Jason Barnard, Adam Block, Patrick Bloom, Andrew Cheung, Jonathan Chung, Lindsay Derman, Kevin Elias, Dan Feng, Brian Foo, Christina Fu, Emily Gray, Michael Hollington, Jane Hu, Ana Islam, Risha Israni, Irwin Law, Dennis Lee, Amy Len, Nicholas Lindsay, Michael Lipnick, Simon Lu, Amir Marouni, Maria McKeenan, Uzochukwu Odili, Jeremy Rahe, Suzanne Sacher, Brett Solomon, Gregory Stoll, Angel Sun, Harriet Sun, Karla Sussman, Andrew Swaffar, Erin Tavagac, Margie Teng, Millie Thomas, David Tsai, Stanley Tsao, Irene Tung, Craig Wellington, Beverly Wind, Diana Yang, Ethan Yeh, and Chendi Zhang.

Additionally, I would like to congratulate another National Merit Scholar semifinalist, Jennifer Guest of Westbury High School, which is also in the 25th Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND RUBEN
DARIO COLÓN

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Rev. Ruben Dario Colón, one of

the longest serving members of Community Board #4 in the Bronx, who will be retiring from the Board this month after years of service.

Born in Puerto Rico, Rev. Colón attended the University of Puerto Rico and the Theological Seminary of Puerto Rico and, in 1947 he married Ms. Ramonita Orabona, with whom he had a son and a daughter.

In the United States, he obtained a bachelor's degree from Adelphi University. He also holds a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran Theological Seminary and a Master of Social Work from Fordham University.

Rev. Colón was ordained in 1950. He has served at Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection since 1959 and became its Pastor in 1968. His ministry is faithfully committed to bringing spiritual enlightenment to the community. In addition, he serves as the highest ranking Hispanic Chaplain of the New York City Police Department and also serves as Chaplain at the Bronx Veterans Administration Hospital.

As a psychiatric social worker, Rev. Colón has provided psychiatric therapy for adults and families at many institutions, including Covenant House and the Bronx Psychiatric Center. He was organizer and President of the New York City Puerto Rican Community Children's Hospital. He is a member of the Board of the Morrisania Diagnostic and Treatment Center of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

The professional, religious and civic organizations to which Rev. Colón belongs, like the honors and awards he has been given are almost beyond counting. Among the many honors bestowed upon him, Rev. Colón is the first Puerto Rican to receive the Silver Medal of the Academic Society of Arts, Science and Literature of France.

Reverend Colón has lived to help those who have needed him. His long and fruitful career as a pastor, counselor, chaplain and community activist has touched thousands of individuals in our community. Reverend Colón has been an outstanding leader and a great role model, not only to the organizations he has served so well but also to the Hispanic community and other religious organizations.

As it is written in Hebrews 6:10 "for God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." The community, too, recognizes him and is honoring him.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Rev. Ruben Dario Colón for his remarkable career serving the community and bringing hope to the many individuals he has touched. While he is leaving Community Board #4, I am confident that Reverend Colón, a wise and talented leader will, continue serving our community.

TRIBUTE TO STANLEY G. TATE—
MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION
POSSIBLE FOR HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS OF FLORIDA'S CHILDREN

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in 1987, with my strong support, the Florida Legislature

created the Florida Prepaid Postsecondary Education Expense Program to allow families to prepay college tuition and housing expenses for their children at a lower rate than the projected costs at the time of enrollment.

Florida was only the second state to try such an innovative program. Today it is a runaway success, thanks largely to the Chairman of the Board of the Florida Prepaid Postsecondary Education Expense Program, Stanley G. Tate, whose brilliant leadership and personal commitment have made Florida's prepaid college tuition program the most successful in the nation.

Stanley Tate deserves the congratulations and thanks of every Floridian, and I join with our community in saluting him. The Miami Herald recently profiled Mr. Tate in a page-one article, which I would like to share with my colleagues.

[From the Miami Herald, Oct. 18, 1998]

COLLEGE CRUSADER—DEVELOPER PAVES ROAD
TO EDUCATION

(By Jack Wheat)

Florida's prepaid college tuition program kicks off its second decade on Monday as the most successful plan of its kind in America, allowing Floridians to pay for a child's future college tuition at today's cheaper rates.

The Florida Prepaid College Program is considered such a good deal that more than 375,000 children, from birth to high school age, were signed up in the first 10 years.

In hindsight, that kind of popularity seems a foregone conclusion. After all, it's possible to buy a contract that will allow a fourth-grader to attend a state university in 2007 for slightly less than what this year's undergraduates pay.

