

April 21, 2010

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Madam Speaker, our Nation mourns the loss of one of our most influential civil rights leaders, Dr. Dorothy I. Height, a native of Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Height spent the better part of her lifetime working to ensure that others would have the freedom to accomplish their dreams. As the only woman in the inner circle of leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, her presence provided the much needed female perspective on decisions made in the struggle to achieve equal rights for all Americans. Even though she was on the dais with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as he delivered his "I Have a Dream" Speech in 1963, her integral role in the movement was not always known to the general public. That role was finally recognized nationally when President Clinton awarded Dr. Height the Medal of Freedom in 1994 and Congress awarded her the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004.

Dr. Height was an outspoken advocate for racial and gender equality both before and after the Civil Rights Movement. Her life of social activism spanned eight decades. From working as a caseworker with the New York City Welfare Department to her four decades as president of the National Council for Negro Women to serving as national president of Delta Sigma Theta, Dr. Height's life has touched countless Americans. Political leaders and heavyweights, such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Presidents Eisenhower and Johnson, regularly sought out her counsel and wisdom. Yesterday's loss is a heavy one. America owes Dr. Height a heavy debt of gratitude for her lifetime of selfless service to her fellow citizens. Our Nation is a better place because of her. She will be greatly missed.