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House of Representatives

A TRIBUTE TO DR. RANDY PAUSCH
HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
OF CALIFORNIA

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Ms. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Randy Pausch, a courageous and charismatic Carnegie Mellon professor with pancreatic cancer, who has chosen to dedicate his last months to raising congressional awareness about the importance of research for this deadly disease.

Dr. Pausch is an award winning educator, researcher, and computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University. Considered one of the Nation's foremost teachers of virtual-reality technology, he helped develop a software program called "Alice" that encourages kids, particularly young girls, to become interested in programming. This 47-year-old husband and father of three young children became accidentally famous when his motivational Last Lecture at Carnegie Mellon was leaked onto the

Internet and inspired more than six million people.

Dr. Pausch is the epitome of a professor—never turning away from an opportunity to educate others. In his Last Lecture, which he titled "How to Really Achieve Your Childhood Dreams," he gives wise advice on how to accomplish even those seemingly impossible childhood wishes, and ultimately, how to live a full and happy life. Most importantly, this lecture was an opportunity for Dr. Pausch to leave a message for his children that he will not live to tell them himself.

I had the good fortune to meet Dr. Pausch in January of this year when he came with the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network to advocate for a National Plan to Advance Pancreatic Cancer Research. This research is critical given the disturbing statistics showing that only 5 percent of pancreatic cancer patients remain alive after 5 years of diagnosis. According to Dr. Pausch, he is a "rock star" because he has been living with a disease for more than a year that claims the lives of most

patients within 4 to 6 months of diagnosis. While the survival rates for this lethal disease have remained fairly constant over the last 30 years, few resources have been dedicated to researching new treatments.

With what little time he has left, Dr. Pausch is doing his best to make a meaningful contribution to pancreatic cancer research. In addition to coming to lobby Congress in January, Dr. Pausch returned on March 13 to testify before the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education during the public witness hearings. Although he will not benefit from the awareness he is raising for this disease, he has taken time to educate Congress about this disease and ask us to take the necessary steps to begin to change the horrifying statistics.

A man who believes in honesty above all else, Dr. Pausch does not sugarcoat his situation. In spite of his prognosis, he continues to see himself as a "Tigger" instead of an "Eeyore." He sees each day as another opportunity to impact the lives of others and to share

his sage advice about living. He encourages us to "always wait for people to show their good side, no matter how long it takes." He challenges us to "never give up" and to "remember that brick walls are there to make you realize how badly you want something." Faced with the seemingly insurmountable brick wall of pancreatic cancer, Randy seizes every opportunity to create precious memories with his wife, Jai, and their three young children: Dylan, 6, Logan, 3, and Chloe who is almost 2.

As a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, I have had the privilege of meeting many impressive people, but Dr. Pausch has been one of the most memorable. My hope is that he will be able to continue to delay the progress of the disease and that his days of good health will continue. Most of all, I hope that Dr. Pausch and his family know that he is an inspiration to us all. Through his Lecture and his advocacy, he has not only left behind a legacy for his children, but for the millions of people he has touched with his story.

