

Ben E. King was the definition of R&B elegance. King's plaintive baritone had all the passion of gospel; however the settings in which it was displayed with his honey smooth phrasing and crisp enunciation, proved, for perhaps the first time, that R&B could be sophisticated and accessible to pop audiences. King's approach influenced countless smooth soul singers in his wake, and his records were key forerunners of the Motown sound.

On September 28, 1938, King was born under the given name of Benjamin Earl Nelson in Henderson, North Carolina, where he sang with his church choir before the family moved to Harlem in 1947. In junior high, he began performing with a street corner doo wop group called the Four B's, which won second place in an Apollo Theater talent contest. While attending high school, he was offered a chance to join the Moonglows, but was simply too young and inexperienced to stick. He subsequently worked at his father's restaurant as a singing waiter, which led to an invitation to become the baritone singer in a doo wop outfit called the Five Crowns in 1958.

The Five Crowns performed several gigs at the Apollo Theater along with the Drifters, whose career had begun to flounder in the years since original lead singer Clyde McPhatter departed. Drifters manager George Treadwell, dissatisfied with the group members' unreliability and lack of success, fired them all in the summer of 1958 and hired the Five Crowns to assume the name of the Drifters.

The new Drifters toured for about a year, playing to hostile audiences who knew they were a completely different group. In early 1959, they went into the studio with producers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller to cut their first records. A song Nelson (still performing under his given name) co-wrote called "There Goes My Baby" became his first lead vocal, and the lush backing arrangement made highly unorthodox (in fact, virtually unheard of) use of a string section. "There Goes My Baby" became a massive hit, laying the groundwork for virtually every smooth/uptown soul production that followed. Over the next two years, Nelson sang lead on several other Drifters classics, including "Dance with Me," "This Magic Moment," "Save the Last Dance for Me," and "I Count the Tears."

In 1960, Nelson approached Treadwell about a salary increase and a fairer share of the group's royalties. Treadwell rebuffed him and Nelson quit the group, at this point assuming the more memorable stage name Ben E. King in preparation for a solo career. Remaining on Atlantic, King scored his first solo hit with the stylish, Latin-tinged ballad "Spanish Harlem," a Jerry Leiber/Phil Spector composition that hit the Top Ten in early 1961. The follow-up, "Stand by Me," a heartfelt ode to friendship and devotion co-written by King, became his signature song and an enduring R&B classic; it was also his biggest hit, topping the R&B charts and reaching the pop Top Five.

King scored a few more chart singles through 1963, including velvety smooth pop-soul productions like "Amor," "Don't Play That Song (You Lied)," and the Italian tune "I (Who Have Nothing)." In the post-British Invasion years, King had a rough go of it on the pop charts but continued to score R&B hits. 1967's Southern-fried "What Is Soul?" was one of his last singles for Atco before departing the label in 1969.

In 1975, Atlantic president Ahmet Ertegun caught King's act in a Miami lounge and invited him to re-sign with the label. King scored an unlikely comeback smash with the disco track "Supernatural Thing, Pt. I," which returned him to the top of the R&B charts in 1975 and also reached the pop Top Five. While he was unable to duplicate that single's success, King recorded several more albums for Atlantic up through 1981, and also collaborated with the Average White Band in 1977 on the album Benny & Us. After leaving Atlantic a second time, King toured in a version of the Drifters beginning in 1982.

In 1986, "Stand by Me" was prominently featured in the Rob Reiner film of the same name; re-released as a single, it climbed into the Top Ten all over again. In its wake, King returned to solo recording, issuing albums every few years. He also guested on recordings by Heaven 17 and Mark Knopfler, among others. King's 1999 album Shades of Blue (on Half Note Records) found him branching out into jazz territory, performing with a big band and guests like Milt Jackson and David "Fathead" Newman.

