

vice-president, and president of the City of Passaic's Democratic Party. Additionally, she served as a County Committeewoman and a Ward leader.

Mel will be married 37 years come this May to John Currier, who is a retired Deputy Chief of the Passaic Fire Department. Mel and John have a son, Joseph, who is classified as autistic and had to attend special schools and classes. Joe has since overcome many of his autistic tendencies, thanks in part to his mother's interest in the "Saturday Group."

Mel is President of the Learning Disabled Young Adult Group, Inc., which oversees her son Joe's "Saturday Group." The group's Board of Directors set policy, disseminate information to the public, and hold fundraisers and many other events.

Mel is also very active in her church, Saint Nicholas' Roman Catholic Church on Washington Street in Passaic. She serves as a Eucharistic Minister, leads the congregation at the 4:00 p.m. mass in their Hymns and responses, and sings at the 11:00 a.m. mass in the church choir.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, Mel's family, friends, and colleagues, and the County of Passaic in recognizing Carmela "Mel" Currier's many outstanding and invaluable contributions to our community, and in wishing her continued health and happiness in her retirement.

HONORING EDWARD AND JESSIE FREEMAN, SR. ON THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Edward and Jessie Freeman, Sr. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Edward and Jessie on their special day.

What a remarkable accomplishment to be able to celebrate a marriage that has endured for so many years. The bond that brought them together has remained and grown over the years. May they always share the love and joy they feel today.

In an era where marriages are too often short lived, it is wonderful to see a couple who have endured the trials and tribulations that can cause a marriage to fail. The love and commitment they have demonstrated should serve as an inspiration to couples everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, what an achievement to be married for 50 years. It is an honor to represent a couple like the Freeman's. I am proud to call them my constituents.

IN HONOR OF EQUAL PAY DAY,
APRIL 3, 1998

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the Coalition of Labor Union Women as they join together to raise awareness of Equal Pay Day. Their dedication to fair

wages in the work place deserves to be commended.

Throughout America's history, men, women, and children have fought for fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. Advocates for child labor laws and unions have fought to protect workers' bargaining rights, wages, and working conditions. However, women are still subject to workplace discrimination where their wages are concerned. On an average, women earn 74 cents for every dollar a man earns. This results in a loss of over a quarter of a million dollars throughout a 30-year career, a loss that not only affects weekly paychecks but also retirement.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 in conjunction with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits wage discrimination for equal or substantially equal work on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, and national origin. However, to the detriment of the worker, wage laws are not strictly enforced and discrimination suits are difficult to prove.

As communities, families, friends and colleagues, we must all work together to fight for fair wages for all working people. All Americans have the right to equitable pay regardless of their race or sex. Thanks to organizations such as the Coalition of Labor Union Women, this issue will not go unnoticed. I ask my colleagues to join me in lending their support for fair wages for women.

IN HONOR OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MINORITY STUDENT PROGRAM AT RUTGERS SCHOOL OF LAW-NEWARK

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Minority Student Program at Rutgers School of Law-Newark for its 30th Anniversary. In celebration, Roger I. Abrams, dean of the law school, and the Minority Student Program sponsored the Annual Spring Banquet at the Hilton Gateway in Newark, New Jersey on Saturday, April 18, 1998.

The School of Law-Newark at Rutgers is committed to the diversity of its law school community and to the diversity of the legal profession. Since its establishment in 1968, MSP has pursued a policy of equal opportunity for those who have been historically underrepresented in law schools and in the legal profession. Over 1000 students of color and students from disadvantaged backgrounds have graduated from the law school.

The law school historically has attracted students who want to make a difference in the world in which they live. These students represent every ethnic group and nationality. Graduates now make important social and political contributions to their community as judges, presidential appointees, law professors, and prominent members of the bar.

It is a honor and a pleasure to be part of this celebration and to recognize the dedication and commitment of the Minority Student Program at Rutgers School of Law-Newark. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in paying tribute to this remarkable program.

TRIBUTE TO FRED KORT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday of this week, representatives of the Congress, the Administration, and the Supreme Court will gather in the Great Rotunda of this building for the National Civic Commemoration to remember the victims of the Holocaust. This annual national memorial service pays tribute to the six million Jews who died through senseless and systematic Nazi terror and brutality. At this somber commemoration, we will also honor those heroic American and other Allied forces who liberated the Nazi concentration camps over half a century ago.

Mr. Speaker, this past week Fortune Magazine (April 13, 1998) devoted several pages to an article entitled "Everything in History was Against Them," which profiles five survivors of Nazi savagery who came to the United States penniless and built fortunes here in their adopted homeland. It is significant, Mr. Speaker, that four of these five are residents of my home state of California. My dear friend Fred Kort of Los Angeles was one of the five that Fortune Magazine selected to highlight in this extraordinary article, and I want to pay tribute to him today.

Fred Kort, like the other four singled out by Fortune Magazine, has a unique story, but there are common threads to these five tales of personal success. The story of the penniless immigrant who succeeds in America is a familiar theme in our nation's lore, but these stories involve a degree of courage and determination unmatched in the most inspiring of Horatio Alger's stories.

