

Alumni Association and the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus for Military Service by Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. In 2010, he was also inducted into the Henry H. "Hap" Arnold Society by the Association of Graduates at the United States Military Academy.

An active member of the Northwest Florida community, Dr. Merkel supports numerous nonprofit organizations, including the Fisher House at Eglin Air Force Base, the Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge, and the Walton County Heritage Museum; he is the president of the West Point Society of Northwest Florida; and he is the First Congressional District Coordinator and Admissions Representative for the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. I can personally attest to his hard work and efforts in this capacity, and I appreciate his personal initiative to follow the progress of all Northwest Florida cadet appointees to West Point and to help ensure they get all the external advocacy/encouragement they may need for successful graduation.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Major Charles E. "Doc" Merkel, Jr., Ph.D., is retiring with an honorable career on which he can proudly hang his cap. He has touched countless lives throughout his time both in and out of the military and has given selflessly back to the country he loves so dearly. It is my pleasure to join a grateful Northwest Florida community and Nation in saluting his lifetime of service. Vicki and I thank Dr. Merkel; his wife, the former Diane Davis of Annandale, Virginia; daughter, Leigh Anne; son, Charles Robert and his wife, the former Julie Jordan of Graceville, Florida, and his three-year-old son, Charles Edward and wish them all the best for continued success.

IN MEMORY OF MR. JIM MORRIS

HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Jim Morris, a beloved musician from Punta Gorda, who passed away on July 13, 2016.

Jim was a passionate singer and songwriter with a devotion to telling stories with his music. Born and raised in Georgia, he was a gifted athlete. Jim attended Augusta College, where he majored in English Literature, on a full baseball scholarship. After an injury forced Jim to give up his pursuit of a baseball career, he began what would be a fifteen year career with Hercules Chemical Company in Delaware.

Following a trip to Florida, Jim decided to leave his job as a corporate executive with Hercules Chemical and attempt to begin a career as a singer and songwriter in Punta Gorda, Florida. Jim quickly found success writing songs about his own life, including one about his outlook on life "Livin' Till the Day I Die." Friends have said that there is not a better phrase to describe the way in which Jim approached life.

Jim cared deeply about Punta Gorda and continuously worked to improve the small community. He served as an ambassador for the Charlotte County Bureau of Tourism, trav-

eling all over the country to tell others of the wonders of the community he fell in love with.

Jim was also a dedicated philanthropist, using his music to benefit those in need. He donated thousands of dollars to his favorite charity, Shoes for Kids, and performed dozens of benefit concerts all over the country throughout his career. Following the destruction of Hurricane Charlie in 2004, Jim assisted in organizing a benefit concert, to help his friends and neighbors get back on their feet, that raised over \$30,000.

According to those who knew him best, Jim was the type of man that never met a stranger. When not writing music, he loved to fish in Charlotte Harbor and travel around the world with his wife, Sharon.

Mr. Speaker, I speak for the entire Punta Gorda community in saying that our thoughts and prayers are with Jim's family as they mourn his passing. He will be greatly missed.

HONORING THE 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWING INDUSTRY

HON. CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable contributions of the towing and recovery industry in the United States, the Towing and Recovery Association of America, the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum, towing associations around the world, and the members of those towing associations, and to celebrate them.

In 1916, Ernest Holmes built the first twin boom wrecker in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for use in his own garage and later agreed to build and sell the units to others;

The first production wreckers were known as "680's" because they cost \$680;

In service to the United States, the Ernest Holmes Company supplied the W-45 military wrecker for use during World War II;

In 1959, the Ernest Holmes Company patented its first tow sling and car dolly;

In the early 1970's, Gerald Holmes built the first hydraulic towing equipment, an advancement in the industry;

In 1995, the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum was established in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the birthplace of the tow truck;

In 2003, the Museum, having outgrown its original home, moved to 3315 Broad Street in Chattanooga;

In 2006, the Museum officially dedicated the Wall of the Fallen, the first monument in the industry to honor towing operators killed in the line of service;

In the United States, there are more than 35,000 tow companies and hundreds of thousands of individuals employed in the towing industry, including tow truck operators, dispatchers, safety advisors, and owners;

More than 1 tow truck operator is killed every 6 days assisting motorists on the roadways of the United States;

