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House of Representatives

TRIBUTE TO TOM VICINI

HON. HAROLD "HAL" ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 4, 2012

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mister Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend, Tom Vicini, for his tremendous leadership and tireless dedication to inspire young people in southern and eastern Kentucky live a drug-free life.

In recent years, Tom has witnessed the devastating effects of the prescription drug epidemic in his hometown of Lynch, Kentucky and across our rural region. Rather than quietly standing by, Tom has committed his life to making a difference both as a selfless community leader and a compassionate little league coach.

After earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Kentucky, Tom returned to Lynch where he worked in the private sector and served as Mayor for 13 years without taking a salary, due to tight budgets. He is now a Coalition Coordinator for Operation UNITE, a non-profit organization designed to combat substance abuse through law enforcement, treatment and education, serving the Fifth Congressional District of Kentucky. Through his work with UNITE, Tom helps coordinate community anti-drug events and reaches out to families and individuals grappling with addiction on a daily basis.

For the last 34 years, Tom has spent his evenings and weekends coaching little league baseball, a lifelong passion. Tom is more than a successful coach, however. He is also an excellent mentor and role model, encouraging players to stay off drugs, make healthy life choices, and never give up. Tom makes sure that

every child gets to play, regardless of talent. All he asks for in return is that they give their best effort on the field. Additionally, Tom organizes free baseball camps for youth and assists with various drug-free programs, including Shoot Hoops Not Drugs and Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs. In honor of his contributions to the sport of baseball, Tom received the 2012 Major League Baseball Commissioner's Play Healthy Award through the Partnership at DrugFree.org in conjunction with MLB Charities.

Tom's talents far exceed his boundaries, yet he is determined to help transform his small community and our rural region of southern and eastern Kentucky. As some of those same little league players have grown up, Tom has encountered a few in handcuffs during drug round-ups, but his immediate response is to kneel down beside them in prayer, offering words of encouragement. It is his courage of conviction and steadfast resolve to help those in need that drive his unwavering kindred spirit. His message of hope and perseverance in the face of adversity is manifested everyday through his tireless effort to encourage the youth of his community to reach for a brighter future.

Mister Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Tom Vicini for receiving the MLB Commissioner's Play Healthy Award, and for his unwavering commitment to the youth of Harlan County.