

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY POLICE OFFICER MELVIN SANTIAGO

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when danger occurs, when disaster happens, when 911 is called, it is the first responders who heed the emergencies.

While most of us flee danger, the men and women who are the thin blue line head toward danger.

They are America's finest.

They are the peace officers.

Officer Melvin Santiago was just 23 when he was gunned down and assassinated for sport by a fugitive, an outlaw.

Santiago was going about his duties as a Jersey City, New Jersey police officer responding to a disturbance at a local drugstore.

When he arrived he was shot multiple times before even exiting his patrol car.

The name of the cold blooded killer who murdered rookie Jersey City police officer, Melvin Santiago shall not be mentioned.

This cowardly murderer thought he would become famous by killing a cop.

The gunman was lying in wait to murder a peace officer.

The criminal was killed by police.

He has gone to meet his Maker.

I doubt the meeting will be pleasant.

Officer Santiago wanted to fight crime and protect the citizens in the toughest neighborhoods.

He wanted to make a difference.

The west section of the city was where he thought he could do that best.

This was not just a job for Officer Santiago; it was a goal he had worked toward.

He excelled in his entrance exam with a score of 98.

This first responder wanted to be like his Uncle Frank, a retired detective.

Santiago looked up to his uncle and often sought his advice.

Officer Santiago graduated from the police academy in December, patrolling the area that he knew he could help turn around, when his life was stolen from him by a worthless criminal.

Law enforcement officers are a special kind.

They put their lives on the line every single day to ensure the safety of their communities.

There aren't many other professions where a person willingly puts themselves at risk on a daily basis in order to protect others.

Mr. Speaker, as a former prosecutor and criminal court judge in Texas for over 25 years, I have known a lot of men and women who have worn the badge—the shield—or the star over their heart.

These are symbols of their willingness to put our safety above theirs.

Unfortunately, I have known and attended funerals of first responders like Santiago who gave their lives in an effort to make our communities safer.

We as a society should never forget the true sacrifice first responders and their families make for our nation.

Officer Santiago went above and beyond to make his hometown of Jersey City, the state of New Jersey, and his country a better place.

Over a thousand officers joined Officer Santiago's family and friends to honor his life and lay him to rest on July 18th, where he was posthumously promoted to detective and given the Jersey City Police Department Medal of Honor.

In his short time on the squad, he quickly gained the respect of many.

We remember his hard work and commitment to family and community.

I commend Detective Melvin Santiago for his service to the people of New Jersey.

Our thoughts and prayer are with Jersey City Detective Melvin Santiago's family, the local peace officers, and the community of Jersey City.

Peace officers stand between the law and the lawless.

Peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence between the fox and the chickens.

Mr. Speaker, peace officers are a rare breed.

Melvin Santiago was one of those individuals.

General George Patton said it quite appropriately when talking about his young troops killed in battle: While we mourn the loss of these men. We should thank the Good Lord that such men ever lived.

And that's just the way it is.

### HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF STEPHEN BERO AND HIS OUTSTANDING IMPACT IN THE WARREN-NEWPORT COMMUNITY

### HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor Stephen Bero, an exceptional public servant who, for more than 20 years, worked in library administration and for the last nearly 10 served years as the Executive Director of the Warren-Newport Public Library District (WNPLD) in Gurnee, IL.

When Steve formally retires at the end of July, he will complete what has been a truly remarkable career in service to his community. During his tenure as Executive Director, Steve presided over the WNPLD during a period of remarkable growth and financial stability. Steve successfully shepherded an \$8.7 million expansion and renovation project, securing a AA+ bond rating from Standard & Poor's as well as favorable financing options that made the project possible.

In addition to his many noteworthy financial accomplishments, Steve fostered an incredibly positive environment at the library that earned the recognition and appreciation of his colleagues and the surrounding community. Steve's colleagues noted his successful leadership during the construction, along with his decision to reinstate the Youth Services department.

Under Steve's stewardship, WNPLD has become one of the most popular public libraries in all of Lake County.

In a fitting conclusion to Steve's tenure at WNPLD, the Illinois Library Association named him the 2014 Librarian of the Year. The entire Warren-Newport community is lucky to have enjoyed Steve Bero's service.

