Charles B. Rangel (1930 – 2025), War Hero, History-Making Congressman



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Former United States Congressman Charles B. Rangel died on Memorial Day.

Former United States Congressman Charles B. Rangel, who served 46 trail blazing years in the House of Representatives and then dedicated his life to addressing the lack of modern infrastructure jobs in his old congressional district through a program at The City College of New York, died on Memorial Day. He was 94.

A founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus who then made history as the first African American member of Congress to lead the powerful Ways and Means Committee, Rangel represented what is now New York's 13th Congressional District from 1971 to 2017. He then served as Statesman-in-Residence at The City College.

In 2022, Rangel continued his mission of service by launching the Charles B. Rangel Infrastructure Workforce Initiative (RIWI) at CCNY to boost modern infrastructure jobs in upper Manhattan and the Bronx.

Rangel was a war hero, history-making congressman, and master lawmaker. He served for 23 terms in the House of Representatives and was cited as the most effective lawmaker in Congress, leading all of his colleagues in passing legislation. He was the primary sponsor of President Obama's historic health care reform law.

Recognized as one of the hardest working legislators in Congress, he sponsored 40 bills and resolutions that became law throughout his tenure. Among his greatest legislative accomplishments was: championing the national Empowerment Zone program, Affordable Care Act, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, and the 'Rangel Amendment' which sounded the death knell of Apartheid in South Africa.

Demonstrating his commitment to education, he created financial mechanisms to construct and rehabilitate public schools across the country. Following Saint Matthew's teaching, he was a stalwart champion for the "least among us," dedicated to improving the lives of working families, fighting for jobs and education, and advocating for equality and justice.

Born and raised in Harlem, he was first elected to Congress in 1970, after serving in the New York State Assembly and as an Assistant U.S. Attorney. Congressman Rangel retired from the United States Congress in 2017. He was a veteran of the Korean War, where he earned a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.