Tow truck operators respond to nearly 15,000,000 accidents per year across the United States;

Tow truck operators are an indispensable part of keeping the United States moving by keeping the highways of the United States clear and open for travel;

Most highway crashes require assistance from tow truck operators;

The people of the United States have a duty to drive safely and be courteous toward fellow motorists on the roadways as the people of the United States work together toward the common goal of reducing fatal accidents;

The week of September 9 through September 16, 2016, would be an appropriate week to designate as "National Towing Industry Awareness Week" and recognize the 100th anniversary of the tow truck, and support the designation of "National Towing Industry Awareness Week", to be held in conjunction with the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum Induction Ceremony and the Wall of the Fallen Ceremony, each of which is held annually at the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and encourage the people of the United States to observe the move over and slow down laws in the United States.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LOS FELIZ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA) upon its one-hundredth anniversary.

In 1916, the Vermont Canyon Improvement Club was founded by William Mead, a prominent Los Angeles businessman and one of the original landowners in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. His initial order of business at the first meeting was to define the club's land boundaries. In 1922, the club's name changed to the Los Feliz Improvement Association, and beautification of the Los Feliz area was named as one of the association's foremost goals.

Over the past century, LFIA advocacy has taken many forms. Between the years of 1922 and 1930, the association was instrumental in realizing many precedent setting goals, including its support for the City of Los Angeles to accept a substantial bequest from Colonel Griffith J. Griffith for the construction of the Greek Theatre and Griffith Observatory. LFIA also was instrumental in the relocation of businesses on Los Feliz Boulevard to other areas throughout the city thus turning the boulevard into a residential street. Persistent in its advocacy for new schools, the association's efforts were reflected with the opening of two new schools, Franklin Avenue Elementary School and Thomas Starr King Junior High School, both of which serve Los Feliz residents to this day. The Los Feliz Improvement Association is heavily involved in cultural preservation, and many local historic landmarks were preserved and designated thanks to the successful advocacy of the LFIA, including the restoration of the Mulholland Memorial Fountain, Hollyhock House, and the Shakespeare Bridge.

Today, the LFIA continues to support historic preservation efforts in Los Feliz by maintaining a historic photo archive and property

survey of every residence in the area, including over 3,000 documented architecturally significant homes. The association is deeply committed to community beautification, and coordinates local clean-up efforts and cares for the celebrated Deodar Cedars that were originally planted in 1922 lining Los Feliz Boulevard. In addition, the LFIA steadfastly advocates for strict enforcement of zoning and community development ordinances that limit noise pollution and traffic congestion in the Los Feliz Area.

With the straightforward goal of making the Los Feliz area in the City of Los Angeles a better place to live, this remarkable organization has made extraordinary contributions to the Los Angeles community for over 100 years.

I ask all members to join me in commending the Los Feliz Improvement Association for their unparalleled dedication to service.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF STE. GENEVIEVE

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 50th anniversary of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri's Jour de Fete. Held each August since 1966, this outdoor arts and crafts fair celebrates the city's rich heritage and honors its French and German roots.

The Jour de Fete is held in the National Historic Landmark District of Ste. Genevieve and features almost 200 arts and crafts booths, historic home tours, 25 local shops and art galleries, skill demonstrations, food, live music, beer and wine. Hundreds of visitors flock to the 2-day event each year.

As the first European settlement in Missouri, Ste. Genevieve has long been home to talented artisans and craftsmen. Its French Colonial atmosphere provides a perfect setting for the Jour de Fete, which was twice named a 'Midwest Travel Treasure' by AAA Magazine and selected as the People's Choice for 'Best Festival' by the readers of Rural Missouri Magazine.

For the innovative way they honor their heritage and enhance tourism through Jour de Fete, it gives me great pleasure to recognize the Jour de Fete Planning Committee and the City of Ste. Genevieve before the United States House of Representatives.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. WILLIAM LYNCH

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. William Lynch for his service to the Kings County Fire Department and to congratulate him on his retirement after thirty one years of dedicated service.

Mr. Lynch was born on August 26, 1959 in Hanford, California. After attending local schools, Mr. Lynch would go on to graduate from Hanford High School and later the Col-

lege of the Sequoias with an Associates of Arts Degree. His commitment to higher education did not stop there, as Mr. Lynch is currently attending Columbia Southern University.

