

producing, and implementing vital community programs across Newark, New Jersey.

Her work included the creation of summer programs, lunch initiatives, and a food bank that have helped meet the needs of families and children in underserved communities, ensuring they had access to essential resources during difficult times.

Josephine Barbee also founded the M.E. Stith Daycare Center at Zion Holiness Church, named in honor of her aunt. This daycare center became a cornerstone of early childhood development in Newark, serving as a nurturing and educational environment for generations of young children.

Her commitment to increasing community access to vital services continued throughout her career with the Essex County Division of Welfare, where she worked to improve socioeconomic conditions in the community. Even after her official retirement in 1985 she continued to support youth programs that still serve the greater Newark community today.

While Josephine Barbee passed away on February 1, 2025, her legacy is carried on by her son, Mark Barbee, who shares his mother's commitment to serving others, ensuring that her profound impact remains alive and well in the lives of those she touched. We are fortunate that Mark continues to carry the torch she lit in my hometown of Syracuse, NY.

CONGRATULATING MR. JOSÉ
CANTORAL ON BEING NAMED
MR. AMIGO 2025

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mr. José Cantoral on being named Mr. Amigo 2025.

Since 1964, the Mr. Amigo Association has celebrated the friendship between the cities of Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Each year, the Mr. Amigo Association selects an individual that promotes and contributes to the cultural exchange between our two countries and helps maintain the dialogue and friendship that have tied our cities together for so long.

Mr. Cantoral has spent his career producing quality music and entertainment that has enriched our culture and inspired people from across the world with a love for music and the arts.

Through his music and through his work on the Cantoral Institute, Mr. Cantoral has become a prominent figure in music and film. He has co-authored music in famous movies such as Disney Pixar's "Coco" as well as being nominated for a Latin Grammy for his musical contributions.

Mr. Cantoral is now the third member of his family to receive the honor of Mr. Amigo. His late father, Roberto Cantoral having received the honor in 1981 and most recently his sister, Itati Cantoral, in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Mr. Cantoral, for his contribution to music and congratulate him on this remarkable achievement.

RECOGNIZING NICOLE SCHMITT

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the extraordinary work delivered by Nicole Schmitt, our Director of Operations and Scheduler. Throughout her tenure in our office, she helped direct a dynamic and highly effective professional team, including recruiting and supervising staff assistants and Congressional interns.

During her tenure, Nicole executed many top-tier engagements, including meetings for foreign heads of state, national travel, and managing the 2025 Presidential Inauguration events for approximately five hundred Iowans who came to visit the Nation's capital.

Further, Nicole proved pivotal in helping the team work with stakeholders across the state and the aisle to earn our team the Top-10 most bipartisan member of Congress, by focusing on delivering results.

Equally, Nicole helped organize a series of "after-hours" Capitol tours and joined me in leading constituents on a unique historical look of the hallowed halls of Congress—just ask her about the Senate chandelier.

Leveraging her naturally spirited personality and proven expertise as a Parliamentary Intern in the Houses of the Oireachtas, Ireland, and clerk in the Iowa House of Representatives, Nicole remains successful in bringing people together to accomplish great things.

Most importantly, Nicole is a friend to us all, not least of all my kids, who will always remember her scavenger hunts during their Junior Congresswoman visits in Washington, D.C. We are grateful for her service with our team and wish her success as she returns to the Great State of Iowa, and all the victories Iowa State football can provide her.

The distinctive accomplishments of Nicole's service reflect well upon herself, the people of Iowa, and the United States.

HONORING THE BALTIMORE
SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS FOR 45
YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDU-
CATION

HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an iconic Baltimore institution and one of the top five public arts high schools in the United States, the Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA).

The Baltimore School for the Arts was founded in 1979, envisioned as a school with a specialized mission to give Baltimore City students the opportunity to train for a career in the visual and performing arts. The BSA set out to achieve this without sacrificing their students' academic potential, combining their artistic instruction with a rigorous college preparatory program.

For 45 years, the Baltimore School for the Arts has not only fulfilled the mission entrusted to it—it has far surpassed it. With a graduation rate exceeding 95 percent and one of Mary-

land's highest reading proficiency rates, the BSA's students thrive inside the classroom and beyond. Its alumni boast a six-year college graduation rate of 81 percent and they can be seen in prestigious galleries and on stages and television screens across the country.