IN TRIBUTE TO JENNY CONTOIS

### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep gratitude to pay tribute to a colleague, a friend, and a trusted deputy, Jenny Contois, who retired last month after serving seven and half years as my District Director in Connecticut's Second District.

Even more than a traditional District Director for a Member of the House, I considered Jenny to be a Co-Member of Congress. Whenever I was called to Washington for legislative duty, I had unshakable confidence in Jenny's abilities to handle all challenges in Connecticut. Jenny's executive experience, honed over 15 years as First Selectwoman of Colchester prepared her to lead my Connecticut office and to expand her area of responsibility from one town to 64 towns of the Second District.

Jenny combined a passionate commitment to public service with an unshakable determination to solve problems that lay before her. When it came to finding a loan for a struggling small business, securing a rural development grant for a town in need, badgering a recalcitrant federal agency to fulfill a previous obligation, or begging and borrowing to get an Army Corps boat to dredge a coastal harbor, Jenny's tenacity was unparalleled and her success rate unmatched.

At no time did Jenny shine brighter than during a crisis. Whether in the aftermath of a winter storm that left residential and commercial power lines down or in the wake of a summer storm that brought extensive flooding to our shores, Jenny rose to the challenge time and time again. Immediately after a blizzard or tempest hit, Jenny would work by my side to rally fellow municipal leaders and emergency responders to expedite the assessment and repairs. After the storms subsided, she worked painstakingly with families and businesses to help them secure the recovery funds and assistance they so desperately needed.

She accomplished all of this with a winning smile and a hearty laugh. By the time that her seven and a half years as District Director had concluded, Jenny in many ways had evolved from the First Selectwoman of Colchester to the First Selectwoman of eastern Connecticut.

This weekend, Jenny's many colleagues, friends, and family will celebrate her service to the Second District of Connecticut at a gathering in her hometown. Jenny will spend her duly earned retirement with her beloved husband Frank, her daughter Amy, and her latest arrival, her grandson Jack.

I will miss Jenny's day-to-day counsel and friendship in the future, but I am heartened and grateful to remember her invaluable assistance in launching my new office almost eight years ago and achieving the success we had together.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting one of eastern Connecticut's finest, Jenny Contois.

ISRAEL HAS THE RIGHT TO  
DEFEND ITSELF**HON. LOU BARLETTA**OF PENNSYLVANIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, Hamas, which was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States under President Bill Clinton, has a history of using schools, hospitals, and civilian areas as staging grounds and launch sites for their attacks against Israel. They have also built a network of tunnels under those locations to facilitate the movement of soldiers and weapons for use against Israel. When Israel responds to these attacks by specifically targeting the missile launchers, Hamas uses human shields—many times children—as propaganda tools. The civilized world should be horrified at such tactics by Hamas and condemn them absolutely.

Just recently, I cosponsored a resolution that reaffirms Israel's right to defend itself, and I would note that they have shown incredible restraint in fighting back. They give ample warning prior to an attack, advising all innocent parties to flee. In truth, if Israel were as indiscriminate as Hamas and used all the military might at their disposal, Gaza would be a smoking wasteland within hours. That this has not happened is testament to Israel's care in targeting only areas that have been used as attack launch points. The United States must speak with one voice on this issue and stand with our strong ally Israel.

HONORING JUDGE IVORY E.  
BRITTON**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**OF MISSISSIPPI  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Judge Ivory Britton, a Justice Court Judge of District 2, who is a native Jacksonian.

Judge Britton was reared on Tougaloo Street in the Virden Addition Community.

Judge Britton attended Brinkley Elementary School, which is now Walton Elementary School, and graduated from Brinkley High School. He attended: the University of Judicial Court, National Judicial College, Reno, NV, National Judges Association, American Judges Association, and National Center for State Courts.

As a Justice Court Judge, Britton works hard to ensure fair and equal treatment for all litigants of his court. He has increased his knowledge of the judicial process to enable citizens to easily use the Justice Court System. Judge Britton will continue to be fair and accessible to all citizens and be knowledgeable and obedient to the laws of The State of Mississippi.

Judge Britton is married to Liza Britton and they have three children: Perry, Dexter and Tabathia. He is a member of Cade Chapel M. B. Church.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Judge Ivory E. Britton.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE**OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed one vote on July 24. Had I been present, on rollcall No. 449, H.R. 3393, the Student and Family Tax Simplification Act, I would have voted "aye."