Mr. Lynch's career in emergency services began in 1984 when he served as a Volunteer Firefighter for the Kings County Fire Department. In 1987, he was hired as a full-time Firefighter by the Hanford Fire Department where his hard work and dedication to emergency services would soon pay off. Due to his strong work ethic and strength of character, Mr. Lynch was promoted to Captain in 1995, Fire Marshal in 2004, and Deputy Chief in 2008. In 2011, Mr. Lynch's career culminated when he was named the Kings County Fire Chief.

During his tenure as Fire Chief, Mr. Lynch has oversaw a reorganization of the department management staff, successfully implemented an automatic aid agreement with the Hanford Fire Department, and renewed the mutual aid agreement with the Lemoore Fire Department. These accomplishments will allow the Kings County Fire Department to continue efficiently serving our community for years to come.

In his personal time, Mr. Lynch enjoys spending time with his wife, Kathleen, and their children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Mr. William Lynch for his dedicated service to the Kings County Fire Department and to wish him well as he begins his retirement.

HONORING STATE REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN PARKER

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a good friend and public servant, State Representative Kevin Parker, who is retiring as the representative for Washington State's 6th District in the state legislature.

Kevin has represented parts of Spokane, Cheney, Medical Lake and Airway Heights in my congressional district for four terms in the state legislature. Kevin also is an entrepreneur who manages 80 employees at his six coffee shops and teaches in the Whitworth University and Gonzaga University MBA programs.

During his time in the legislature, Kevin became known as a compassionate conservative who focused on solutions to help the less fortunate in his district and around the state. He said his most memorable achievements were legislation providing temporary IDs to the homeless to enable them to find work and this year's Cancer Can't bill allowing certain cancer drugs to be included in the state's charitable pharmacy program.

Kevin also was chosen by his peers to serve as Assistant Ranking Member on the House Appropriations Committee where he was intricately involved in budget negotiations. His experiences in the private sector and in the higher education classroom as an instructor helped lead to one of the most successful and widely accepted state budgets in recent legislative history.

In May, Kevin announced that he will not seek reelection to a fifth term. He has said

that "serving the citizens of Spokane and the 6th District has truly been one of the highest honors of my life. Engaging with people and finding solutions to their problems is an abundantly rewarding occupation." He emphasized, however, that "what I do as an elected official needs to take a back seat to my role as a father and husband." I certainly understand the challenges associated with raising children as a public official, and commend Kevin for balancing his public and private responsibilities extraordinarily well.

Mr. Speaker, Kevin has said that he hopes he's remembered as a hard worker whose door was always open to anyone and any ideas. That's a model all public officials should emulate. I can say without hesitation that he has served his constituents and his community diligently and effectively. Although the legislature will miss his insight and expertise on matters important to our state, I know Kevin will carry on his service to Eastern Washington in many other ways. I wish him and his wife, Kerry, and their three children the best in the next chapter in their lives.

IN RECOGNITION OF SETH LEVENTHAL OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the tremendous work of my constituent Mr. Seth Leventhal of Sterling, Virginia. Mr. Leventhal has served his nation proudly at the Department of the Navy for over 35 years, and for this I wish to acknowledge his service.

Following the completion of his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Syracuse University, Mr. Leventhal began his civilian service to the Department of the Navy in August 1982. For the next 22 years, Mr. Leventhal worked with the Naval Seas Systems Command (NAVSEA) before taking the position of Budget Policy Officer at the Commander, Naval Installations Command (CNIC) in 2004.

He was furthermore an educator who taught numerous classes for the Navy on financial management and policy. His expertise and willingness to mentor others without a doubt positively impacted the lives of countless co-workers. More notably still, Mr. Leventhal is a recognized expert in the financial policy arena, speaking at numerous forums and publishing a weekly naval newsletter on this issue.

Mr. Leventhal has been an integral member of the Department of the Navy throughout his career, eventually being recognized in 2007 with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy award for Individual Achievement in Human Capital for his role in establishing a command-wide leadership training program at CNIC. This is a man who deserves all our thanks and gratitude for all that he has done for this great nation.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that my colleagues join me in thanking Mr. Seth Leventhal for the outstanding services he provided to the United States throughout his 35 year long career at the Department of the Navy. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.