These men were, in the words of author Carol J. Loomis, "Holocaust survivors in the most rigorous sense," they "actually experienced the most awful horrors of the Holocaust, enduring a Nazi death camp or a concentration camp or one of the ghettos that were essentially holding pens for those camps."

They picked themselves up "from the very cruelest of circumstances, they traveled to America and prospered as businessmen. They did it, to borrow a phrase from Elie Wiesel, when everything in history was against them." They were teenagers or younger when World War II began. They lost six years of their youth and six years of education. "They were deprived of liberty and shorn of dignity. All lost relatives, and most lost one or both parents. Each . . . was forced to live constantly with the threat of death and the knowledge that next time he might be 'thumbed' not into a line of prisoners allowed to live, but into another line headed for the gas chambers." Through luck and the sheer will to survive, these were some of the very fortunate who lived to tell the story of that horror.

The second part of their stories is also similar—a variant of the American dream. These courageous men came to the United States with "little English and less money." Despite their lack of friends and mentors, they found the drive to succeed. As Loomis notes, "many millions who were unencumbered by the heavy, exhausting baggage of the Holocaust had the same opportunities and never reached out to seize them as these men did." Their

success in view of the immense obstacles that impeded their path makes their stories all the more remarkable.

One other element that is also common to these five outstanding business leaders—they are “Founders” of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum here in Washington, D.C. They have shown a strong commitment to remembering the brutal horrors of the Holocaust, paying honor to its victims, and working to prevent the repetition of this vicious inhumanity.

Mr. Speaker, Fred Kort is one of the five Holocaust survivors and leading American entrepreneurs highlighted in this article. Fred is the Chairman of the Imperial Toy Corporation in Los Angeles. As we here in the Congress mark the annual Days of Remembrance in honor of the victims of Nazi terror, I ask that the profile of Fred Kort from *Fortune Magazine* be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From *Fortune Magazine*, Apr. 13, 1998]

EVERYTHING IN HISTORY WAS AGAINST THEM
FRED KORT, CHAIRMAN, IMPERIAL TOY CORP.

He's 74 now and has hair that spikes from his forehead as if it were exhibiting surprise at having made it this far. That image fits Fred Kort's life: At Treblinka, the Nazis' killing camp in north-central Poland, somewhere between 700,000 and 850,000 Jews were exterminated and only nine are believed to have survived. Kort is one of the nine.

Before Treblinka, the youth then called Manfred endured the Holocaust as most of its survivors did, fleeing and barely substituting. The son of a hard-up Polish Jew who lived in Germany, he was pushed with his family into Poland and then, as the Germans overran that country in September 1939, into a succession of mean ghettos and work camps. Once, when he was 17, he turned smalltime entrepreneur, sneaking out of the Warsaw ghetto, risking capture and probable death each trip, to sell baking powder, cinnamon, and other spices on the streets. “When you're young,” he says, “you think you're invincible.”

He abandoned such thoughts in July 1943, when the Germans summarily collected Kort and 2,000 other Jews and packed them into cattle cars headed for Treblinka. The train crawled for two days, and people perished. Those who didn't were shoved into a selection process aimed at sending around 300 of the strongest to the work camp called Treblinka 1 and the rest to the gas chambers of Treblinka 2. From the grass on which all the Jews huddled, one man rose to plead for the work camp and was immediately shot. Kort nonetheless also rose and in German said rapidly that he was an electrician—true, sort of, since he'd been an apprentice before the war—and could be useful. A German raised his gun. He then waved Kort to the work group.

Kort skinned by for about a year, mainly doing water-carrying duty that got him food from the guards' kitchen. Then one day in July 1944, the Jews in Treblinka 1—about 550 at that point—heard the guns of the advancing Russian army. To them the sound was ominous, because they felt sure their German captors would not let them live to broadcast the story of Treblinka 2's exterminations. On a Sunday morning, July 23, 1944, guards burst into Kort's barracks with a rough command: “Lie down wherever you are.” Instead, Kort ran, climbing out a barracks window and hiding in a storage shed.

Guards searched the shed but did not find him. He hid there until nighttime, repeatedly hearing gunfire that he assumed, correctly, meant that Jews were being shot.

And then—we know this scene from fiction, except that this was not—Kort covertly

watched the guards patrolling the camp's three rings of fences, discovering that their rounds were at intervals of 15 to 20 minutes. When the moment seemed right, he took a spade and ran for the fences, there finding the ground so softened by rain that he could dig under them easily. As he crossed a corn field outside the fences, sentries in the camp's towers tried to shoot him down, but he zigzagged into woods just beyond. He walked all that night and in the morning discovered that he must have gone in a circle, because he had returned to the camp's edge and to mass graves that held the hundreds of Jews murdered on the previous day.

Shortly, Kort joined up with members of the Polish underground. But Jews were unwelcome there, and within days he risked crossing into Russian-held territory, his hands high as he entreated: “Don't shoot, comrades. I'm a Jew.” Russian troops interrogated him for ten days before finally accepting his Treblinka story as true.

