

Brigadier General Wayne A. Wright retires as the Chief of Staff/Air Component Commander, Virginia Air National Guard, responsible for the command and control of 1,230 Virginia Air National Guard members, representing five organizations. Provided to the Governor and Adjutant General of Virginia, Air Guard military forces protect and defend the Commonwealth, and when activated to federal military duty, provide those same forces to the President of the United States.

General Wright entered the United States Air Force and received his commission in 1981 after graduating from the University of South Carolina. He transitioned from active duty to the Georgia Air National Guard in 1992. General Wright has held various leadership and command positions at the squadron, group, wing and major command levels. His assignments involved operations and formal training of United States Air Force and allied Command and Control personnel. He also worked in the developmental and operational testing arena. General Wright is a Master Air Battle Manager with qualifications in six ground-based Command and Control systems including joint and allied systems.

General Wright has been awarded the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Force Commendation Medal (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Combat Readiness Medal, National Defense Service Medal (with 1 Bronze Service Star), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Ribbon Short Tour, Air Force Overseas Ribbon Long Tour, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon (with 1 Silver and 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster), and the Air Force Training Ribbon.

Brigadier General Wright has excelled throughout his distinguished career and I am honored to pay tribute to this Airman. I thank Wayne's wife, Jeanette, and their daughter, Jessica and Son-in-law, Jeremy along with their children, Noah and Haley as well as their son Justin and his wife Caitlin and also Kelly and Dawson for the many years they have supported Wayne while he served his country. I wish Wayne and Jeanette Godspeed, and continued happiness as they start a new chapter in their lives.

AMERICA'S HEART AND SOUL

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance and in honor of all of The Fallen and their families this Memorial Day. The Men and Women who have given that last full measure in the name of freedom. I submit this poem penned by Albert Carey Caswell.

On this Monday each year.
As all across our Nation appears.
Rows of flags in graveyards here.
And far across the distant shores too revered!
As we take the time as a Nation so clear.
With memories of them in our hearts so dear.

As the parade's line the streets all across the towns.

As throughout the Nation in graveyards planted flags are found.

When, we as a Nation take the time to stop and pause.

To remember and honor all of those patriot's in their just cause.

Because, Memorial Day represents America's very Heart so clear.

Her very soul all in what we hold dear!
For on no other day do we as a Nation remember and grieve so here.

And shed such tears,
as above all else this ranks each year.
For all of those who now lie in soft cold quiet graves.

Who over the decades have shown,
how men and women of honor behave!
I'm sorry but your son Johnny's not coming home!

But for the greater good their fine lives they gave!

Because Freedom Is Not Free,
but with only most precious lives bought and paid!

A price so high and grave!
Remember this,
and remember them this Memorial Day!
And give thanks to all of their families with tears upon their faces.

Whose hearts on this and everyday so break in places!

And thank all those heroes who came back from war.

Without arms and legs and PTS the more!
Who the rest of their young lives must endure.

Memorial Day is our heart and soul,
the one fine reason we have all that we behold!

Our Freedom bought and paid for with the blood of human gold!

The one's who will never get that chance to grow old!

Carry them in your hearts so,
and give thanks and remember what to them you owe!

Memorial Day is but,
America's Heart and Soul!

CONGRATULATING CORNELIA "CONNIE" BAER

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Cornelia "Connie" Baer, an exemplary civic servant, advocate, and community leader in Ventura County.

Connie has embodied public service through her staunch leadership and advocacy, as well as steadfast dedication and continued commitment to our community. Over several decades, Connie has generously given her time and energy as a valued and highly respected board member and representative for an array of organizations, including the Harbor Community Council, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the League of Women Voters. Both locally and nationally, Connie has been a vocal advocate for equality. She was instrumental in the founding of the Stonewall Democrats of Ventura County. In addition, she has played a significant role in the establishment and development of the Ventura County Women's Political Council, which encourages all women to actively engage and participate in the political process.

Additionally, since earning her bachelor's degree in International Relations, Connie has

been an active alumnus of the University of Southern California (USC). Connie also attended the Southwestern University School of Law, where she received her Juris Doctor degree, and later embarked on a respected career in law in Ventura County.

