

who are not African Americans recognize the importance of education, we further recognize the importance of facilities that are conducive to learning for those young people who are in the inner city. So, Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address the need for school construction and repair throughout the country, but, most importantly, in the inner cities, and especially in the 37th Congressional District, which I represent.

Mr. Speaker, today's youth cannot learn in an environment that is surrounded with decrepit walls, that are crumbling from neglect, roofs that are leaking into classrooms, broken windows that have not been repaired for months on end, buildings that are painted with toxic levels of lead paint, and the list goes on.

These young students face the hazards of asbestos, poor indoor air quality, nonexistent air conditioning systems and heating units which barely warm the buildings throughout the winter months. These schools are literally in decay.

Mr. Speaker, these are the schools that represent the inner city that our children are asked to be educated in.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the critical importance of placing our children and the Nation's children in an environment that is conducive to learning. The Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest public school district in the country and where I served as an educator for several, is one of the many public schools in need of school repair.

In the entire State of California, 87 percent of schools report a need to upgrade or repair on-site buildings to just good condition, and the majority of these schools are in the inner city. Seventy-one percent of all California schools have at least one inadequate building feature, ranging from lead paint to lack of heating units.

So today I ask my colleagues to think about the larger issue when it comes to educating our children. I ask my colleagues to consider the more than 60 percent of the Nation's 110,000 public, elementary and secondary school facilities that need major repair in order to function as an effective education institution.

This Nation's youth not only deserve it, but they cry out for schools that represent a conducive learning environment. Mr. Speaker, this must be at the top of our priority as we begin the second session of the 105th Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MEEK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### AFRICAN AMERICANS IN BUSINESS: THE PATH TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as African-Americans, we have known for quite some time that our professional and personal achievements would come through business ownership and participation in the economy. 'The path towards empowerment' has been a struggle, but we are seeing the rewards.

The 'path toward empowerment' begins with a sound education and personal commitment. With these key ingredients, our young men and women can achieve their goals and make a difference in the areas of science, business, finance, and education.

I am pleased to recognize Bethune Cookman College as a school in my district that is building a state of the art hospitality center for minorities. I have testified for several years to get funding for the Mary McLeod Bethune Fine Arts/Hospitality Training Center, which will create an economic stimulus from Jacksonville to Orlando. The Center will train minorities for management and leadership positions in Florida's tourism industry.

Historically, African-Americans have been limited to non-management positions in the tourism industry. This complex once finished will provide hands-on hospitality management training for careers in the hotel, restaurant, tourism, business travel, conference and convention industries.

The center will not just be a complex of classrooms and training facilities—it will be a tribute to one of America's foremost champions of civil rights and public education for African-Americans.

In addition to mentioning Mary McLeod Bethune, I would also like to mention the literary contributions of Zora Neale Hurston an Eatonville, FL native who represents a dominant voice of the Harlem Renaissance period. Hurston was a prolific writer, and her writing style has inspired famous poets and novelists. Her contributions to the twenty-first century have inspired the Zora Neale Hurston Society at Morgan State University and the annual Zora Neale Hurston Festival of Arts and Humanities in Eatonville.

African-American, men and woman, have carved a noticeable place in the fabric of our Nation. And, heroic pioneers like Mary McLeod Bethune and Zora Neale Hurston represent famous Americans who have shaped and enriched our lives. Their legacy lives on and generations to come will be educated and nurtured at Mary McLeod Bethune/Cookman College, and ambitious young writers will read Zora Neale Hurston's novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God" for inspiration and literary guidance.

Note that the heroines I have referenced are just a fraction of the great African-Americans who have shaped this country. Their contributions laid the foundation for myself and younger generations.

In closing, I would like to recognize Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) like, Bethune Cookman College, Edward Waters College, and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University—located in Florida—be-

cause they represent a light of hope for young African-American men and women. These colleges and universities represent approximately 3 percent of American institutions of higher learning, but they award one-third of all bachelor's degrees as well as a large share of graduate degrees earned by African-Americans every year.

Our HBCUs protect, support, educate, and nurture students and they give them the tools needed to compete in business and life.

As we approach the twenty-first century, I know HBCUs across America will continue to be a light of hope for young African-Americans traveling on their paths toward independence and financial empowerment.

In my opinion, this special order passes on the light of hope to young African-Americans and beckons them to continue their quest for knowledge and wisdom.

#### TRIBUTE TO GENERAL BENJAMIN O. DAVIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, February has for some time now been recognized as Black History Month, during which time we recognize the contributions of African Americans throughout the United States and throughout the world.

As a member of the Committee on National Security, I want to call attention tonight to General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., one of our American heroes, one of the true contributors to the end of World War II, and the contributions of the military in the world for 20 years after that.

General Davis was the first black graduate of West Point. As we now have become familiar with our military academies and the fine opportunities for education, the opportunities for men and women of all races in America to participate in the military and have long and distinguished careers, we also pay attention to the fine collegial atmosphere at the military academies.

When General Davis first went to West Point, that was not the situation. Many of us are familiar with the terrible time and hazing he was given there. He literally spent four years with no other member of West Point being allowed to speak to him, not one word. But he graduated from West Point and went on to have a long and distinguished career.

As a Member of Congress, we get to participate in helping to make nominations. We get to send in names of candidates to the different military academies. It is a tremendous opportunity for men and women in America to take on a very distinguished career in the military.