The BSA has achieved these consistent and impressive results by instilling in its students the core set of values upon which the institution was founded. Its instructors encourage pupils' curiosity, foster their self-confidence; build up their technical expertise; promote co-operation and collaboration teach about global perspectives; and encourage students to develop a sense of purpose. These values enable them to mold students who are not only talented artists and scholars, but also well-rounded people.

The BSA has proven to be a tremendous boon for the Baltimore community. They have formed professional collaborations with institutions across the city, including the Everyman and Hippodrome Theatres, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and the Walters Art Museum, providing their students with the opportunity to learn from walking artistic professionals. So many notable alumni have walked through its doors: Actress Jada Pinkett Smith, actor Lawrence Gilliard, Jr., fashion designer Christian Siriano, visionary painter and sculptor Shinique Smith, and the one-of-a-kind rapper, songwriter, and actor, Tupac Shakur.

Along with the more than 400 high school students that the BSA serves every year, the school also provides a free after-school program, To Work in Gaining Skills (TWIGS), to over 500 Baltimore City students between the 2nd and 8th grades. These students are introduced to various art disciplines and skills, and TWIGS alumni make up roughly half of the BSA's annual freshman admissions. In addition, the BSA annually brings thousands of children and their families to their campus to see free live performances.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Baltimore School of Arts for their great contributions to my community and its people over these last 45 years. The high-quality education that they offer introduces students to new art forms and career paths while imbuing them with deep confidence that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to. Given the magnitude of their achievements thus far, I eagerly look forward to seeing what great artists, performers, and innovators emerge from the halls of the Baltimore School for the Arts in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE PERFECT SAT
SCORE OF SAHLI NEGASSI

HON. LaMONICA McIVER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mrs. McIVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Sahli Negassi, a NJ-10 student at West Orange high school who received a perfect score on the SAT this year. Less than 1 percent of SAT test-takers earn a perfect score each year, and Sahli's accomplishment is nothing short of extraordinary. His SAT preparation was largely self-directed, relying on free resources, and using his time and determination to study for the exam. Beyond

academics, he is deeply involved in extra-curricular activities at West Orange High School. He has been a dedicated member of the cross-country and track teams since seventh grade and spent two seasons on the color guard. Sahli is also the president of the math team, chapter president of the National Honor Society, a varsity chess team member and part of the Royal Strings ensemble. His involvement in multiple activities and honor societies speaks to his well-rounded excellence. After graduating high school, he hopes to attend Harvard and study law. Any school would be lucky to have such a bright young mind.

What an incredible accomplishment and a shining example of New Jersey excellence. I Congratulate Sahli. He makes New Jersey proud.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARGARET "MARG" VENEKLASEN

HON. TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of Margaret "VK" VeneKlasen (Margaret Lorraine Bombasaro)—lovingly known to her family and friends and the broader Santa Fe, New Mexico community as Marg.

It is hard to know where to start in honoring the life, achievements and contributions of this unstoppable renaissance woman who transformed our city and our state for the better over the almost 70 years she gave us. A fierce leader and advocate for women and girls, realtor, entrepreneur, skier, flight attendant, tap dancer, athlete, matriarch, icon, and Santa Fe Living Treasure.

Marg often said "It's better to be true to yourself than be popular." And true to herself she was—although beloved she was for it.

Born in 1927 to a tight-knit, union, Italian immigrant family in Joliet, Illinois, Marg was a young athlete who started her career as a stewardess for United Airlines. It was on a flight that she met Walter Paepcke, who invited her to his new Aspen Ski Resort in Colorado—which is where she discovered two of her great loves: skiing and her future husband, Gordon VeneKlasen.

Marg and Gordon, a geophysicist and WWII veteran, were wed in 1953, and shared their love of New Mexico and each other until his passing in 1998. They moved to Santa Fe in 1956, where Marg met her next love: our Santa Fe mountains. She wrote in her journal at 94: "I see the ski mountain from my window and check on it every morning. I gave up skiing this year, but the mountain is where my heart is."

