

TRIBUTE TO THE REMARKABLE LIFE OF AMELIA PLATTS BOYNTON ROBINSON

**HON. TERRI A. SEWELL**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 8, 2015*

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the extraordinary life and legacy of an American treasure and one of my personal heroes, the courageous Mrs. Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson. Amelia passed away on August 26, 2015 at the age of 104. While we mourn the loss of this remarkable woman, I am comforted in knowing that her brave spirit will live through her impactful contributions to this nation.

Amelia was a key figure in the voting rights movement in Selma, Alabama and she is often remembered for her historic role as one of the coordinators and marchers on “Bloody Sunday.” On that solemn day on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Amelia was savagely beaten and a photo of her taken shortly after she was attacked became a powerful symbol of the injustices suffered by those fighting on the frontlines of the movement.

Yet this fearless revolutionary continued her work as a leader on the frontlines of securing the right to vote for all Americans. She was undeterred by the perils of a racially unjust society that relegated blacks to second-class citizenship. Her story is a testament to her commitment to serving as a conduit for change and a reminder of why we in Alabama lovingly refer to her as the matriarch of the movement.

Amelia was born on August 18, 1911 in Savannah, Georgia. Her mother was an activist during the women’s suffrage movement. After the passage of the 19th amendment, she and her mother distributed voter registration information to women from the family’s horse and buggy in 1920. Her mother’s tireless efforts to secure the right to vote for women would have a lasting impact on Amelia. It also paved the way for the young activist to claim her own place in American history.

Fueled by that same passion, Amelia began her own service to mankind when she and her husband Samuel Boynton fought for voting rights and property ownership for African-Americans in the poorest rural areas of Alabama. She was later named the only female lieutenant to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the civil rights movement. In this role, Amelia traveled alongside Dr. King and often appeared in his stead for various events and gatherings during the movement.

Amelia is also best known for her leadership that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Amelia was such an integral part of the process that the contents of the bill were drafted at her kitchen table in Selma.

On May 5, 1964, Amelia broke yet another barrier when she became the first woman in the state of Alabama to run for a congressional seat. She garnered 10.7 percent of the vote during a time when very few blacks were registered voters. Her historic run further solidified her impact on the movement for human rights in Alabama.

When this extraordinary woman wasn’t contributing her time to the causes of her generation, she worked as an educator, a home demonstrations agent with the Department of Agriculture, an insurance agent, an income tax

preparer, and a real estate agent. She attended Georgia State Industrial School, which was renamed Savannah State University and Tuskegee Normal, which is now known as Tuskegee University.

Without her courageous campaign for the 7th Congressional District, I know that my election to this seat in 2010 would not have been possible. Her sacrifices paved the way for me to walk the halls of Congress and I will carry my love and admiration for her in my heart each and every day. I will always cherish the time we spent together when she honored me as my special guest for the State of the Union on January 20, 2015. I am grateful for the memories of her greeting President Obama that night and I am so blessed to have called her a beloved mentor and friend.

As she reminded us in life, there is still much work to be done for this nation to live up to its ideals of equality and justice for all. Let us be inspired by the extraordinary life of Amelia to keep striving and working towards a more perfect union. May we honor her by continuing her life’s work. I ask my colleagues to join with me in saluting Mrs. Platts Amelia Boynton Robinson, an Alabama gem and an American treasure. Thank you.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE AND SELFLESS SACRIFICE OF TECHNICAL SERGEANT MARTY B. BETTELYOUN

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 8, 2015*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with both profound sadness and deep gratitude that I rise to pay tribute to a fallen decorated American hero. On Monday, August 3, 2015, Technical Sergeant Marty B. Bettelyoun of the 24th Special Operations Wing, located in Florida’s First Congressional District, tragically lost his life during a military freefall training accident. TSgt Bettelyoun was 35 years old, but lived a lifetime marked by and full of service.

Born to Sonny and Christina Bettelyoun on October 18, 1979 in Eugene, Oregon, TSgt Bettelyoun graduated from Oregon City High School. After graduation, he answered the call and joined the Air Force in 2000. Enduring one of the most challenging training pipelines the United States military has to offer, TSgt Bettelyoun earned his stripes as one of our Nation’s most elite. As a lead instructor in Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape, and later as a Combat Controller with multiple training and combat deployments around the globe, TSgt Bettelyoun’s leadership and devotion to duty served thousands of airmen and our Nation well throughout his prestigious fifteen-year career.

