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REMARKS IN HONOR OF IRA D. LIPMAN

HON. STEVE COHEN

of Tennessee

in the House of Representatives

Thursday, September 19, 2019

Madam Speaker - I rise today in praise of my friend Ira A. Lipman, founder of the international private security firm Guardsmark, who was also a passionate advocate for social justice, a defender of journalistic freedom and a lover of history and the arts. Ira died Monday in New York at the age of 78. A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, Ira was a student at Little Rock Central High School and was an important anonymous source for NBC Newsman John Chancellor during the historic but contentious integration of the school in 1957. That led to a lifelong friendship and, in 1995, Ira created the John Chancellor Award of Excellence at Columbia University School of Journalism, honoring the best in the business with a \$50,000 annual award. The selection committee for the award is led by the Ira A. Lipman Professor of Journalism, Jelani Cobb at Columbia. This prestigious award is presented at a dinner, a prized event for those invited. In 2018, Columbia established the Ira A. Lipman Center for Journalism and Civil and Human Rights. Mr. Lipman was a leader in social justice organizations, and served as chairman and later as honorary chairman for life of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He stood up to racism wherever it raised its ugly head. In 1983, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He served on the board of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and on the board of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Mr. Lipman held many positions with the United Way of America, including as the first chairman of its ethics committee, and headed up its Memphis United Way chapter with record-setting donations. In Memphis, Ira was a model of civic responsibility, a thoughtful philanthropist and, like "Mr. Anonymous," was looked to for his leadership, including financial support for the Memphis and Shelby County Crime Commission. In 1992, when Minister Louis Farrakhan was given the keys to the city by then-Mayor W.W. Herenton, Ira stood up and made it clear the decision was questionable. When he realized his lifelong dream of moving to New York City, he became one of that city's leading patrons, serving on the board of The New-York Historical Society. As New York City's quasi-anthem says, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere, and Ira made it there and New York was the better for it. He was a longtime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and, in 2016, his generous gift created the Ira A. Lipman Chair in Emerging Technologies and National Security at the Council. Recognized worldwide for his dedication to Jewry, he was a member of the board of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for 38 years and last year received its highest honor, the Humanitarian Award. He also served as an officer of the American Jewish Historical Society. Ira served on the Board of Trustees of his alma mater, Ohio Wesleyan University, which conferred on him its Distinguished Achievement Citation for significant accomplishments and service to mankind. Mr. Lipman received the Stanley C. Pace Award for Leadership in Ethics from the Ethics Resource Center in 2002. That same year, the Committee for Economic Development honored him with its Corporate Citizenship Award. In 2004, he received the Dean's Medal of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as a member of the Board of Overseers from 1991 to 2004 and again from 2005 to 2016. It was Ira Lipman who suggested that I sponsor and pass legislation creating the Tennessee's Holocaust Commission in 1984 when I was a State Senator. In 1963, Mr. Lipman founded Guardsmark, a private security and security guard company, in Memphis, and grew it to a 17,000-employee operation before he sold it in 2015. He wrote *How to Protect Yourself From Crime* (1975) and was often consulted by law enforcement and private security officials for his expertise. Mr. Lipman's philanthropy will long be remembered. He will be missed by so many for his wisdom, courage and willingness to step up. I want to express my condolences to his wife, Barbara; his sons Gus, Josh and Ben; his extended family and his many friends. His was a life well-lived.