Connie's dedication and outstanding volunteerism is best illustrated by her 19 years of service on the Ventura County Medical Resource Foundation's Board of Directors. Through her service and leadership, Connie has successfully assisted the organization in furthering its mission of supporting the medical needs of Ventura County's under-served and vulnerable communities.

From providing the life-saving medical equipment for premature infants to providing dental and vision care to children of low-income households to funding breast cancer prevention, early detection and treatment programs, the Ventura County Medical Resource Foundation is ensuring that quality health care services are readily available and accessible to all of Ventura County's residents. However, this outstanding organization could not offer these invaluable services if it were not for the remarkable generosity and commitment of individuals such as Connie Baer.

For these reasons, it is my sincere pleasure to join the Ventura County Medical Resource Foundation in recognizing Connie Baer with the 2015 Trailblazer Award for her extraordinary life of leadership and service to the entire Ventura County community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUDGE DAVID SILVA

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Judge David Silva. Born in Beeville, Texas, on May 26, 1944, to Marcos and Altagracia Silva, Judge Silva passed away on March 16, 2015, after losing a long battle with leukemia.

Judge Silva's life exemplified the American Dream. He graduated from A.C. Jones High School in 1963, before joining the U.S. Air Force to faithfully serve his country. While in the Air Force, Silva attended Boise State College in Idaho and married Yolanda Olivares.

One year after being honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force, Silva graduated from Bee County College. He would go on to earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree in American History in 1975 and a Master of Arts Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies: History, Psychology and Sociology from Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Judge Silva understood how education would forever transform his life. From 1974 until his passing, he taught at Beeville College, helping students realize their potential through education.

In addition to his active role in educating citizens of Beeville, he was a church pastor, served on the Juvenile Board to help at-risk youth, provided guidance to the Local Emergency Planning Committee, and helped plan the future of Beeville. Silva's contributions to his community are without equal.

In 2004, Silva's reputation for fairness, dedication, and love for his community earned him

an appointment to the Beeville Municipal Court. This moment in Silva's life arrived after decades of dedicated effort and service to his community. He worked his way through high school as a janitor in the same courthouse where he would later serve as a judge. He lived a life defined by integrity, commitment and dedication.

Silva would continue to be a pillar of the Beeville community during his later years. He found time to help lead community boards as he continued his passion for education. His capacity to perform at a high level was second to none.

Our community suffered a tremendous loss with Judge Silva's passing, but his legacy will be preserved by the positive change he made in his community and through the many students who had the privilege to learn from him in the classroom.

Judge David Silva is survived by his beloved wife of 44 years, Yolanda Olivares Silva; his daughters, Cassandra Dianne Silva (Casey Hawks), and Cristianna Dawn Silva Meineke (Aaron Meineke); siblings, John Marks Silva, Amado Silva (Zenaída), and Grace Ramirez (Adolfo). He is also survived by a granddaughter, Audria Nouvelle Diem Silva.

On this day, I remember Judge David Silva. May he forever rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF BISHOP CURTIS E. MONTGOMERY

HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Bishop Curtis Montgomery of Tacoma, WA. Curtis epitomized the role that long-standing faith leaders play in their community. He was a tireless advocate for the members of his congregation and the greater Tacoma community.

Bishop Montgomery was a key leader who shepherded Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood through the civil rights struggles of the 1960s and the gang and drug violence of the 1980s. His steadfast leadership and staunch belief in the power of community involvement will be remembered in the revitalization of this historically significant neighborhood.

His contributions to the Hilltop include the establishment of Christ Temple Church in 1959, which later became Greater Christ Temple Church in 1977. Under his leadership, Greater Christ Temple Church has become much more than a place for worship. Parishioners are community leaders, volunteers, and advocates for the work that Curtis has espoused his entire life.

One of his most esteemed accomplishments was the realization of the Oasis of Hope Center. This faith-based community outreach center was the culmination of Bishop Montgomery's efforts and long-standing vision to provide a safe and stable place for the community to serve their neighbors. Opened in 2004, the Oasis of Hope Center has operated feeding programs, a clothing bank, counseling services, youth programs, and donation drives.

Mr. Speaker, last year there were over 500 Hilltop community members served at the Center's annual Share the Harvest Thanks-

giving Meal. I have been told there were more volunteers than they could possibly need for that dinner. This simple fact is just one piece of evidence representing his legacy and his vision. Scripture tells us that God loves a cheerful giver. It's safe to say God loves Curtis Montgomery and his parishioners—who have given so much, to so many, for so long.

