

RECOGNIZING IRMA GARCIA

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of one of Laredo's finest citizens, Irma Garcia.

Ms. Garcia was born in Laredo, Texas on the 26th of October in 1951 to Adolfo and Irma Garcia. She was the second child of six children; Adolfo, George, Ileana, Hector and Cordelia Garcia. Throughout her life, Ms. Garcia was always held in high regard by her family members, friends, and colleagues because of her outgoing nature and positive attitude. Her ability to treat everyone she met with kindness and respect made her a role model for the entire community.

Irma brought the best out of everyone who had the privilege of being in her company. Known for her fun-loving side, she was regarded as one of Laredo's best party hosts. Ms. Garcia was also known for her love of politics and enthusiasm for social justice. This devotion led to her taking on work in the county clerk's office in 1976 under Clerk Mike Volpe. She then went on to work in the 49th District Court. In 2007, she started working with Jesus "Chuy" Garza in County Court of Law No. 2. She was revered for her faithful dedication to her work throughout her career.

Ms. Garcia is survived by her father Adolfo Garcia; siblings, Adolfo Garcia, Ileana Garcia Maldonado, and Hector J. Garcia. She is also survived by her nieces and nephews, Kenny, Adrian, David, Vanessa, Ariane, Chanelle, Meriel, Nicole, Cordelia, and Joshua—all of whom she regarded as her own children.

Her legacy will remain strong through dedication and support of those around her. Her kindness will never be forgotten and is something that all should strive to emulate.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have the opportunity to remember the legacy of Irma Garcia.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE WYANDOTTE JAYCEES FOR THEIR SERVICE AND ACTIVISM IN THE DOWNRIVER COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Wyandotte Jaycees for their efforts to promote positive change in the community. For the past 40 years, the Wyandotte Jaycees have helped to build young leaders while engaging in projects to raise awareness and address issues facing the Wyandotte and Downriver communities.

Founded in 1976, the Wyandotte Jaycees is an organization of young professionals that, in collaboration with local non-profits, works to improve their community while providing leadership opportunities for its members. The group has compiled an impressive record of developing leaders while working to improve the local community through events like Hooray for the Good Guys, which provides food and baked goods to public safety officials. The

Jaycees also host team building events like camping trips and leadership conferences. Collectively, these help build a strong organization with community-minded individuals that are equipped to address issues facing the city.

The Jaycees embody the values of community service through their project and events throughout the city of Wyandotte and the surrounding area. Through the organization's actions, the Wyandotte Jaycees have not only worked to tackle local issues while promoting economic development, but have also provided countless young men and women with valuable leadership and organizational experience that opens the doors to new opportunities. I have confidence that the experience that these individuals gain through their involvement with the Wyandotte Jaycees will allow them to become leaders in the community and give them the skills they need to succeed professionally.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the Wyandotte Jaycees and their 40 years of service on behalf of the Wyandotte and Downriver areas. The Wyandotte Jaycees continue to serve a critical role in providing valuable community service while helping young people develop leadership skills.

RECOGNIZING JASON JABBAR SPEAR

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. NORTON, Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in recognizing Jason Jabbar Spear, who has served as my Legislative Associate and Deputy Communications Director for more than five years. During this time, he has proven himself to be a valuable member of my staff and essential to the work that our office provides to our more than 670,000 residents. On December 31, 2016, Jason will be leaving my office to further his education at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Jason's strong work ethic, quick wit and humor, intelligence, and constant enthusiasm will surely be missed by his colleagues in the House, the residents of the District of Columbia, and especially my office.

Jason, a native of Alabama, quickly adopted D.C. as his second home. After completing a term as a White House intern, Jason joined my office and took advantage of every opportunity to help the mission of our office. Jason performed his duties with excellence and energy. He answered phones; wrote correspondence, legislation, and press releases; planned events; and even photographed many of those same events, all while managing a legislative portfolio. His capacity for hard work and his very affable demeanor made Jason a pleasure to be around and work with.

Jason's presence in my office and in the city will surely be missed and I wish him all the best in New York.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jason Spear for his outstanding service to the House of Representatives and my office, and to the residents of the District of Columbia.

TRIBUTE TO LORNA GROW

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Lorna Grow for her 50 years of leadership with the Sugar Grove Sunshine 4-H Club, which celebrated its 100th anniversary on September 24, 2016.