But the program's success is a civic Cinderella story, in which a real-life godfather came in the rescue:

Meet Stanley G. Tate, a millionaire Miami developer whose iron will and deep pockets made a winner out of a little-known program that looked like it was going nowhere when contracts first went on sale in 1988.

"There were a lot of people who were saying it would never fly," said Tallahassee lawyer Philip Blank, general counsel for the program. "But when Stanley was appointed to the board, he took it to mean he needed to do what he would do with his own private business."

Florida was the second state to try a prepaid tuition program. The first, Michigan, was struggling through a troubled start-up. Although the Florida legislature approved the program overwhelmingly in 1987, its staff was instructed to watch its progress closely for signs of trouble.

Tate knew it was sound because he helped design the plan from ground up.

In 1986, Gov. Bob Graham asked him to work with the legislative staff to develop a program like one just started in Michigan. Tate and the staff learned from Michigan's glitches and put together a program of guaranteed prepayment of future university and community college tuition.

The next year, Gov. Bob Martinez appointed Tate to the prepaid college plan board, and he became its first—and so far, only—chairman.

STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN

In 1988, with initial sales significantly lower than he had predicted, Tate feared that the program would die the unceremonious death of new products that are labeled duds.

So he put his business and personal life on hold and started barnstorming. "I went all over the state, from Pensacola on down," Tate said.

During a three-month crusade, he visited local school boards and state education officials, promising he would get program pamphlets to every school that would distribute them to kids to take home to their parents.

"I printed up two million pamphlets," he said.

The fledgling program paid for as many as it could. The plan, starting up with \$600,000 borrowed from a state insurance fund, couldn't pay for them all.

Barnett Bank donated ad agency services, and Tate wrote checks to TV and radio stations around the state to broadcast spots. He paid all his travel costs, too.

He estimates his campaign cost him \$200,000 out of pocket. At first, he called it a loan, but he never sought repayment.

"I can't get him to take state reimbursement to save my life," Blank said.

THOUSANDS SIGN UP

When the first enrollment period ended in January 1989, the Florida Prepaid College Program had sold 58,651 contracts—below Tate's initial expectation of 100,000 but far more than skeptics ever imagined.

Tate, 70, said he had highly personal reasons for his crusade as well as general principle.

Attending the University of Florida in the 1940s was one of the toughest ordeals of his life, he said in an interview last week.

The son of a tung-oil dealer from Miami Beach, he was the first in his family to go to college. He worked at Gainesville's Primrose Inn restaurant for tips and meals. For two years, he couldn't go home for Christmas break; otherwise he would have lost his job.

That experience illustrated how deeply he values a college education.

"I have always said that if this state is going to prosper, we've got to have more of our young people going to college and staying in Florida," Tate said.

As a developer who built a real-estate empire in Florida and South Carolina, he knows that a large pool of highly educated workers is a magnet for industries and corporate operations. They buy prime property and construct upscale facilities and pay well. Their employees buy nice houses, cars and boats, and they get involved in civic and cultural life, making communities stronger, he said.

A POLITICAL FIGURE

He was a case in point. He graduated from UF, came back to Dade, built a home in Bay Harbor Islands, served 20 years in Bay Harbor Islands government as a councilman, vice mayor and mayor. He also became a fixture in Republican politics, but worked comfortably with Democrats, too.

In 1993, President Clinton nominated Tate as chief executive officer of the Resolution Trust Corp., which was charged with cleaning up the national savings-and-loan mess. He spent five months in Washington preparing to move into the job, but returned to Miami when the Senate would not set confirmation hearings.

Tate's critics accused him of trying to get involved in details of agency decision-making on behalf of friends and politicians. Tate, however, believes he was a victim of sniping from insiders who objected to the strong hands-on management methods he believed were necessary to identify and correct problems in the troubled regulatory agency.

In any event, in Tate's mind, all of his other civic achievements pale in significance to the prepaid program.

"When you think of all the many thousands of college educations we've helped make possible, that's a real legacy," he said.

The program succeeds because it lets families work together to the benefit of everybody's children, said Tate, who has enrolled all of his Florida grandchildren.

A MATTER OF MATH

He knew the plan could work after he saw two sets of figures, he said:

From 1967 to 1987, state university tuition rose an average of 7 percent a year. During the same period, stocks and bonds earned an average of 7.5 percent a year. The statistics showed that if parents, grandparents and other benefactors paid into the plan at current tuition rates, a well-run investment would make their money grow enough to cover future tuition increases.