Bishop Curtis Montgomery was born in Selma, AL, which was central in the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. He was raised to stamp out discrimination and racism. He built his church and developed a powerful message of tolerance and peace. Bishop Montgomery served his community in the steps of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who he admired and followed from an early age.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of visiting Selma on the 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday and had the privilege to join leaders like Rep. JOHN LEWIS in commemoration of the struggle for equal rights. I am proud to have walked in the hometown of Bishop Curtis Montgomery with the knowledge that his contribution to a safer and more equitable society would not be forgotten—that his legacy was etched with his brothers and sisters in Selma, 50 years later.

On behalf of his congregation and the people of the Hilltop Neighborhood in Tacoma, WA, I stand today, proudly, to honor the lifetime achievements of Bishop Curtis Montgomery of Greater Christ Temple Church in the Congress of the United States.

HONORING MS. ANDREA JENKINS

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Andrea Jenkins, who has been chosen to serve as Grand Marshal for the 2015 Twin Cities Pride parade and festival because of her distinguished contributions to the citizens of Minnesota in the form of art and activism.

Ms. Jenkins has been among the Twin Cities' leading advocates for transgender equity, especially at the intersections of race and class. During her 12-year career as a policy aide for the Minneapolis City Council, Ms. Jenkins was central in raising the profile of transgender issues among Minnesota's most influential policymakers. Under her leadership, the City of Minneapolis started the Transgender Issues Work Group, a roundtable dedicated to changing city ordinances to improve the lives of transgender citizens. Local and national media outlets have covered her efforts—raising the profile of an often-overlooked segment of the population. At a time when our nation is seeing an epidemic of violence against transgender individuals—specifically trans women of color—Ms. Jenkins's work is critical.

In addition to her work in the political realm, Ms. Jenkins is an award-winning poet and performance artist. Her work has been honored by the Jerome Foundation, Intermedia Arts, The Playwrights' Center, the Walker Art Center, the Givens Foundation, the Loft Literary Center, and countless other arts organizations. In 2011, she was named a Bush Fellow.

On top of crafting nuanced pieces that reflect her identity as a trans woman of color,

Ms. Jenkins serves on numerous boards and panels, including serving as the board chair of Intermedia Arts. This leadership has allowed Ms. Jenkins to create some of the Twin Cities' most inclusive and boundary-pushing events, frequently centering the voices of those at "the margins of the margins." One such event, the Queer Voices reading series, is the longest-running series of its kind in the country.

Recently, Ms. Jenkins left her position with the City of Minneapolis to begin curating the Transgender Oral History Project, part of the University of Minnesota's Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection. In this role, she will travel throughout the upper Midwest to document the experiences of transgender people. This permanent record will serve as one of the nation's most comprehensive catalogs of contemporary transgender life.

At a time when the T in LGBT is often overlooked, Andrea Jenkins has helped move the spotlight to the trans community. Her work has sparked conversation, propagated knowledge and forged a path for future trans leaders. Her work in our community is inestimable and I congratulate her on being selected Grand Marshal. I am proud to call her a friend and ally.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE HELP HIRE OUR HEROES ACT

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge the House to bring to the floor my bill, the Help Hire our Heroes Act.

My bill would renew the Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance Program (VRAP) and permit additional veterans to participate in the program. As you may know, the VRAP program provides up to 12 months of re-training assistance to veterans in need of employment training, but who are unable to participate in other VA programs because of their age and time since active duty service.

Specifically, the program provided training assistance to unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 who are no longer eligible for the GI Bill. Veterans could use these benefits at community colleges and technical schools in occupations that the Department of Labor identified as "high demand."

The VRAP program started in 2012, but funding for this program expired in March 2014 and the VA has not been able to enroll new veterans in VRAP.

In 2014, there were 573,000 unemployed veterans, 55 percent of whom were age 45 and up. I simply do not understand why the Majority has allowed this important veterans' job training program to lapse. It has resulted in thousands of older, qualified veterans being unable to access job training to help them find work.

As we approach Memorial Day, Congress should be doing all it can to help unemployed veterans find work. Please bring my bill to the floor, so that we can renew the Veterans Re-training Assistance Program.