Frankly, in my district I do not think I got enough applicants for all the slots we have. I think that perhaps there are many students, black, white, Hispanic, other races, men and women, who perhaps do not consider the opportunities which General Davis paved the way for in the military academies.

So tonight, during Black History Month, I pay tribute to General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., and I hope the youth of America will also consider the opportunities to lead such a distinguished career in the military.

#### 1998 CONGRESSIONAL OBSERVANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STOKES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to reserve this special order this evening. I would also like to thank my colleagues who are gathered in the Chamber with me. We take special pride in coming together for the 1998 Congressional observance of Black History Month.

Since 1976 when Congress adopted the resolution designating February of each year as Black History Month, we have utilized this opportunity to highlight and pay tribute to the notable accomplishments of black men and women who helped to build our great Nation.

From Garrett Morgan's invention of the traffic signal, to Mary McLeod Bethune's founding of a university on \$1.50, black men and women have made enormous contributions to the development of this country.

With this in mind, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus proudly take this time to share with our colleagues and with the world black history, our history.

As we move forward with our special order, I want to commend the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) for her unfailing leadership of this organization. Her strong leadership guarantees that the Congressional Black Caucus will continue to be a tireless advocate on behalf of minorities, the poor and the disadvantaged of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the theme for the 1998 observance of Black History Month is "African Americans in business: The path towards empowerment." The theme is particularly significant as we pause to review our history and highlight some of our accomplishments in the business arena.

In the field of business, it is important to note that some free black Americans managed and owned small businesses during the period of slavery. For example, Fraunces Tavern was a well-known dining place and tavern popular in New York City during the latter half of the 18th century. It was

owned and operated by Samuel Fraunces, a migrant from the British West Indies. Both British and American troops patronized the tavern, and George Washington came there to draw up terms with the British regarding their evacuation of New York in the 1770's.

Paul Cuffe, a free black man, was a shipper and merchant in New England in the 1790's. James Wormley was a well-known hotel proprietor in Washington D.C. in the 1820's.

After gaining their freedom from slavery, many black Americans set up businesses that rendered personal services to blacks who were the victims of discrimination and segregation imposed by white businesses.

For example, barbering was a source of both black employment and business. Two of the earliest fortunes among black Americans were made by Annie T. Malone and Madame C.J. Walker in the manufacture and marketing of hair products for black Americans. Funeral services were another personal service business almost exclusively under black ownership and control.

As we celebrate the success of African American businesses, we mark the founding in 1888 of the True Reformers Bank of Richmond, Virginia, and the Capital Savings Bank of Washington, D.C., the first black-created and black-run banks in America. We also mark the historic achievements of Maggie Lena Walker, who, in 1903, became the first black woman to be a bank president. She founded the Saint Luck Penny Savings Bank in Richmond, Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, in another field of business, the African Insurance Company of Philadelphia was the first known black insurance company, founded in 1810. It was not incorporated, but had capital stock in the amount of \$5,000. The North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company, founded in 1893 in Durham, North Carolina was the first black insurance company to attain \$1 million in assets.

In celebration of Black History Month, we note the achievements of D. Watson Onley, a black businessman, who in 1885 built the first steam saw and planing mill owned and operated entirely by blacks. We also recognize the contributions of Ruth J. Bowen, the first black woman to establish a successful booking and talent agency. Bowen began her business in New York in 1959 with a \$500 investment. Within 10 years, her firm became the largest black-owned agency in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I will at this time recognize a number of my colleagues gathered here in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York, Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STOKES) for having this special order.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate Black History Month. Although I have only a few minutes to honor hundreds

of years of struggles and achievements of black Americans, I must share my feelings of how much the African American community has added to our country.

In 1782, Thomas Jefferson, a slave holder himself declared that "the whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on one part, and degrading submission on the other."

A Founding Father to whom our Nation looked for moral guidance, his hypocrisy only underscored the terror our Nation was inflicting on generations of African Americans at that time.

Yet, even with slavery placing in bondage hundreds of thousands of Africans, some black Americans had already begun to make their mark. For instance, 200 years ago, in 1798, James Forten, Sr., established the first major black-owned sail-making shop in Philadelphia, achieving a net worth of more than \$100,000, a massive sum at the time. Forten went on to become a leader of the abolitionist movement and the organizer of the Antislavery Society in 1833.

The heights of Forten's achievements only remind us what our country lost due to the depths of slavery and subsequent years of oppression. This country at one time erected every conceivable legal, societal and cultural roadblock to prevent African Americans from getting an education, wealth and power from our society.

As we commemorate Black History Month, the people of the United States must recognize what injustices were perpetrated through the years. We must recognize that our society still suffers the results of the oppression of African Americans.

It has only been within the last half century that our country has made real progress to guaranteeing to black Americans the basic civil rights that other citizens have for so long taken for granted. Within that time, America has only begun to see the tip of the iceberg, the tremendous potential of this community. It is only during this period that we have come to realize the dream of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that "Children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the contents of their character."

As a Jewish American, Mr. Speaker, I believe I share a sense of understanding with African Americans. Not only do our two communities face a history filled with severe cruelty and discrimination, but we also fought together for decades to overcome bigotry in this country.

When I commemorate Black History Month, I am reminded of a civil rights movement where Jewish Americans and black Americans stood shoulder to shoulder to fight racial prejudice.