

CELEBRATING 2016 NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

**HON. DAN BENISHEK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 2016 National Catholic Schools Week. Across the First District of Michigan, there are 22 Catholic schools providing a first rate education to over 4,100 students that combines faith with academic excellence. Since coming to Congress, it has been an honor to meet with students in Catholic schools across my district at St. Francis de Sales in Manistique, Manistee Catholic Central School in Manistee, and Menominee Catholic Central School in Menominee, among others.

This year, the theme of National Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service." As a lifelong Catholic, former student, and frequent guest of schools across Northern Michigan, I know that the Catholic schools in our region are certainly living up to these goals.

This year, Congress was blessed to hear from Pope Francis. Pope Francis has called on all Catholic schools to "provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values."

In light of this, I have signed onto House Resolution 35, a resolution that honors the contributions that Catholic schools have made to the United States and its people. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 35, and urge my colleagues to support this resolution as well. Together, we must all recognize the significant contributions that Catholic schools have made to our country.

HONORING BOONE EVANS

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Boone Evans. Boone is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Boone has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Boone has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Boone has led his troop as the Senior Patrol Leader, earned the rank of Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, and has become a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow. Boone has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Boone Evans for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF NICOLINA  
(NICKI) R. CARDWELL FOR HER  
DEDICATED CAREER OF PUBLIC  
SERVICE

**HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of our own. On Friday, January 22, 2016, Ms. Nicolina (Nicki) Cardwell retired from my office after serving a combined seventeen years for the people of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District as a Community Affairs Liaison for eleven years in my Independence District Office and six years with my predecessor. Overall, Nicki dedicated four decades of public service to our community, as a teacher, county employee, and ultimately retiring from Congressional service, spending much of her career based in Eastern Jackson County, Missouri.

Born May 7, 1947, to an Italian mother, Silva Piva, and a Kansan father, George Morris, Nicolina Rowena Maria Cardwell often reminds folks of her proud Italian heritage. After studying at Central Missouri State University and taking time to raise a beautiful family, Nicki returned to school. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Health, going on to teach in public and private schools in Independence, helping to shape future generations.

Nicki has spent much of her adult life as a resident of Independence, Missouri, home to Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States. She is well known throughout the area, as she has been an active volunteer in the community and politically active for causes and individuals she supports. In 1988, Nicki joined the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department, holding a variety of positions over the next ten years, including in the Speaker's Bureau, where she helped introduce thousands of individuals to Jackson County's programs, facilities, and parks. Among many other responsibilities, Nicki assisted with marketing, group events, and public relations while working for the County.

In 1999, Nicki joined the staff of my predecessor, Congresswoman Karen McCarthy. While being considered for the position, some of her prior employers called her, "the best we've ever had dealing with the public," and "a hard worker—very good." As she assumed her new role as a caseworker, Nicki handled passports, immigration, and veterans issues among others impacting residents of Missouri's Fifth District. She was often the recipient of great praise from constituents she helped, including in one letter to the editor in which the constituent had faced repeated roadblocks before making his first call to a Congressional office. He wrote:

"... I called [the Congressional] office expecting another difficult process. Nicki Cardwell called me back within five minutes. She proceeded to treat me as if I were 'family.' I know that she is very busy, but I felt like I was the only one on her agenda. She went beyond the call of duty and even met with me on a Saturday afternoon to complete the paperwork I needed. . . . She made me feel very comfortable throughout the entire process. She took a lot of stress off my shoulders, and

I would just like others to know how considerate and kind a government employee can be."

This type of praise was not uncommon for Nicki. Her personnel folder is full of thank you notes and emails referring to her as "jumping right into the action", "could not have been more helpful", and "beyond the call of duty." Her dedication to constituents led one individual to even refer to her positively as a "bulldog" and went on to say "You're lucky to have such a person on your staff."

So it should come as no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that when I was first elected to Congress in November, 2004, I knew immediately who my first staff hire would be. The list of civic leaders and elected officials advocating that I hire Nicki was lengthy, but they did not need to convince me. I knew after our conversation that a more passionate and caring caseworker did not exist.

Over the past eleven years, Nicki has helped thousands of constituents. She has worked primarily with our veterans and active military personnel, but does not hesitate to jump in to help whenever needed. She often would spend hours listening to constituents in person or on the telephone as they shared their struggles with her, pleased to find an empathetic listener. Her compassion for the men and women in uniform who have served and continue to serve our nation is unparalleled. She regularly attended Stand Downs, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day events with me, or on my behalf. She worked to honor veterans through helping to arrange special events for Vietnam veterans, Korean veterans, World War I veterans, World War II veterans, and Tuskegee Airmen, just to name a few. She created a Veterans Advisory Committee to help serve as a sounding board when important issues arose within the VA system or in proposed legislation. In addition, Nicki spent countless hours every year helping our young people going through the Academy nomination process, giving counsel and advice to those eager to join our prestigious military institutions.

Given Nicki's background, she often assisted with many of our special projects as well. There have been too many projects to name them all, but the one that stands out is our annual Congressional Art Contest. Nicki's leadership helped shepherd record participation with nearly 200 pieces of artwork from high school students around the Fifth District being submitted for consideration. She worked personally with principals and art teachers to encourage submissions to guarantee all parts of the District were well represented. She carefully handled and displayed each piece as if it were her own. She helped secure some of our community's strongest advocates for the arts to judge the students' submissions to ensure the winning artwork hanging in the Cannon Tunnel represented the best of our District. Students and teachers alike have come to rely on Nicki's friendship and expertise and they will surely miss her guidance, as will I.