Later, Kort entered the official Polish army, then reconstituting itself, and in a battle caught a piece of shrapnel from a German shell. A far deeper wound: His father, his brother, and 60 relatives died in the Holocaust.

Fred Kort, then 24, arrived in the U.S. in 1947 with a nickel. On the boat that carried him, he used the English he'd begun to learn in postwar Europe to ask a sailor what American money was like—and got not just a look but a coin to keep. Beyond the nickel, though, Kort had some resources, because he was under the wing of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee—called the Joint by all who knew it. The Joint put him up in a modest Manhattan hotel, and soon he got a job at Bendix Corp. and entered night school.

Still exploiting those electrical skills, Kort next landed a job at General Electric and in time wangled a transfer to California. Leaving GE, he went to work for Los Angeles' Biltmore Hotel as an electrician. On one fateful day, he was called to a guest's room to fix a desk lamp. Engaging Kort in conversation, the guest, Martin Feder, said he was planning to open a toy factory and wondered if Kort knew anybody he might hire. “How about me?” Kort asked, in a question that would chart the rest of his career.

Over the next 20 years he worked for Feder, who specialized in producing the bubble-blowing kits that we all used as kids; started, and folded, a bubbles company of his own; and served as a manufacturers' rep for other toy manufacturers, proving to be a master salesman who could have sold jump ropes to snails. As a rep, he made good money. So he was ready to march when by chance he came upon a tiny, hard-rubber, high-bouncing ball that hadn't been pushed in the market. In 1969, Kort took this irrepressible bit, the Teeny Bouncer, and \$50,000 and, with a partner, set up Imperial Toy Corp.

Today the partner's gone, but the original Teeny Bouncer is still a big seller in Imperial's huge line of 880 toys. Most of the items are the year-round, very basic, \$1.99-to-\$4.99 stuff of everyone's childhood—jacks, marbles, balloons, paddle balls, water guns, rubber snakes, and yes, bubble kits, of which Imperial is the world's largest producer. Imperial's 1997 sales were just over \$100 million, which makes the company a midget compared to Mattel and Hasbro but a steady, important force in an industry teeming with smaller, trend-riding companies. Kort says with particular pride that Imperial has never had “a losing year.” That applies even to 1997, though the importance of money in that year was dwarfed by a disaster: a November explosion in Imperial's Los Angeles headquarters (linked to roll caps sold by the company) that killed four factory employees and injured several others.

That tragedy punctured Kort's natural ebullience, but not much else does. From an office decorated in purple—and with that hair going boing!—he runs his business as if he expects to be there forever, which he pretty much does. His son Jordan, one of three sons who work with him and try to match his pace, says his father has “this drive, this incredible drive.”

Since the war, Kort has testified in four war-crimes trials and has sketched, from memory, a detailed map of Treblinka 1 that is now at Washington's Holocaust museum. But Kort is in no way locked into the memories of the past. Deeply aware that America has been good to him, he is instead propelled by the thought that he'd just better bounce out there and “do more.”

TRIBUTE TO THE LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC VOLUNTEERS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 21, 1998

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to commend Lake County Public Library (LCPL) volunteers during National Library Week and National Volunteer Week. The LCPL honored its volunteers on Sunday, April 19, 1998, during the Friends of the Lake County Public Library annual meeting, which was held at the library in Merrillville, Indiana. Two individuals, Helen Goodman and Frank Peterson, earned special recognition for their outstanding service to the library.

Helen Goodman, of Crown Point, Indiana, has volunteered at the Lake County Public Library since 1986. An assistant in the library's Indiana Room Helen researches and locates materials for library patrons on such topics as genealogy. In addition to her daily responsibilities of sorting and reshelving materials, Helen takes the initiative to offer personal assistance to patrons who are in need of specific information. Helen is prompt, reliable, and so dedicated to serving patrons, the library's Reference Department has considered naming her an “Honorary Reference Librarian”. Helen also volunteers in the Friends of the LCPL Book Sale Room, where she helps patrons select and purchase used materials. In addition, Helen is a loyal participant in all library programming, including book discussion group, as she thrives on the exchange of ideas through reading and research. Helen also displays her dedication to public service by working at the Veterans Administration (VA) several days a week. A VA volunteer since 1988, Helen assists disabled veterans with transportation needs by determining their eligibility and availability for assistance programs, as well as coordinating travel schedules. Helen also recruits other volunteers to help disabled veterans when necessary, and she is invaluable in maintaining quality patient care for the service.

Frank Peterson, a native of Portage, Indiana, has been a volunteer at the Lake County Public Library for 5 years. Frank assists the library's Book Coordinator by moving boxes of donated books for sorting, selecting, and shelving in the Book Sale Room. He works at least 2 hours each Tuesday morning and sometimes on Thursdays, re-arranging the books and encyclopedias, clearing the shelves of books for new selections, and organizing the Book Sale Room for the public. In addition, the library considers Frank to be its one-