

IN RECOGNITION OF GREATER ST.
MARK A.M.E. CHURCH'S 127TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations to the congregation of Greater Saint Mark A.M.E. Church in Columbus, Georgia as they celebrate a remarkable 127 years. The anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, December 8, 2013 at 3:00 pm at Greater St. Mark Church in Columbus. The event will also be an opportunity to welcome Reverend Kevin Moore as the church's new pastor.

Greater Saint Mark traces its roots back to 1886 when the seven original members began holding prayer meetings in a small house located on the land where the church stands today. From the prayer meetings, soon grew a Sunday school and eventually, a full church service with a devoted congregation. St. Mark assigned its first pastor, Reverend M.R. Wilson, in 1889, and from his pastorate came the church's original structure.

Since then, the Church has seen many changes. After Reverend W.L. Brown installed a new piano and organ, Reverend A.M. Threath purchased a new parsonage, transforming the old one into classrooms, a Pastor's study, and meeting space. Reverend W.J. Daniels helped the Church acquire new pews, carpeting, and a bell honoring Mrs. Susie Herte and Miss Clara Charleston. The Bussey-Hixon-Alexander Annex was built to accommodate a modern kitchen and restroom, a pastor's study, a secretary and finance office, a choir room, and a stewardess room. In honor of Mrs. Johnnie Mae Johnson, a scholarship fund was established, along with the donation of a church van.

In addition to the physical renovations to Greater St. Mark, many of the church's leaders have focused on advancing the spiritual impact the church can make on the surrounding area. Under the pastorate of Reverend B.A. Hart, Greater St. Mark held a planning meeting which eventually brought Citizens Trust Bank, a minority enterprise, to Columbus. He also established the Young Adult Ensemble and the Male Chorus to enhance the Church's music ministry, and introduced bi-weekly Bible study and Christian Education seminars. Reverend Dr. Roosevelt Morris oversaw the donation of a house to the Columbus Historic Foundation, on behalf of the church. In the three years of Reverend Henry E. Green's leadership, a new roof was installed and a church website was built. Now Greater St. Mark will be welcoming Reverend Kevin Moore into the family as the church's new pastor and more improvements are sure to come under his leadership.

What began as a small house for families to meet in prayer has grown into a family of its own, housing generations of church members and guiding them through their journey with the Lord. All of these additions and renovations exhibit the giving nature of the entire St. Mark congregation, as well as their dedication to serving Christ, each other, and the community. Not only do contributions and improvements to the church improve Greater St.

Mark's ability to spread the word of the Lord, but they also strengthen the bond the members have with each other.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the Greater St. Mark A.M.E. Church in Columbus, GA for serving as a pillar of faith and fellowship to its members for the past 127 years. May God continue to bless the church and its congregation.

CAIRN UNIVERSITY

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, Langhorne Manor, Pennsylvania is home to Cairn University as it celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. We acknowledge and congratulate the dedicated administrators and academic staff who have contributed greatly to its success. The school that began on July 8, 1913, as the Bible Institute of Philadelphia, and later the Philadelphia Biblical University, has grown to be an outstanding academic institution with a professed Christian mission to educate students who will graduate as professionally competent men and women of character to carry that mission forward into their church and society.

Cairn University students have the option of five schools: Divinity, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business and Leadership, Education and Music; two departments, Social Work and Christian Counseling, and graduate programs. On this occasion, we heartily congratulate Cairn University Chancellor W. Sherrill Babb and President Todd J. Williams and look forward to future achievement and the contributions Cairn graduates will make toward the betterment of their communities.

**THANKING STEVE KAESER FOR
HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE**

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement on October 31, 2013, we would like to thank Mr. Steve Kaeser for his over twenty-five years of distinguished service to the United States House of Representatives. Steve has served this great institution as a valued employee of House Information Resources (HIR), within the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

Steve has held a multitude of senior engineering positions over the years and his technical expertise and skills have been invaluable to servicing customers in the House community as well as staff within Technology Support and Enterprise Operations. Before moving to Enterprise Operations, Steve served as an engineer on the Software Support Team, in the newly created Technology Call Center, and on the Escalations Team. Among his many accomplishments, Steve helped create and run the House's new anti-virus software program with the establishment of Trend. His other defining achievement was the establishment of

an Apps-server, which created a central access point for the download of all supportable software.