On March 27, 2012, the Songwriters Hall of Fame announced that "Stand By Me" would receive its 2012 Towering Song Award and that King would be honored with the 2012 Towering Performance Award for his recording of the song. King toured the United Kingdom in 2013 and played concerts in the United States as late as 2014, despite reported health problems. Ben E. King died on April 30, 2015, after a brief illness. King has been covered by acts from several genres and artist including Shirley Bassey, Tom Jones in 1970 and Sylvester. "Till I Can't Get It Anymore" was revisited by peer Ray Charles in 1970 and "Spanish Harlem" was sung by Aretha Franklin in 1971. "Stand by Me" was covered by Otis Redding, John Lennon and Mickey Gilley. King also inspired several rock bands: Siouxsie and the Banshees recorded "Supernatural Thing" in 1981 and Led Zeppelin did a cover version of "Groovin'", more known under the title of "We're Gonna Groove."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing Benjamin E. King, and honoring his truly pioneer work, dedication, and great accomplishments; worthy of our Nation's highest artistic and charitable esteem. He is an example of someone who used his raw talent to become a legendary figure, and set the groundwork for many others that followed.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, the Church Plan Clarification Act addresses several unintended consequences resulting from the application of general tax and pension regulations to the unique structures of church pension plans. Churches and synagogues established some of the first pension plans in the country, several dating back to the 18th century, and they

are designed to ensure that our clergy and laystaff have adequate resources during their retirement years.

Church plans are often structured to reflect the ecclesiastical teachings of their denomination. The resulting diversity of plan structures, coupled with the complexity of the legal and regulatory framework that applies to church plans, has led to the need for this legislation. The bill would correct several technical issues that are critical to the functioning and operation of church plans and the retirement benefits they provide.

While the corrections contained in PATH Act would be of tremendous help to church plans, I want to make clear that the bill does not affect the definition of "church plan" under the Internal Revenue Code or Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, ERISA. In particular, no inference is intended by this legislation regarding the statutory requirements a pension plan must meet to be considered or treated as a "church plan" under IRC section 414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code and section 3(33) of ERISA, and the bill has no bearing on the interpretation of those sections. Rather, the Church Plan Clarification Act is simply about fixing the rules that govern how church plans operate and serve their participants.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,788,138,221,346.49. We've added \$8,161,261,172,243.41 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

#### RECOGNIZING GARY BRACKETT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and congratulate Gary Brackett, longtime Business and Political Manager for the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce, on his retirement after nearly four decades of service to the Tacoma-Pierce County community.

The Puget Sound region is home to a large number of military personnel, retirees, and their families. Over the course of Gary's 36 years at the Chamber, his top priority has been to advocate for this community in Pierce County and beyond. When Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM)—and other military installations—faced drastic cuts to its workforce in recent years due to federal budget cuts in defense spending, Gary led local efforts to retain

as many troops as possible by providing the U.S. Army with a quantitative analysis of JBLM's vital role to the region and to U.S. national security. His diligence and successful coalition-building helped to minimize the negative impacts that a reduction in military personnel would have entailed, including a projected \$1 billion loss in economic activity in the region that could have resulted.

Throughout his career at the Chamber, Gary made it a priority to not only interact with local and state leaders, but to have a presence in Washington, D.C. as well. He was instrumental in helping to secure federal funding for the construction of much-needed elementary schools at JBLM, local water and sewage projects, and other transportation infrastructure improvements on base. In recognition of his leadership, Gary was asked by Governor Inslee to serve on the Washington Military Alliance (WMA) where he worked to ensure the continued liveliness of Washington's military and defense sector community.

Gary's success at building coalitions includes his significant role in the development of an ongoing positive relationship between JBLM and its surrounding communities. Through his work to create the Chamber's Military Affairs Forum, base commanders and personnel have the opportunity to interact with local business and political leaders on a monthly basis. The Forum has served as an open platform to discuss controversial issues including joint land use and clear zone funding. Due to its success over the years, the Military Affairs Forum has served as a model for similar military communities across the country.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate Gary Brackett on his retirement and accomplishments. His leadership has been critical to fostering a thriving economy and maintaining the quality of life of Pierce County businesses and military personnel and their families in Washington State.

CONGRATULATING RON HAYNES  
ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE  
CITY OF HURST, TEXAS

**HON. KENNY MARCHANT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ron Haynes on his well-earned retirement from the City of Hurst, Texas.

Ron Haynes is a hardworking, respected employee of Hurst, and has been since he began in March of 1985. He has displayed strong leadership and instilled positive change throughout his tenure. His quick ascension demonstrates his dedication, efficiency, and success as a worker for the people of Hurst. Ron began as an engineer in 1985, became Director of Public Works just two years later, and has held that post since.

Born a Texan, Ron graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1970 and married his wife, Dixie, in 1971. He then attended North Texas State University where he would graduate with a Master in Public Administration in 1982 while working for Dallas Water Utilities. They went on to have three beautiful children, Brian, Keri and Amy.

