

Washington, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives today passed H.R. 663, sponsored by Congressman John Barrow (GA-12), to rename the Post Office Building in Sparta, GA, the "Yvonne Ingram-Ephraim Post Office Building." H.R. 663 passed by voice vote.

Raised in Sparta, Yvonne Ingram-Ephraim attended Hancock County Public Schools, and remained dedicated to her community until the day she died. Ingram-Ephraim was the first African-American to be elected to the Sparta city government in 1992, winning a seat on the city council. In 1997, she was appointed Mayor Pro-tem of Sparta, while also serving as Secretary of the prestigious Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials. In addition to her elected duties, she was a fourth grade teacher, devoted mother, and preacher's wife. In 2007, she passed away at the age of 42, after a courageous struggle.

"I'm proud today to announce that the post office building in Sparta will be named in honor of Yvonne Ingram-Ephraim," said Barrow. "Whether she was serving her country, her community, her family, or her church, Von carried herself with dignity and grace. I hope that this will serve as a daily reminder to folks in Sparta of everything Von accomplished before she was taken from us so soon."

Congressman Barrow's floor statement follows:

Madam Speaker: I rise today in support of H.R. 663, a bill to designate the post office in Sparta, Georgia, as the "Yvonne Ingram-Ephraim Post Office Building." Yvonne Ingram-Ephraim, or "Von"; as she was known to all who knew and loved her, was

one of Sparta's most respected citizens before her untimely death nearly two years ago.

Von was the first African-American to be elected to the Sparta city government when she was elected as city councilwoman in 1992, and she was re-elected three more times before her passing. As a former four-term city councilman myself, I can tell you that doing what it takes to keep folks in your hometown happy enough to keep you in office for that many terms is no easy task. In 1997, she was appointed Mayor Pro-tem of Sparta, a title she held until her death in 2007. During this time, she also served as Secretary of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, one of our state's most respected and influential political organizations.

Von married Reverend Michael Ephraim in 2000, and found herself managing the demands of a preacher's wife, mother, fourth grade school teacher, and elected official. Any one of those jobs is big enough, but Von was able to perform each of these roles in such a way as to make all those around her feel loved and respected.

On a purely personal note, Von was a good friend to me, and showed by her example that the things we have in common are much more important than the things that tend to divide us. And I can't think of a better way to commemorate her example than to pass this legislation, which will give us all a lasting reminder of what Von accomplished during her too-short time on this Earth.

Thank you Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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Contact: Jane Brodsky, (202) 225-2823

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