Since 1965, Lorna has served as the Sugar Grove Sunshine 4-H Club leader, guiding and encouraging its members through fair projects, shows, and other activities. Head, Heart, Hands and Health are the tenets of 4-H. Lorna embodies them all. Her influence has been evident in the lives of so many area families. A former member said Lorna encouraged her to do a presentation to quell her fear about public speaking to a large group at the Iowa State Fair which now, in adulthood, she does on a regular basis. Another former 4-H Club member made sure her own children joined Sugar Grove Sunshine 4-H Club because of the guidance and skills taught by Lorna, including how to can vegetables and sew clothing. Lorna meets with every member of the Club regularly and on an individual basis, encouraging them in their growth as individuals and to experience new adventures they might not otherwise have.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Lorna for her outstanding leadership. Her dedication as a 4-H club leader has influenced so many over the past 50 years. It is an honor to represent her and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating her and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE OSHER LIFE-LONG LEARNING INSTITUTE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize George Mason University and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) on the occasion of OLLI's 25th Anniversary.

In 1991, OLLI was founded as the Learning in Retirement Institute by Kathryn Brooks, Shirley Fox, and Lilyan Spero, whom I knew and collaborated with for many years. The institute eventually developed a relationship with George Mason University as part of GMU's continuing efforts to expand access to educational opportunities to all members of the community.

OLLI's mission is "to offer to its members learning opportunities in a stimulating environment in which adults can share their talents, experiences and skills, explore new interests, discover and develop latent abilities, engage in intellectual and cultural pursuits, and socialize with others of similar interests." What started as a member-run center with 100 individuals operating and teaching out of a single room has grown into a robust, first-rate educational and social organization with more than 1,200 members.

OLLI offers mature adults in Northern Virginia over 400 courses and special events at its three campuses in Fairfax, Reston, and Loudoun.

From arts to zoology, religion to science, there is a topic to satisfy everyone.

I believe that education and learning are lifelong endeavors. OLLI provides this opportunity to learn for the sake of learning. Not to get a degree or advance in your career—but just for the sheer pleasure of expanding your knowledge or finally having the time to explore a new subject.

I commend the leadership of both George Mason University and OLLI for their commitment and vision to extending the benefits of continued and collaborative learning to as many members of our community as possible. As someone who comes from local government, I understand firsthand that the high quality of life that we enjoy in Northern Virginia is directly linked to the quality of educational resources that are at our disposal.

I congratulate the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute staff and volunteers on 25 years of service to our community and ask my colleagues to join me in wishing them great success in all future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to include in the RECORD today the personal stories of families from across the country that have been affected by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading to change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

JOHN MICHAEL AHERN—ROCKPORT,
MASSACHUSETTS

John was born on September 30, 1969. He was the youngest of three siblings, Kathryn, Charles, and Mary, and a father to three beautiful boys, Johnny, Rian, and Connor.

Growing up, John was a wonderful son—joyful, loving and compassionate. At the age of 14, he began a transition that would lead to a long, hard fought battle with addiction. Over the years, John was treated at various rehabilitation clinics across the country. He did his best to maintain his sobriety and would do so for short periods of time, but the disease of addiction was too strong for John.

John was determined to overcome his struggles, fighting fiercely and with all his

strength. But in the end, on August 16, 2015, the disease of addiction proved too great for him to overcome. John passed away unexpectedly from a heroin overdose. He was 46 years old.

"I can't imagine his daily struggles and the hardships he faced in his short life," writes his mother, Gail. "It was heart-breaking to see John's self-esteem diminish over time. He had a difficulties maintaining employment and finding stable living. Before his last and final attempt at recovery, which so sadly failed, John was living in a homeless shelter."

"I loved my John. I know his life was bittersweet and his struggles were so great. I believe some individuals are just too fragile for this world, and I am so grateful to God that he took John home at last. For I know in my heart he is now joyous, at peace, and in the loving arms of our Lord. John's struggle is over; he is now an angel."

ANDREW ANGERS—SAGINAW, MI

Andrew was born April 5, 1982, at 12:01 a.m. He was a beautiful baby and had a star quality about him as a toddler. Growing up, Andrew was a happy, healthy boy with a kind heart and a brilliant smile. Then one day he was not so happy anymore.

As Andrew entered high school, he began to struggle with personal demons. As a result, he experimented with drugs as a way to cope with his emotions. Andrew was immediately taken hostage by addiction and his battle progressed before he even graduated. Andrew did manage to graduate, although a year later than he should have. Regardless, it was a happy day for him and his family.

