WASHINGTON- Congressman Lee Terry (R-NE) announced that he is a co-sponsor of H.Res. 942, a resolution recognizing the significance of Black History Month that unanimously passed in the House this week.

"It is important to reflect on and honor the important contributions African-Americans have made to our nation. This resolution is only a small token of thanks they deserve for all their contributions to our society," said Congressman Terry.

Congressman Terry's floor statement:

Congressional Record

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH -- (House of Representatives - February 06, 2008)

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 942, a resolution recognizing the significance of Black History Month.

It is a time to reflect on and honor the important contributions African-Americans have made to our Nation. We should especially take note of the extraordinary people who continue to help build our great Nation.

Of the thousands of African-Americans in my District, I have the privilege of representing two individuals and an outstanding group: Marguerita Washington and Rudy Smith, both of Omaha, and the Alfonza W. Davis chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, based in Omaha.

Dr. Marguerita Washington is the editor of the Omaha Star newspaper in Omaha. The paper has been in existence for more than 69 years and is Nebraska's largest African-American newspaper. The policy of the Omaha Star has been to print only positive news and to be a vigilant champion for African-American progress. The paper is located in the heart of Omaha's African-American community.

The Omaha Star was founded by the late Mildred D. Brown in 1938. She is believed to be the first female, certainly the first African-American woman, to have founded a newspaper in the Nation's history. When Mrs. Brown expired unexpectedly in 1989, the paper was then placed in the very capable hands of Dr. Marguerita Washington, her niece, who now heads the newspaper.

Dr. Washington and the Omaha Star work for equal rights for all; the paper was on the forefront, leading the charge to open public accommodations to African-Americans, including hotels, restaurants, theaters and taverns. The paper was instrumental in working with Omaha Public Schools to ensure that black teachers had equal participation. Dr. Washington also worked hard to get the Omaha Star landmark status in the city of Omaha and the State of Nebraska.

Rudy Smith has lived in Omaha since age 6 and has been an Omaha World Herald photographer and editor for more than 40 years. He is in the process of completing a book of his photographs, many of which have been exhibited at black colleges, universities and museums around the country. As a journalist and photographer he has captured images of some of America's greatest heroes.

Rudy is more than just a photographer; he is able to chronicle historic moments in Omaha. Every picture he takes is a moment; each special moment holds a lifetime of memories that lives on after the moment has passed. Each of his photographs is a window to a memory and has the ability to deeply connect you to the beauty of life itself. His talent is endless.

Omaha native Alphonza Davis graduated from Omaha Tech High School and later Omaha University. He finished first in his class at Tuskegee and was chosen squadron leader. He was killed in combat in 1944 while over in Germany. The local Tuskegee Airmen chapter in Omaha is named after him.

The chapter is one of 45 nationwide, and its membership includes four original Tuskegee Airmen. They are LTC (Ret) Paul Adams, LTC (Ret) Charles A. Lane, Jr., LTC (Ret) Harrison A. Tull, and Mr. Robert D. Holts. These members continue their service to our community by mentoring and working with youth through the local Civil Air Patrol.

The Tuskegee Airmen and their record of success during the war are unmatched. Not a single American bomber protected by the Red Tails was ever shot down by enemy aircraft. By war's end, the Tuskegee Airmen had flown over 15,000 sorties, completed over 1,500 missions and destroyed more than 260 enemy aircraft.

I join my colleagues in recognizing these and the millions of African-Americans in our country for their numerous achievements throughout history, today and the future. This designation is only a small token of the thanks they deserve for all of their contributions to our society. I urge the adoption of H. Res. 942.

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