

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;

Rev. D. W. M. Johnson, 1931–1940; Rev. Wilson Ford, 1940–1948; Rev. Jimmy Jones, 1948–1982; Rev. Percy Turner, 1983–Present.

Over the years, the following persons have served as Associate Ministers: Rev. Alf White, Rev. Marcus Frisby, Rev. Louis Frisby, Rev. Louis White, Rev. Edgar White, Rev. Leon Dorsey, Rev. David White, Rev. George A. Tyler, Rev. Aubry Watson, Rev. Juanita Tyler, Rev. Ernest Gaines, Rev. Andrew Dorsey, Rev. Mandy Green, Rev. John H. Hawkins, Rev. Charles Kaho, and Rev. John Tyler.

Some dynamic men have served as Deacons; they include: Bro. Phillip White, Bro. Jackson Tyler, Bro. Richard Tyler, Bro. Wilson Tyler, Bro. James Compton, Bro. Sanford "Sam" White, Bro. Bivens Cole, Sr., Bro. Daniel White, Bro. Juanita Tyler, Bro. Aubry Watson, Bro. General Jenkins, Bro. Leon Dorsey, Bro. Frank White, Bro. John Tyler, Bro. Monroe Griffin, Bro. Leon Dorsey, Jr., Bro. Frank Gamble, Bro. Charles Kaho, Bro. John H. Hawkins, Bro. Jerome Herrington, Jr., Bro. Willie J. Pree, Bro. Robert L. White, Bro. Samuel L. White, Sr., Bro. Larry D. Tyler, Bro. Charlie Hawkins, Sr., Bro. Roosevelt "Bill" White, Bro. Keith King, Bro. Joseph Cole, Sr., and Bro. Jerry Sims.

Over the years, the Mother's Board (Deaconess Board) has included: Sis. Arnetta C. Tyler, Sis. Lou Virginia White, Sis. Kizzie Tyler, Sis. Ella Tyler, Sis. Juanita Tyler, Sis. Celeste Frisby, Sis. Irene Tyler, Sis. Jinice Sanders, Sis. Ora Clark, Sis. Mindy White, Sis. Effie Turner, Sis. Henretta Compton, Sis. Lillie Perryman Jackson, Sis. Virginia S. White, Sis. Martha White, Sis. Mary E. Dorsey, Sis. Floridia Jones, Sis. Louella White, Sis. Doris Kaho, Sis. Mae Rose Herrington, Sis. Sarah Griffin, Sis. Carrie Jenkins, Sis. Augusta Ballard, Sis. Lettie Irving, Sis. Gertrude White, Sis. Cora White, Sis. Almeta Dorsey, Sis. Mamie Herrington, Sis. Edna Holmes, Sis. Laura Reed, Sis. Laura Tyler, Sis. Effie Woods, Sis. Jean Hawkins, Sis. Levater White, Sis. Lollie J. Doss, Sis. Johnnie R. Tolliver, and Sis. Sophronia Evans.

The membership is proud of its rich history and Christian traditions. We will continue to celebrate the accomplishments of our forefathers, but more importantly, we are dedicated to embracing God's call to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our mission is to win souls to Christ through love, dedication, loyalty, and service to mankind. We humbly thank God for more than 150 years of service and we pray for His continued blessings and divine guidance as we demonstrate to the world that Bethlehem is the place where "Our Feet are on the Rock and Our Names are on Heaven's Roll."

Since the writing of this history in 2010, the name of the Bethlehem Baptist Association has changed to Jefferson County Baptist Association.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church for its outstanding service to the community.

IN RECOGNITION OF CATHERINE "KATE" ERTZ-BERGER UPON HER RETIREMENT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding career of Ms. Catherine "Kate" Ertz-Berger, Executive Director of the Contra Costa Child Care Council, and congratulate her as she retires after twenty-eight years of dedicated service to the children and families of Contra Costa County.

Kate's deep passion for helping others was evident early in her career, during her tenure with the Massachusetts Department of Social Work and the United Way of the Bay Area. She brought that same passion to the Contra Costa Child Care Council in 1985 and has been the heartbeat of that agency for nearly three decades. Under Kate's dynamic leadership the Council has grown to be one of the largest and most effective nonprofit organizations in the San Francisco East Bay serving families throughout our community.

Kate has shown remarkable command of the issues most critical to early education and the needs of families with small children. Under her guidance, the Council has greatly increased public awareness of the need for quality child care and early childhood education through the development of a wide variety of innovative initiatives, programs and services. Most importantly, she has forged lasting partnerships with the community, parents and child care providers.

I invite my colleagues to join me in commending Executive Director Kate Ertz-Berger, for her committed and diligent service to the children and families of Contra Costa County. I am pleased to call her my friend and wish her the very best as she begins a well-deserved retirement.

CONGRATULATING TWIN GROVES MIDDLE SCHOOL ON BEING NAMED A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Twin Groves Middle School in Buffalo Grove, Illinois, in the district I represent. This outstanding educational institution has been recognized as one of only 286 Blue Ribbon schools in the entire country.

This is the second National Blue Ribbon distinction that Twin Groves has earned, one of 21 awarded in the state, one of only three awarded to Illinois middle schools and one of four awarded to schools in Illinois's Tenth District.

Good education is the foundation of any community, and it is essential to our success in the 21st Century. In Buffalo Grove, you will find some of the nation's finest schools, filled with eager and curious students and passionate and engaging teachers.

In Illinois's Tenth District, our communities are strong, in part, because of excellent educational institutions like Twin Groves.

With schools like Twin Groves, Tenth District students are building foundations for success in this ever-changing, competitive 21st Century.

The education Twin Groves Middle School students receive not only helps position them for future success, but also prepares them for the rigors of one of the area's top high schools, Stevenson High.

Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to honor Twin Groves Middle School here today, and I am so proud to have such excellent schools in the Tenth District. I congratulate Twin Groves once again on receiving this distinguished award.

RECOGNIZING MORRIS COUNTY SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Morris County School of Technology of Denville, New Jersey for being named a Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education.

The Department of Education acknowledges schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals. Union Morris County School of Technology is a proud example of academic excellence where students have high levels of performance, stellar student achievement and where educators facilitate a strong learning environment.

I congratulate the students, faculty and community on this high honor. This is a prestigious award to receive and Morris County School of Technology is a proud example of academic excellence and worthy of this national distinction.

CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MR. DARREN MILLER OF MURRYSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the accomplishments of Darren Miller of Murrysville, Pennsylvania.

On August 29, 2013, Darren became the first American man and only the fourth person in history to complete the seven grueling open-water swims known as the Ocean's Seven challenge. He spent over seventy-five hours braving frigid waters, treacherous weather conditions, and dangerous wildlife while swimming across bodies of water including the English Channel, the North Channel between Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the Strait of Gibraltar. Darren is the only person to ever complete all of the swims on the first attempt.

A graduate of Franklin Regional High School in Murrysville and Pennsylvania State University, Darren is a product of the first-class educational institutions in our Commonwealth. Darren used our beautiful lakes and rivers in Western Pennsylvania to train for his