For the years following, Andrew's struggles with addiction continued but at times it seemed he was gaining the upper hand. Andrew entered college and even married his high school sweetheart. Sadly, college went by the wayside and the marriage failed. Even throughout all the hardships, Andrew was still there—there were glimpses of the sweet, sensitive, kind-hearted man he was.

Andrew was a very talented musician and was often seen walking around wearing a banjo. He had the most wonderful smile and such a warm laugh. Andrew had hope right up until the end. In a final phone call he spoke of his future and being done with using. On June 18, 2009, Andrew was found dead from an overdose. It truly was the day the music ended.

NICHOLAS ANTICH—CROWN POINT, INDIANA

The mother of Nick Antich wants people to know her family's tragedy in order to bring light to a growing epidemic in the United States. It's unfortunate that people are ashamed to tell the stories of their loved ones who are battling drug addiction. They worry that society will see those struggling as second class, low-life individuals. As an emergency nurse, Nick's mom has a job to help anyone who enters the ER.

Nick's mother now has the perspective that if addiction can happen to her son, it can happen to anyone. Addiction impacts people who are educated; smart, charismatic and have the world in the palm of their hand. Nick Antich was an top student who didn't get into trouble at school and never caused his father and mother much grief beyond the typical teenage issues. Nick was raised in a normal family, played baseball as a child and wrestled in middle school. He loved animals and was known as the "animal whisperer" because on several different occasions he saved kittens from the side of busy highways where they had been dumped.

When Nick was accepted into an Engineering program for college, he moved to Indianapolis. During his Sophomore year in college, Nick started dabbling in drugs. Nothing his mother would consider hardcore, but

never-the-less, drugs. Nick was smart and knew the risks involved with drug use, so his mother never imagined that anything serious was happening. She certainly never prepared herself for the journey her family was about to embark upon.

One day, Nick called his mother to say he had been sick in bed for three days. She knew in her gut that something was not right. Nick had been sick a bunch of times since going away to college, which is normally no big deal—take some Tylenol and get rest—but this time felt different. She called an ambulance and sent them to Nick's address. Two hours later, Nick's mom arrived at the hospital where she found her son curled up in a ball on a cot. Nothing had been done. The hospital knew Nick was going through heroin withdrawal but because of HIPAA they couldn't tell Nick's mother what was happening. When Nick saw his mom, he held up his arms and said, "Mom, it's bad." She dropped to her knees and her hell as a parent began. Within 24 hours, Nick was on a plane to Arizona where he was admitted into treatment for the next two months.

Nick moved back home after treatment and within three months his mother saw suspicious signs. She kicked him out of her house. In September of 2014, Nick came and told her, "Mom, I'm using again." Within 24 hours, Nick was back on a plane to Arizona for a second stint in treatment. This time Nick was there for four months. He came home for Christmas of 2014, clean from Xanax and heroin.

Nick got a job working for the state of Indiana and was quickly promoted. However, Nick felt miserable inside and nothing his mother did could fix Nick's loneliness. When Nick was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, he faithfully took his meds and followed up monthly with his doctor. He did not want to be unhappy; he exercised, attempted a vegan diet and quit smoking three months before he died.

The week before Nick relapsed, he had to work long shifts plowing during a snowstorm and was stressed and tired. Sitting by himself plowing snow for 16 hours did something to Nick; he got Xanax from a friend. When his mother found out, Nick told her, "Mom, I just wanted to take something to make my miserable job tolerable . . . I would never use heroin again." Unfortunately, Xanax was all it took to wake up the devil within Nick that had been dormant for 18 months. His mother was petrified that whole week, thinking here we go again. On Friday, March 4th, Nick went to see friends in Indianapolis for the weekend and had plans to stay with his sister in Bloomington for the rest of that week. Nick's parents flew out on Saturday for a week's vacation in Arizona. On Sunday afternoon, March 6, 2016, Nick didn't wake up.

She hates drugs. They robbed Nick of his life, they robbed her daughter of her only sibling, and they robbed his parents of their only son. Over 450 people attended Nick's wake, which was a testament to how loved he was: friends, family, and teachers from elementary through high school came to share that day with Nick's family. Nick didn't realize how much love there was for him in this life.

Despite the resources Nick's mother had access to as an emergency room nurse, she could not save him. This is what she has to learn to live with forever. Please don't hide these stories anymore. Out of the 450 people who attended Nick's service, at least a dozen said it happened to them too.

TOMMY JACOB ARNOLD—DECATUR, ILLINOIS

The Arnold's youngest son, Tommy died of a heroin overdose on June 25, 2016. His battle