



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *112th* CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, March 1, 2012

House of Representatives

VISCLOSKY HONORS JOHN COWANS

Mr. Speaker: It is with great honor and admiration that I congratulate Mr. John Cowans on a significant milestone, his 90th Birthday, which is today, Thursday, March 1, 2012. John will celebrate this remarkable milestone with family and friends on Saturday, March 3, 2012, at a semi-formal gala in his honor. For over 32 years John's lasting dedication and irreplaceable presence in Northwest Indiana has allowed him the opportunity to touch the lives of countless individuals.

John Cowans was born on March 1, 1922, in Union Springs, Alabama. After high school, John devoted six years of his life to serving our country in the United States Army. Mr. Cowans then attended Tuskegee Institute, earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education, which would be the beginning of an influential teaching career. John went on to further his education and earned a master's degree in school administration from Alabama State Teachers College. John accepted his first teaching position at the Morgan County School in Decatur, Alabama. Later, he moved to Gary, Indiana, and taught science, math, and social studies at Charles R. Drew Elementary School. His career at Charles R. Drew Elementary School would span 32 years. For his many dedicated years of inspiring youth through teaching, he is worthy of the highest praise.

John Cowans made his mark on history as the first African American Vice-President of the Indiana State Teachers Association. Mr. Cowans also became President of the Gary Classroom Teachers Association. Mr. Cowans's pursuit to push education to greater levels continued, and he was instrumental in bringing about a day of recognition for teachers. To add to his already extraordinary career, John was a member of the National Education Association Assembly of Delegates to the Democratic National Convention in 1976. John was able to impact the lives of youth for generations to come when he contributed to the creation of the 21st Century Scholars Program, which today helps to ensure that every student in Indiana can afford to attend college in exchange for a good citizenship pledge. Mr. Cowans is truly an inspiration, and I am grateful for his outstanding contributions to education in Indiana and across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, John Cowans has been an excellent leader in our community. Not only has he dedicated his time and efforts selflessly to numerous students, teachers, and people of the community, he is also a faithful servant of God, loving husband to the late Roberta Emogene Matthews, and compassionate father to his five daughters: Carmen, Cheryl, Vickie, Judy, and Emelia. I respectfully ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in wishing John a very happy 90th Birthday!