Outside of work, Ron is very active in the community. He has been involved in several organizations and groups over the years. Ron was a member of Rotary in the Mid-Cities for nearly a decade, as well as the City of Fort Worth's Wholesale Water and Wastewater Customers' Committee for 28 years. Other organizations he participated in over the years include the American Water Works Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, and the American Public Works Association. He also received a Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Municipal Utilities Association in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the exhaustive efforts Ron has contributed to the City of Hurst. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing Ron Haynes and his many years of service.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RE-  
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIA-  
TIONS ACT, 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Omnibus Appropriations bill. While this is far from a perfect bill, I believe it represents the best way forward to keep the government open and advance many important priorities that help Maryland get ahead. I thank Ranking Members MIKULSKI and LOWEY and the Democratic negotiators for their work to protect critical priorities.

I was pleased to help lead efforts to lift sequester caps, which has allowed us to make needed investment to support jobs and the economy. The Purple Line, WMATA, and efforts to ensure a clean Chesapeake Bay are all supported. The National Institutes of Health will see its most significant funding boost in many years. Education programs like Head Start, Title I, and special education get added resources, and the maximum Pell grant will be increased. And I am pleased that funding for full consolidation of the FBI headquarters was included in the bill—Team Maryland will keep fighting for it to be relocated to Prince George's County.

Important tax provisions were included in the Omnibus. I strongly support extension of the renewable energy tax incentives that will create jobs and aid our transition to a clean energy economy. I am also pleased with the delay in the so-called Cadillac tax, which would otherwise erode health benefits for workers. The Omnibus also reauthorizes the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, finally fulfilling our promise to first responders.

Democrats were also able to reject countless corrosive policy riders, including those that would defund Planned Parenthood, block refugees from Syria, pollute our air and water, and erode worker protections.

However, some damaging riders remain. I strongly oppose lifting the oil export ban, a Christmas gift to Big Oil. If we are to reduce global carbon emissions, as world leaders pledged to do just last weekend, we must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and keep

more of them in the ground. Lifting the export ban would do the opposite. Moreover, there is no evidence that American consumers would see any benefit from this policy.

The Omnibus also contains a rider to delay action at the IRS to clarify rules surrounding political activities by nonprofits. It delays efforts at the SEC to require corporate disclosure of political spending, a critical step to address the dark money that is influencing our elections.

The bill continues the prohibition on gun violence research—known as the Dickey Amendment—that our nation's public health experts strongly oppose. We should be acting with urgency to confront this plague of violence in our nation, and that includes research into preventing injuries and death. Even former Congressman Jay Dickey, who authored the amendment, now opposes it, writing in the Washington Post that "The same evidence-based approach that is saving millions of lives from motor-vehicle crashes, as well as from smoking, cancer and HIV/AIDS, can help reduce the toll of deaths and injuries from gun violence."

I am troubled by provisions of a cybersecurity authorization that were packaged into this bill and believe they deserve a fuller hearing than the few days we have had to review this measure. While cyber attacks are a clear threat that must be confronted, we must be vigilant to ensure the protection of civil liberties.

While I support the short-term extension of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, I am disappointed that a permanent extension was blocked. LWCF funds are a critical tool for local conservation and the program should not be allowed to lapse, as it did in October for the first time in 51 years.

I remain concerned that we are underfunding important investments in the middle class and those working to join the middle class, particularly in light of the enormous, unpaid-for tax package that was just passed by this House. If we can afford tax giveaways to special interests, we can afford a stronger investment in middle class families and those seeking to join the middle class. More must be done to bring families out of poverty, rebuild our infrastructure, and provide opportunity to all.

Ultimately, no bill of this size is perfect, and all sides have made concessions to move our country forward. I will continue to fight for the investments we need to make our nation safer, stronger, and more prosperous for all.

RECOGNIZING DEAN WILLIAM  
REEDER OF GEORGE MASON UNI-  
VERSITY FOR HIS COMMITMENT  
TO THE ARTS AND EDUCATION

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 18, 2015*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dean William (Bill) Reeder of George Mason University on his career in education, management, philanthropic administration, and most notably, the arts.

Over the span of his 40-year career, Dean Reeder has raised over \$250 million in private funds for the arts and education. Reeder is the