True to her life-long love of sports—which she encouraged all of her five children to pursue—Marg was committed to making sports accessible to all New Mexican children, regardless of their background. In 1973, she co-established the Santa Fe Public School Ski Program, which helped 40,000 Santa Fe public school children learn to ski. In the 70's, 80's, and 90's, she built and led the Northern New Mexico Soccer Club (now known as the Northern Soccer Club), and through her leadership, in 1981, girls soccer was sanctioned as a varsity sport in New Mexico.

Marg championed "everyone watches women's sports" before it was cool. She herself was an accomplished tennis player, skier, and golfer—she was the first woman to serve on the FIFA National Rules Committee and fought for girl athletes to have access to public playing fields across sports.

A successful real estate broker for over 40 years, she co-founded VeneKlasen Property Management with her husband Gordon, which they ran together for almost 30 years, with a commitment to employing local workers and paying decent wages.

Kiwanis Club of Santa Fe named Marg "Person of the Year" for her commitment to protecting the traditional culture and wellbeing of the city.

A champion for women and girls throughout her life, she served on the boards of Girls, Inc. and the Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center.

In 2002, Marg was asked by the late Governor Bill Richardson to carry the Olympic Torch on its last prestigious leg of its journey: lighting the Olympic bonfire on Santa Fe Plaza.

On January 22, 2025, at the age of 97, Marg passed away peacefully in her beloved home of 62 years.

Today, we include Marg's name and accomplishments into the RECORD. In the words of one of her sons, Garrett, "She taped wings on people and made them into who they were." We add our gratitude for the many flights of possibility New Mexicans took because of her generosity and love for our whole state. It is my honor to enshrine her contributions to our state, culture, and economy in history.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND RETIREMENT OF SOMERSWORTH POLICE CHIEF TIMOTHY J. MCLIN

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy and career of Somersworth Police Chief Timothy J. McLin.

After 33 years in law enforcement Chief McLin is embarking on a well-earned retirement. For more than three decades, he has served as a member of Somersworth Police department, rising from patrol officer to Chief of Police in 2022. Throughout his career Chief McLin has played a crucial role in supporting Granite Staters through the Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team (ACERT) and Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP).

In addition to his decades in law enforcement service, Chief McLin is a proud veteran of the United States Navy, serving from 1984 to 1990 in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Upon his completion of military service, he returned to Somersworth where he began his 33 years of public service to his hometown.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I wish Chief McLin well in his retirement, thank him for his commitment to the people of Somersworth, and congratulate him on a job very well done.

RECOGNIZING REGAN HINSON

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Regan Hinson and her service and contributions to Virginia's First District and the Nation.

Regan always served our office and our team well. Always a friendly face in the office, she was highly motivated and energetic about her work and her relationships. Regan was very committed to connecting with the wonderful people and beautiful landscapes of Virginia's First District, both of which featured heavily in her communications on behalf of our office.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in recognizing the service and accomplishments of Regan Hinson. May the Lord bless her as she embarks on a new challenge, and I look forward to seeing her continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA INTERNATIONAL'S EDUCATORS RISING

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the 10th anniversary of Educators Rising, a nationwide movement dedicated to eliminating the teacher shortage in America by recruiting, preparing, and inspiring the next generation of educators.

Educators Rising is a community-based, Career and Technical Student Organization that supports middle and high school students in rural, urban, and suburban communities with a passion for teaching in their communities.

With over 60 percent of K-12 educators in the United States teaching within 20 miles of the high school they attended, creating pathways for local talent to enter the teaching profession plays a critical role in addressing our Nation's shortage of teachers.

As part of their Grow Your Own initiative, Educators Rising helps create diverse teaching workforces that reflect communities where students live. Teachers who share similar backgrounds and experiences with their students foster stronger student-teacher relationships, improved academic outcomes including higher test scores, rates of high school graduation and college enrollment, more inclusive school climates, fewer suspensions, and lower rates of chronic absenteeism.

Educators Rising has a presence in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with over 1,400 school chapters and 38 state-level partnerships, and works with institutions of higher education and State Departments of Education to create seamless transitions into the education field.

Over 70 schools across Virginia have Educators Rising Chapters that are contributing to ending the teacher shortage in America. Since 1994, over 325,000 students have participated in Educators Rising, including nearly 145,600 students since its rebranding in 2015.