

## Howard Wolpe

Thomas Jefferson once declared, "Whenever a man has cast a longing eye on public office, a rottenness begins in his conduct." The sentiment is familiar; the evidence for it is widely bewailed. It is our great privilege today, however, to honor our own 3rd District representative to the United States Congress, Howard Wolpe, whose reputation for integrity and commitment to the common good is widely admired.

Born in Los Angeles in 1939, Mr. Wolpe earned his undergraduate degree at Reed College and his Ph.D. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Upon completing his doctorate in 1967, he came to Kalamazoo to teach political science at Western Michigan University -- and soon plunged into local politics. He was first elected to the Kalamazoo City Council in 1969 and first elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1972 -- the year he gave up his teaching position at Western. In 1978, he was elected to the U.S. Congress, where he is currently serving his seventh term in office.

Mr. Wolpe wasted little time establishing his congressional priorities or using his academic expertise in Washington. As an academic, he had taught courses on African political systems; as a congressman, he quickly attained a seat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and later became chairman of the Africa Subcommittee. He has since become a major force in the House on African issues, working for economic sanctions against South Africa and tirelessly arguing that U.S. policy makers must take the perspectives of black South Africans into account in formulating U.S. policy toward South Africa.

As the *Almanac of American Politics* observes, however, it is not only on African issues that Howard Wolpe has been a "legislative powerhouse." Several of his legislative initiatives have recently become law, including his bill for foreign lobbyist registration, the Waste Reduction Act, the Taxpayer's Right to Know Act, and the African Famine Development and Relief Act. He is a leading proponent of the Urban Development and Economic Development Action programs, and a prominent advocate in the Congress for pollution prevention, waste reduction, and soft energy research.

John C. Calhoun once wrote that "the very essence of a free government consists in considering offices as public trusts, bestowed for the good of the country, and not for the benefit of an individual or a party." We are grateful this day that Howard Wolpe has been a good friend of this College. We are grateful, as well, for his energy, his intelligence, and his good will, and for his unsurpassed commitment to the good of the country.