Moving forward, Steve has remained committed to supporting the ever-changing technology environment. After a few years in Technology Support, Steve joined Enterprise Operations where he became involved in critical aspects of client server architecture. He played an integral role in Windows server delivery and support and he performed system builds, security analysis and troubleshooting. In addition to server support, on occasion, Steve would lend his "radio" voice to the Recording Studio as a narrator for House training or you might see him at a co-workers desk helping them solve a problem. Throughout his career, Steve has provided House customers with the world class service they expect from the CAO.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Steve for his years of dedication, outstanding contributions and service to the United States House of Representatives.

We wish Steve much happiness in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

HONORING JOSE R. ESCOBEDO III

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Sgt. Jose R. Escobedo, Jr. III. Born in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Mr. Escobedo became a United States Citizen with the intention of enlisting in the United States Marine Corps. During over 10 years of service in the armed forces, Sargent Escobedo served in both the Marines and the Army and he served courageously during two tours of duty in Iraq.

Jose Escobedo graduated from Bowie High School in El Paso in 1995. After high school, he decided to join the Marines and served for nearly 9 years. After his honorable discharge, he worked for the city of Albuquerque in the Department of Transportation, but he missed the military. Eager to continue his service, "SGT Esco," as friends called him, decided to join the Army and after training he was assigned to 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment in Schweinfurt, Germany.

On November 19, 2008, Sargent Escobedo deployed to Iraq for the third time. Despite being in a combat zone, Jose was known by his fellow soldiers as a kind individual with a positive outlook on life that was infectious. He passed away on March 19, 2009 in Baghdad and at the age of 32.

Mr. Escobedo is survived by his wife, Angelica, and their three children, Elvida, Jose, and Mikey. He is interned in Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso. The dedication with which he served our nation for so many years is an inspiration. El Paso misses Jose Escobedo and we are proud to honor him as a hero who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the United States.

TRIBUTE TO ARLEIGH BIRK

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 72nd anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, I rise to pay tribute to one of the true American heroes of that day, and of the long World War that followed—former Boatswain's Mate First Class Arleigh Birk, United States Navy.

Today, as Arleigh approaches his 94th birthday, he and Marion, his lovely wife of 67 years, still live in their family home in the northern Minnesota community of Hoyt Lakes, where they retired after Arleigh's 25 years of employment at Erie Mining Company from 1957 to 1982.

Seventy-two years ago, on Sunday, December 7, 1942, Arleigh was 4,028 miles west of Hoyt Lakes, stationed on the USS *Honolulu*, watching as Japanese warplanes filled the skies and the USS *Arizona* exploded in fire. The *Honolulu* itself sustained damage in the attack, and Arleigh was transferred to the USS *Denver* where he remained in the Pacific Theatre until the war's end.

During those years in the Pacific, Arleigh and his mates on the USS *Denver* were part of the force that engaged and sank the Japanese destroyers Minegumo and Murasame in the 1943 Battle of Blackett Strait.

In October 1943, they earned the Navy Unit Commendation for outstanding performance in the battle of Empress Augusta Bay for helping sink one enemy light cruiser and a destroyer, and heavily damaging two heavy cruisers and two destroyers.

On July 4, 1944, Arleigh and the crew of the USS *Denver* bombarded Iwo Jima, fought numerous battles throughout the Pacific, and fought off a Kamikaze attack on November 27th during action in the Leyte Gulf.

In September 1945, Arleigh and the *Denver* sailed from Okinawa to cover the evacuation of Allied forces imprisoned in the Wakayama area before heading home to Norfolk, Virginia, where they arrived on November 21st.

Arleigh was honorably discharged from the Navy on January 12, 1946—and honorably married to Marion a little over a year later.

On behalf of a grateful Congress and a grateful nation, we honor and thank Arleigh Birk for his service in the preservation of American freedom.

RECOGNIZING CAROLYN CLOSS-WALFORD ON THE OCCASION OF HER PROMOTION TO COLONEL

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Army Lieutenant Colonel Carolyn Closs-Walford who will today be promoted to the rank of Colonel. Like many of my colleagues, I have had the pleasure of working with and knowing LTC Closs-Walford both personally and professionally when she served in the Army's House Liaison Division.

LTC Closs-Walford's distinguished military career began at Winston-Salem State Univer-

sity when she joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps. She graduated in 1987 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Signal Corps and accepted a position in the Army Reserve. The Signal Corps develops and manages communications systems for the U.S. military and is integral to its strength and resilience.

LTC Closs-Walford completed Signal Officers Basic Course at Fort Gordon in Georgia and settled in Washington, DC. She studied at National Louis University where she received a graduate degree. After, LTC Closs-Walford transferred to the Quartermaster Corps which provides logistic support for the Army.