In addition to Nicki's primary role as a caseworker, she also regularly represented the office at meetings and events throughout the District. She was a regular at the Independence Chamber of Commerce, the Eastern Jackson County Betterment Council, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the Truman Presidential Library and Museum, and 40 Club to name but a few. She is as well

known in our community as anyone and oftentimes when I would join her for an appearance at one of these events, individuals would approach me to share how much they appreciated Nicki's active participation and unequalled dedication to the people of our District.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues in this Chamber know, we are regularly pulled in many directions as we try to represent the nearly 800,000 constituents in our Districts. Oftentimes, it is our staff, serving behind the scenes, helping to ensure those constituents get prompt attention as they maneuver through the bureaucratic hurdles that regrettably get in the way. There is not a member of this esteemed body who wouldn't be proud to have Nicki Cardwell on their team, and her service has certainly been a blessing for me. She is a loyal, caring, and compassionate individual whose commitment to Missouri's Fifth District will be sorely missed. As she retires to spend more time with her family and loved ones, I encourage my colleagues to join me in recognizing her lifetime of dedication to our community and country and wishing her continued success. The people of Missouri's Fifth District, including me, are better off because of Ms. Nicolina R. Cardwell.

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IN RECOGNITION OF CHIEF  
RODNEY JONES

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**HON. NORMA J. TORRES**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Rodney Jones of the Fontana Police Department for his 35 years of service to the Inland Empire.

Chief Jones began his career as a public safety official in 1981 and has since served in various capacities to lead police activity in the City of Fontana where his work throughout the years has earned him praise from both his peers and residents of the community. Chief Jones' leadership has also garnered him numerous commendations from national, state, and local police organizations for his outstanding service. All of these accolades highlight his extraordinary commitment to public safety, which has greatly benefited the people of our region.

Chief Jones' distinguished career in law enforcement is further bolstered by his role as head of the Fontana Police Department. Throughout his tenure as Chief of Police, he administered many reforms that have enhanced public safety in the region. His accomplishments include overseeing a \$12 million expansion of Fontana's police headquarters and implementing modern police procedures to improve operations in the area.

On Friday, February 5th, Chief Jones will retire from the Fontana Police Department. He will be missed by the community. I thank him for his contributions to our region and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

For his many contributions to the Fontana Police Department and other achievements, I would like to recognize Chief Rodney Jones.

CONGRATULATING RONNIE  
METSKE

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**HON. KEVIN YODER**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend Ronnie Metsker for his appointment to serve the State of Kansas as Johnson County Election Commissioner.

Ronnie is honest, trustworthy, sincere, and a true gentleman.

He served with me as a member of the Kansas State House of Representatives from 2006 to 2009.

He's been a long-time member of both the Overland Park and Northeast Johnson County Chambers of Commerce, as well as on the Shawnee Mission Rotary Board of Directors, working to bring more jobs and better paychecks to the community.

He's fought for the best education for our children and future generations on the Shawnee Mission School District Committee for Excellence.

But most of all, he is my friend.

I want to thank Ronnie for making Johnson County a better place over the course of decades of hard work on behalf of the community.

I should also mention Ronnie's wife, Susan, is a member of my district staff. Together these two make a great team and much have dedicated their lives to public service.

There is no better person to ensure the integrity of the elections in our county.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this great body, I send heartfelt congratulations to Commissioner Metsker.

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HONORING GRANT CORKILL

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**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Grant Corkill. Grant is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1412, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Grant has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Grant has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Grant has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Grant planned and led the construction of a perch pole at Smithville Lake for eagles and other birds to rest on within easy sight for bird-watchers.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Grant Corkill for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE USO

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**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 75th anniversary of the United Service Organizations Inc. (USO). The USO is a shining example of what can be achieved by an organization committed to serving those who wear the uniform. Throughout its proud history, the USO has served millions of servicemembers and their families, ensuring that our Nation's heroes remain connected to their communities and families wherever their service to our country may take them.

As Thomas Jefferson wrote during his time as the United States Ambassador to France, "No society is so precious as that of one's own family." The brave men and women who choose to serve our Nation, to protect and uphold our Constitution, understand that their decision may lead to extended absences from their loved ones. While they take on this sacrifice without asking for anything in return, the USO was founded on the belief that, when the military mission takes our servicemembers away from their loved ones, we have a duty to support them by keeping them connected to their family, their home, and our country.

The USO was formed during one of the most challenging periods in our history. With the United States on the brink of entry into World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt brought together six private organizations—the YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Service, the National Jewish Welfare Board, the Traveler's Aid Association and the Salvation Army—to create a new organization wholly dedicated to maintaining the bonds of family and comforts of home. In response, these organizations pooled their resources, and, on February 4, 1941, the USO was born.

As American servicemembers began fighting in World War II, the USO teamed up with Coca-Cola to provide every servicemember with the taste of home, and they also established the world famous USO show concept. From 1941 to 1947, an incredible 428,521 USO shows were performed, and by the end of World War II more than 1.5 million Americans had volunteered on the USO's behalf.

Building on their incredibly successful efforts during World War II, the USO has accompanied our troops during wartime in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In Korea, not a single day passed without a USO show for the troops, while in Vietnam the USO's 17 centers in Vietnam and six in Thailand served more than a million servicemembers a month, including with the famous Bob Hope USO Christmas shows. In recognition of their work, the USO entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Defense in 1987, which recognized the USO as the principal channel representing civilian concerns for servicemembers worldwide.

Today, the USO, with the support of 30,000 volunteers and 600 employees, provides services, entertainment, and programs at more than 180 locations worldwide. From Afghanistan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Djibouti, to Germany Italy, Japan, South