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## (April 26, 2005) Lipinski Honors the Life of Erich R. Weber Owner of Weber's Bakery

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Owner of Weber's Bakery

MR. SPEAKER, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of a member of my community who truly exemplified the dedication and hard work required of his ancient profession.

As the longtime owner and operator of a popular Chicago neighborhood bakery, Erich R. Weber never knew an easy day.

For many years, the Chicago native would begin his workday at 2 a.m., breaking by mid-afternoon to have dinner with his family, then returning to the bakery later in the evening. Family members said that in addition to keeping the business side running, he was also the baker behind many of the pastries that disappeared quickly from the shelves.

"He was first and foremost a baker," said his son Michael. "He wore his whites every day."

Mr. Weber, age 71, the longtime owner of Weber's Bakery on the Southwest Side, died April 7, 2005.

Mr. Weber graduated from St. Rita High School in 1951. He received a bachelor's degree in baking science and management from Florida State University in Tallahassee in 1955. That same year he married his wife of 49 years, Bernadine, a fellow student.

Mr. Weber learned to bake from his father, a German immigrant, who founded the bakery in Chicago in 1930. Originally on Kedzie Avenue, the bakery moved in the 1940s to 63rd Street, and in 1979 to 7055 W. Archer Ave. in the Garfield Ridge neighborhood.

After serving two years in the Air Force during the late 1950s, Mr. Weber returned to Chicago, where he joined his father at the bakery. For several years, father and son served as co-presidents of the Chicago Lawn Chamber of Commerce.

"With his college background, my father brought an understanding of the business end of things," said Mr. Weber's son, Michael, who now owns and operates the bakery. "He was technology wise and willing to take chances."

Family members said that when more Hispanic residents moved into the bakery's neighborhood, Mr. Weber introduced more ethnic pastries such as tres leche cake, or three milk cake, which became popular with his customers.

"He was very good at adapting to the changing needs and times of the neighborhood, but he never gave in to trends," his son said.

The father of seven sons, including his late son, David, Mr. Weber often sought the help of family at the bakery, especially during holidays.

"One of my fondest memories is of Dad and me rolling hundreds of loaves of bread during Holy Week at Easter time, and all before the sun came up," said his son Michael. "It was a chance to be alone with him and just talk."

After retiring in 1996, Mr. Weber spent much of his time traveling with his wife and enjoying winters at his home in Naples, FL.

Mr. Speaker I extend my heartfelt condolences Mrs. Weber and Mike Weber, as well as Mr. Weber's five other sons, Mark, Paul, Phillip, Stephen and Kurt; his brother, Gilbert; and his 21 grandchildren.