Later, LTC Closs-Walford served in the Army's busy House Liaison Division where she was the first point of contact for Members and staff who called on the Army for assistance. While there, she developed, coordinated, and executed Congressional Delegations to Iraq, China, Israel, and Sudan, among others. Her professionalism, attention to detail, and hard work did not go unnoticed by Members who were lucky enough to travel with her.

LTC Closs-Walford's extraordinary career afforded her the opportunity to serve in the administrations of President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama. She supported the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor by serving as a liaison to Members of Congress, the Department of Defense, State Department, and the intelligence community by coordinating strategic communications and global outreach.

From the White House, LTC Closs-Walford moved to the Pentagon and worked in the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and focused on women and gender issues, human rights, and international humanitarian policy.

Currently, LTC Closs-Walford serves in the National Guard Bureau's Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate. She is responsible for helping to develop the National Guard's outreach, communications, and messaging.

LTC Closs-Walford was born in Louisburg, North Carolina, located in Franklin County and in my congressional district. She is the youngest of 10 children born to William and Fannie Closs. Her father bravely served the United States in the military during World War II and was awarded a Purple Heart for his unflinching and valiant service in the face of danger. She is married to Raymond L. Walford.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of LTC Closs-Walford's distinguished career. As representative of the congressional district that LTC Closs-Walford is a native daughter, we salute her on this special day. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking her for honorable service to the United States of America and congratulating her on her much deserved and earned promotion.

HONORING BETHLEHEM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, which is located at 2975 Cannonsburg Road in Cannonsburg, MS.

December 17–19, 2010 Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church celebrated its 150th year anniversary with three days of festivities. Dr. Samuel White penned the church's history.

The Bethlehem Baptist Church was organized in 1860 by Rev. George White and other like-minded brothers and their wives. The Church was organized to serve the religious and spiritual needs of freed blacks and ex-slaves of the Cannonsburg community. Three prominent families populated the area and became active in the early church. They were the Whites, the Frisbys, and the Tylers. Even today, most of the church's membership is related to one or all three of these family lines. Later the Church's population grew to include the Comptons, Coles, Clarks, Herringtons, Perrymans, Hawkins, Kahos, Prees, Washingtons, Dorseys, Gambles, among others.

The original church was located on property lying between the Natchez Trace and the Cannonsburg Road. In 1907, the Church Fathers, Alfred White and James Compton, purchased a two acre tract of land from Gabe Tyler to build a "Church House." A white wood structure was erected with a potbelly stove in the center for heat. In 1965, this building was removed and the first brick sanctuary was built. The church membership outgrew the facility; and, in 1984, a major renovation and expansion project was undertaken and completed to include a Fellowship Hall and a Pastor's Study.

The current multi-purpose facility which was dedicated in April, 2005, represents the fifth building erected for the Church Family. In 1999, the Church Family initiated a five-year Building Plan to design, finance, and build a worship facility that would accommodate and serve the needs of a growing membership. Under the leadership of a dynamic Pastor, the Rev. Percy Turner, and an activist Board of Deacons, this goal was achieved in 2005. Additional property was purchased from the Golden Mutual Aide Society and Mrs. Carrie Jackson Johnson on which to build the new facility. Rev. John Hawkins, Deacon Charlie Hawkins, Sr. and Bro. Dwayne Hawkins—acting as Hawkins Construction, were all members of the congregation that constructed the new sanctuary and fellowship hall.

The Church has held a prominent position in the religious, social, and civic life of Jefferson County. Many of the early religious pioneers of the Black Baptist Movement in the county were either members or pastors of Bethlehem, i.e. Rev. P. C. Rucker, Rev. P. E. Frisby, and Rev. W. N. Tyler.

Bethlehem is also the site of the first Civil Rights mass meeting to be held in Jefferson County. While others feared retaliation from those who would burn crosses and churches, the leadership at Bethlehem took the bold steps to host the NAACP and challenge the racial inequities that existed in the 1960s. As a result, even today our community takes very seriously the right to vote and participates fully in the electoral process. Several members of this Church have attained the status of being the first of their race to be elected and/or appointed to political positions at the City, County, and State levels.

Since the church has been at its present location, the following individuals have served as Pastors: Rev. George White, 1902–1905; Rev. P. C. Rucker, 1906–1909; Rev. P. E. Frisby, 1909–1918; Rev. John Alexander, 1918–1928; Rev. W. N. Tyler, 1928–1931;