HONORING MS. LUCY COFFEY,  
AMERICA'S OLDEST LIVING FEMALE  
VETERAN**HON. LAMAR SMITH**OF TEXAS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today we honor America's oldest living female veteran, Ms. Lucy Coffey of San Antonio, TX.

Ms. Coffey, who is 108 years old and lives in my Congressional district, is in Washington today and tomorrow to visit the WWII Memorial, the Women's Veterans Memorial and Arlington Cemetery.

Ms. Coffey served honorably in the Women's Army Corps during WWII. Serving mainly in the Pacific theater, she was awarded two Bronze Stars for valor. After the war, she continued serving her country, working at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio for twenty years until retiring in the early seventies.

The United States is stronger today because of the sacrifices all our veterans have made. And Ms. Coffey exemplifies what is best about our veterans and our great nation.

It is with great appreciation and admiration that today we recognize and honor Ms. Lucy Coffey.

## HONORING DR. VINCENT HARDING

**HON. BARBARA LEE**OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Dr. Vincent Harding. Known throughout the country as a scholar, activist, father, friend and former speechwriter for Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Harding has left an indelible mark on our national discourse. With his passing on May 19, 2014, we look to the outstanding quality of his life's work and the inspiring role he played in the Civil Rights Movement.

Born on July 25, 1931 in Harlem, New York, Dr. Vincent Harding began his education by attending New York public schools, graduating from Morris High School in 1948. After high school, he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the City College of New York, and in the following year, he graduated from Columbia University, earning a Master's degree in Journalism. Dr. Harding went on to

serve our country in the United States Army from 1953 to 1955.

In 1958, Dr. Harding met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who urged him to move to the South to join in the Civil Rights Movement. Once in Atlanta, Dr. Harding and his wife, Rosemarie, founded the Mennonite House, an interracial service center and began engaging in a wide variety of social and political campaigns. Dr. Harding worked closely with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee to challenge segregation in the South.

As Dr. Martin Luther King's speechwriter, Dr. Vincent Harding drafted the famous and highly controversial speech, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence." Dr. Vincent Harding was a strong opponent to the Vietnam War and, as Chair of the History and Sociology Department at Atlanta's Spelman College, Dr. Harding was concerned that students were not aware of the situation in Vietnam. He worked to ensure that students and other Americans were aware of the atrocities occurring during the war in Vietnam.

Dr. Vincent Harding founded the Veterans of Hope Project in 1997, which is a multifaceted educational initiative encompassing the topics of religion, culture and participatory democracy. His work through Veterans of Hope emphasized the importance of nonviolence and a grass root approach to social change.

After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, Dr. Vincent Harding worked with Coretta Scott King to establish the King Center in Atlanta, serving as the Center's first director. In addition, Dr. Vincent Harding wrote several books reflecting on the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King Jr., including "Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero" and "Hope and History: Why We Must Share the Story of the Movement." Dr. Harding was deeply passionate about public service and impacted countless lives with his theology, activism and scholarly efforts. Dr. Harding once wrote that "we are all a part of one another, and we are all part of the intention of the great creator spirit to continue being light and life."

On a personal note, Dr. Harding was a loyal friend for over 30 years. During the late 1970's, I worked on Capitol Hill for Congressman Ron Dellums while raising two sons as a single parent. My sons wanted to attend the Penn Relays in Philadelphia, but we did not have a place to stay. A mutual friend called Vincent and Rosemarie to ask if we could stay with them. With no hesitation, they said yes, not knowing me and on short notice. I will always remember that weekend in their beautiful, warm home and their delicious meals. They treated us like family and our spirits connected. I did not see Vincent and Rosemarie again until the late 1990's when, as a Member of Congress, I attended a retreat in Santa Barbara sponsored by the Faith and Politics Institute. The Harding's led this retreat, which renewed my spirit, challenged my intellect and warmed my heart.

Today, California's 13th Congressional District salutes and honors an outstanding Civil Rights leader and social activist, Dr. Vincent Harding. His dedication and efforts have impacted so many lives throughout the nation. I join all of Vincent's loved ones in celebrating his incredible life. He will be deeply missed.