Among his many awards and accolades are the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Unit Award with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with four oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Ribbon Long, Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border, Air

Force Longevity Service Ribbon with two oak leaf clusters, USAF Noncommissioned Officer Professional Military Education Graduate Ribbon with one oak leaf cluster, and the Air Force Training Ribbon.

By all accounts, TSgt Bettelyoun was the consummate leader and selfless warrior in his professional life as well as his personal life. Described by close friends as being able to walk into a room of strangers and leave their friend, TSgt Bettelyoun surely lived a full, albeit too brief, life. A dedicated family man, it remains clear his family was the most important aspect in this young patriot’s life. With five children to his beloved wife, Jennifer, TSgt Bettelyoun and Jennifer took in a young cousin as their own, after the cousin’s parents tragically passed away.

Mr. Speaker, this is the type of man we lost on August 3, 2015. There are no words I, this body of Congress, or the Nation can say that might assuage the bereavement of the Bettelyoun family and the six children Marty leaves behind. All I can say is on behalf of a humble and grateful Nation, we thank them for the love, counsel, guidance, and support given to Marty, which helped make him the hero he became both in uniform and as a father. His life stands as a testament that freedom is not free, and his legacy will echo in time as an example of the ultimate sacrifice for all free people. My wife, Vicki, joins me in praying that God be with Marty’s wife, Jennifer; his children Kalyn, Olivia, Benjamin, Isabella, and Mollie; his parents, Sonny and Christina; brothers Luke and Adam; Stepmother Sharon and Stepfather Jim; and all family and friends during this time of great mourning, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 8, 2015*

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate the Humane Society of Fairfax County for reaching the grand old age of 50, and, perhaps more impressively, for spending those years caring for the animals of Virginia’s 8th District.

The Humane Society of Fairfax County was established by concerned citizens in 1965 in order to pursue the three-fold mission of promoting humane education, preventing all forms of cruelty to animals—both domestic and wild—by every legitimate means available, and assisting the community with all matters pertaining to the welfare of animals.

In furtherance of this mission, the HSFC provides numerous different services for both the animals and people within its community. The HSFC accepts and cares for all animals in need—dogs and cats of course, but also birds, rabbits, gerbils, and more. They care for animals that have been given up by their families and for animals from overwhelmed and kill shelters. They help military families that have special needs in regard to caring for their animals and they provide emergency medical treatment for animals from families that wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford such care.

They provide spay and neuter services for community cats and run a pet food pantry to assist families during financial difficulties.

They do all of this, which would be impressive enough on its own, and yet the HSFC goes even further—they have made a conscious decision not to simply fix the problems that come their way, but to also seek out unaddressed problems and resolve them. They have been involved with legislative issues such as ensuring adequate shelter and veterinary care for animals and stopping the operation of rodeos and circuses. They employ investigators that, for over 40 years, have investigated thousands of cruelty and neglect cases. Finally, they have assisted with the Deer Spay Project for the past 2 years.

I hope I have made it as clear to you as it is to me that the Humane Society of Fairfax County is an outstanding, upstanding organization that has done more than can here be described for the animals and families in their community. I thank them for their valuable work and wish them many more happy anniversaries to come.

IN HONOR OF COLONEL CHARLES EDWARD COOKE

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to a respected public servant and outstanding citizen, Colonel Charles Edward Cooke. Sadly, Colonel Cooke passed away on Sunday, August 2, 2015. Funeral services were held on Monday, August 10, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at Andersonville National Cemetery in Andersonville, Georgia.

Colonel Cooke devoted nearly three decades of his life to protecting his country in the United States Marine Corps, an unwavering responsibility for which we are all greatly indebted. In his 31 years of duty, he was stationed in nine states and eleven countries. Though his responsibilities carried him across the globe, Colonel Cooke always enjoyed returning to his birthplace of Plains, Georgia and hometown of Americus, Georgia.

Throughout his career, Colonel Cooke impacted the lives of thousands of young service men and women who served under him. For his outstanding leadership he was awarded the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal with Gold Star, and the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal. Beyond these achievements and the respect held for him by Marines everywhere, he was an honorable human being who loved deeply and, in return, was deeply loved.

Following his retirement from the Marine Corps in 2004, Colonel Cooke worked for Northrup Grumman as an Information Assurance Specialist. His co-workers and fellow servicemen cherished the smile and boomerang laugh of a man with seasoned wisdom and a passion for reveling in the beauties of life. After 7 years, he retired to full-time community service with organizations such as the Semper Fi Community Task Force and Meals on Wheels.