Tate predicts the recent erratic stock and bond markets will stimulate a surge of interest in prepaid tuition this year.

In the past, experts like Mike Powers, whose book *Investing for Your Child's College Education* has just appeared, have recommended prepaid plans for poor money managers. But Powers wrote, "When examined from a purely economic perspective, they're a lousy investment."

But Powers wrote his book during a five-year market boom. By the time it hit bookstores, markets were plunging.

When investors get stockbrokers' reports "and see their value has gone down 15 or 20 percent," Tate said, they'll see new merit in the idea of paying this year's tuition rates to cover college costs that will be incurred up to 22 years from now—when this fall's newborns are college seniors.

But he worries that a souring economy could lead prepaid tuition contract-holders who need the program most to drop out. If recession hits, he fears, thousands of cash-strapped Florida families who are prepaying tuition in monthly installments will let the contracts lapse.

Contract-holders who let their payments lapse get a refund of what they paid in, with no interest. But the contracts cannot be reinstated.

"It's probably the second-most important debt payment you can make, right behind your mortgage payment," Tate said.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING JUSTIFICATION

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, in the midst of political controversy, I rise to thank my colleagues, Chairman JOHN PORTER of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee, the entire Appropriations Committee, and the Speaker for their leadership on the House Labor HHS Appropriations bill, thus disproving the disturbing mischaracterization of this Congressional session, what some have called a "do nothing" Congress. Instead, I am proud to be here today to talk about the historical achievement that has taken place, the fruit of many years of work.

I'd like to thank my colleagues for making medical research funding a priority this year by providing a 15% (\$2 billion) increase for the National Institutes of Health. Over the years, the Labor HHS Appropriations bill has allocated money wisely and responsibly, this legislation is known as a fiscally conservative bill. The few allocations that are made, such as NIH funding, are carefully considered.

It is essential to point out that money invested in basic research cannot be expected to achieve a specific outcome. Instead, we can expect to use such funds to accelerate the pursuit of knowledge. As the new millen-

nium approaches, we are on the cusp of a "golden age" of medical and health discoveries. Additional money will help increase the likelihood that such discoveries will take place. The outcomes will contribute to reducing suffering and improving the quality of life for future generations of Americans and all human beings.

I thank my colleagues for their work and for having the chance to discuss this achievement with you today. I encourage my colleagues to read the detailed justification for an increase in NIH funding which I am submitting for the record.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING

The National Institutes of Health has been operating for many years at funding levels far below its capacity. Many new and exciting research ideas that hold tremendous promise for the prevention and treatment of disease have gone unfunded because of limited dollars, not due to lack of scientific merit. These trends, coupled with the wealth of emerging scientific opportunity, underscore the need to enhance our national investment in the health sciences.

An increase of 23% over FY98 in NIH funding would be required to address scientific opportunity in all of the Institutes under a scenario where budget dollars were unrestrained. The "Omnibus Appropriations" measure provides an historic 15% increase for the NIH. NIH has developed specific action plans for each of its Institutes to guide a significant resource expansion. Although it is impossible to identify which of the lines of scientific investigation will lead to a new treatment or cure, there is no shortage of emerging scientific opportunity which should, as judged by past example, produce positive results to improve the quality of life in this Nation.

For example, in the National Cancer Institute alone, professionals have called for a \$3.19 billion budget in FY99. The House Appropriations proposal of a 9% increase would provide approximately \$2.78 billion for NCI. Richard Klausner, NCI Director, said the difference would mean that, under the full increase, one-third of the agencies' grants would be funded rather than 28% being funded under the latter scenario. Secondly, NCI is considering a major expansion and redesign of its clinical trial system. Funding will affect the speed with which NCI can expand this system so that the trials are faster and more trials can be done. Additional funds would also help bring the clinical trials system up-to-date with technology. Instead of the pencil and paper system in place for over 40 years, the additional increase could help pay for a new information-based electronics system to accommodate the more complex clinical trials associated with biological markers.

The funding increases provided for the NIH in this bill will accelerate research across the board, but particularly in six key areas of emphasis: disorders of the nervous system, genetic medicine, pathogenesis, computers and instrumentation, new approaches to disease prevention, and new avenues to therapeutics.

In FY99, NIH plans to increase the number of grants substantially to an all-time record of just over 30,000 awards. Nearly 8,300 new and competing awards will be made, achieving a success rate very close to 1 of every 3 grants being funded. In addition, the size of the average new and competing award will increase by about ten percent, permitting Institutes to fund a greater number of grants at the levels recommended by review groups and to better support more expensive forms of research such as patient-oriented research