

Washington, DC (March 6, 2012) - Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) released the following statement on the passing of Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ):

“Don Payne was a citizen of the world; a quiet and dignified gentle man with a fierce commitment to justice and human rights everywhere. He was the de facto ambassador to Africa. No one in this Congress knew or cared more about the people of Africa. He also personally knew the leaders and they knew and respected him. His knowledge and his relationships will leave a big hole here. He was the go to person if you wanted to know anything about what was happening, the political situations, or who was who on the continent.

I had the privilege of traveling with Don and his brother Bill to places all around the world, and I always listened carefully when Don spoke because of his great knowledge of all things relating to foreign relations and human rights. My heart goes out to Bill and the children, the grandchildren and one great grandchild of Donald Payne, my beloved friend who I will miss so much. I hope that he found peace and comfort in the knowledge that he helped so many people in this world.”

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