Colonel Cooke was a resolute steward of Christ's message. His faith and spirituality al-

ways reminded those around him of the power of love and fellowship through Christ and his Church. He earned a Certificate of Biblical Studies from the Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church Institute of Biblical Studies and served as deacon of First Mount Zion Baptist Church in Dumfries, Virginia for four years.

Colonel Cooke is survived by his wife of 44 years, Wilma; daughter, Mary; siblings Oscar, Josie, Lula May, Carrie, and Barbara; six grandchildren; and a host of other family members and friends.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Vivian and I, along with the more than 730,000 people of the Second Congressional District salute Colonel Charles Cooke for his dedicated service to our nation and to his community. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join us in extending our deepest sympathies to Colonel Cooke's family, friends and loved ones during this difficult time. We pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks and months ahead.

HONORING MR. VU VAN LOC FOR HIS SERVICE TO SANTA CLARA COUNTY

**HON. ZOE LOFGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a distinguished member of my community, Mr. Vu Van Loc. Mr. Vu has been a leader in Santa Clara County for nearly forty years. As the founder of the Immigrant Resettlement & Cultural Center, Mr. Vu provided essential resettlement services to Vietnamese refugees immediately after the Fall of Saigon and for decades following. He pioneered the historical preservation of the journey of the Vietnamese Boat People when he created the Viet Museum in San Jose, which displays their journey.

Mr. Vu was born in 1933 in Nam Dinh, North Vietnam. He became a Lieutenant upon graduation from the Dalat academy in 1954. During the Vietnam War, he held multiple leadership positions in the South Vietnam Army, including Colonel Director for the General Logistics Department.

After the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, Vu Van Loc came to the United States and settled in San Jose, California. Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Vu began working with the Indochinese Resettlement & Cultural Center, or IRCC, to assist immigrants arriving from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos who were beginning to settle in Northern California. The Social Planning Committee of Santa Clara County created the IRCC as a temporary office in 1976, but it was Mr. Vu who spearheaded IRCC's efforts and ensured the organization's mission was fulfilled in the decades that followed.

Over forty years, Mr. Vu built the IRCC as a community-based organization to serve Vietnamese immigrants in resettlement. Due to his efforts, IRCC, which changed its name to the Immigrant Resettlement & Cultural Center in the 1990s, has provided over 20,000 immigrants with access to resettlement services, such as ESL classes, job training programs, housing assistance, U.S. citizenship applica-

tion assistance, and voter registration information.

Mr. Vu's work with the IRCC has also ensured that the history of the Vietnam War, and the sacrifice of many South Vietnamese soldiers, is not forgotten. In 1993, Mr. Vu gathered contributions to help restore the abandoned Bien Hoa Military Cemetery in Vietnam. With this support he helped ensure the Vietnamese government would not destroy the site as it had other military cemeteries.

Mr. Vu also had a vision for the creation of a museum that preserved the history of South Vietnam, the Vietnam War, and the diaspora of Vietnamese Boat People. In 2008, the Republic of Vietnam Boat People Museum opened at History Park in San Jose. Mr. Vu's efforts were critical in building community support to establish the museum. Today, the Viet Museum is a San Jose treasure that ensures the courageous stories from survivors of the Vietnamese Exodus are never forgotten, especially by young people.

Vu Van Loc has been a dedicated leader within the Vietnamese community in Santa Clara County. I had the pleasure of first meeting Mr. Vu when I served on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. He has been an important friend throughout my public service to Santa Clara County. I am grateful for his dedication, and through these remarks I hereby recognize and commend Mr. Vu for his service to Santa Clara County and our immigrant community.

HONORING CHANCELLOR JOSÉ ORTIZ

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of Dr. José Ortiz, Chancellor of Peralta Community College District. The Peralta District spans six cities within the East Bay and serves over 60,000 students.

Dr. Ortiz has spent his career serving within institutions of higher education and in a variety of administrative positions. His career brought him to campuses in California, Maryland, and the University of Puerto Rico at Bayamon. His range of experience, both professionally and culturally, made him the ideal candidate to serve at Peralta, which is within my Congressional District; the most diverse Congressional district in the nation.

Prior to serving as Chancellor, Dr. Ortiz served as Vice President to Laney College, which falls under the umbrella of the Peralta Community College system. While there he was known for his deep understanding and commitment to the many challenges facing the extremely diverse student body.

Later, in 2005, Dr. Ortiz moved on to become President of Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria, California, where he served until 2012. Little did he know he would one day return home to Oakland and the Peralta system. Dr. Ortiz's appointment served as an opportunity for him to return home to foster his friendly relationships and spend more time with his family.

His appointment came in the years following the Great Recession, at a time when community college districts across the nation were