

September 15, 2008

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, today we honor the life and musical legacy of Isaac Hayes, a passionate humanitarian, whose prolific songwriting and distinctive baritone were loved across generations and around the world.

He overcame humble beginnings and personal obstacles to make excellent contributions in many endeavors. He was a true Renaissance man, an extraordinary singer, songwriter and music producer who also achieved success as a pianist, saxophone player, cookbook author, radio show host, and television and motion picture actor.

Born in Covington, Tennessee, tragically orphaned as an infant, and raised by his maternal grandparents, Isaac Hayes came to know the pleasures of country life but also the hardships of rural poverty.

Shortly after his family moved to Memphis for the greater opportunities in the "big city," his grandfather passed away. To help his family survive, Isaac Hayes worked in cotton fields, cut lawns, and cleaned bricks at two cents apiece, all while going to school. He even shined shoes on Memphis' famous Beale Street.

Despite experiencing rural, and then urban, poverty, he found ways to bring music into a central role in his life. At the age of five, he began singing in his local church and before long had also taught himself to play the piano, electronic organ, flute and saxophone.

He dropped out of high school for a time, but never lost sight of the critical role that education plays in improving one's life. He returned to school and proudly graduated at the age of 21.

After graduating, he played piano for Floyd Newman, a saxophonist bandleader. This work led to his becoming a studio musician for a new label called Stax Records, where his first paid sessions were with Otis Redding. These sessions were so successful that he became a

ubiquitous presence at Stax.

While at Stax, he met David Porter, who became a long-standing friend and collaborator. As a result of their collaboration as songwriters and producers, they made more than 200 songs, including such classics as "B-A-B-Y," "Soul Man," and "Hold on, I'm Comin'."

Perhaps the musical accomplishment that Isaac Hayes is best known for is the groundbreaking score and theme song that he wrote for the movie "Shaft." His smooth baritone vocals and iconic style carried that song to the top of the charts, nationally and internationally.

During his life, he received an Academy Award, a Golden Globe Award, two Grammy Awards, the NAACP Image Award, and the Edison Award, which is Europe's highest musical honor. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2005.

He was not content to rest on his musical laurels, probably because of his roots in both rural and urban poverty. A passionate humanitarian concerned about the underprivileged throughout the world, he saw education and literacy as the keys to freedom and prosperity.

Based on that belief, he founded the Isaac Hayes Foundation, whose mission it is to promote literacy and education and other programs throughout the world.

The foundation, among other endeavors, built an 8,000-square-foot education facility in Ghana, West Africa, and supported education efforts in Tennessee. In recognition of his humanitarian work and educational and economic contributions, in 1994 Isaac Hayes was crowned a king in Ghana.

Last year, Isaac Hayes and David Porter came to Capitol Hill to speak to Senators and House Members about the importance of protecting the intellectual property rights of their fellow songwriters and performing artists.

He was an excellent advocate for his fellow songwriters and vocal artists. He was humble, well-spoken, and passionate about protecting creative works, not just for the benefit of artists, but also for the benefit of our national economy.

There is so much more that I could say about this man, but for time's sake, I'll just end with this observation.

Isaac Hayes' achievements and influence made him a cultural icon, and his humanitarian work also made him a great human being. With the fatal stroke that took his life at the age of 65, Isaac Hayes leaves behind a legacy of monumental significance.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues from Tennessee, Mrs. *Blackburn* and Mr. *Cohen*, for their leadership on this measure.