

BRIGADIER GENERAL SANDY BEST

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pride to honor my friend, Brigadier General Sandy Best, the first woman in the Minnesota National Guard to be promoted to the rank of General. In recognition of her extraordinary leadership and exemplary service to the Guard and to our Nation, she began her new command of the 133rd Airlift Wing and 148th Fighter Wing on February 25th.

In her many visits to my office, General Best has always been an outstanding advocate for the Minnesota National Guard. She exemplifies the best of what makes our National Guard so effective. In her former role as the Minnesota National Guard's Director of Government Relations she advocated for Minnesota's bases at the federal and state level, contributing greatly to making our state's bases some of America's premier defense operations.

Members of the Minnesota National Guard have been deployed around the world, and they always stand ready to help our region when natural disasters strike and people are in need of aid and assistance. I'm confident that both the 133rd Airlift Wing and 148th Fighter Wing are in strong hands under General Best's command. And I know she will continue her strong advocacy for the brilliant, highly trained and hardworking men and women of Minnesota's National Guard.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing General Sandy Best for her historic accomplishment and service to our great nation.

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATORS**HON. KEVIN CRAMER**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges in public education is the integration of learning opportunities for exceptional children.

Dedicated parents, teachers, staff and administrators all contribute to the success of this effort. Today I congratulate Meredith Frisch, a paraprofessional at Westside Elementary School in West Fargo, who was recognized as Paraeducator of the Year by the North Dakota Council for Exceptional Children.

This award recognizes individuals who work to promote significant educational successes for students, a commitment to continued professional development and the highest standards of educational quality.

Meredith represents well all paraeducators in my state who dedicate their careers to working with exceptional students. She is known for her commitment to finding the best in all students, encouraging them to reach above and beyond their potential all with a unique brand of compassion and humor.

She is a credit to all educators throughout North Dakota, and our state is better because of her devotion to exceptional students.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend House Roll Call Vote Numbers 71 through 78 on February 11, 2016. If present, I would have voted Yes on vote numbers 71, 73, 74, and 75 and voted No on vote numbers 72, 76, 77 and 78.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF OFFICER DAVID HOFER**HON. KENNY MARCHANT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and memory of Officer David Hofer of the Euless, Texas Police Department. Officer Hofer was tragically killed while serving in the line of duty on March 1, 2016.

David's career as an officer began in 2009 after joining the New York Police Department. A native of Brooklyn, New York and a 2008 graduate of New York University, David fulfilled his lifelong dream of becoming a police officer soon after completing his degree. After dutifully serving the people of New York for five years, David relocated to North Texas where he accepted a position with the Euless Police Department.

David was an upstanding citizen of the community, and an outstanding police officer. He is remembered as a loving son, brother, fiancé, and hero. David's service and dedication to his neighbors, his community, and the City of Euless will never be forgotten. As we memorialize David's life within the halls of Congress, may we never forget his commitment and sacrifice for the safety and wellbeing of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand here today to recognize a true hero. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Officer David Hofer.

IN HONOR OF JAMES KEHOE**HON. DONALD NORCROSS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate James Kehoe on his recent retirement as Business Manager for the Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union 322 of Winslow Township, New Jersey, after thirty-six years of membership. Jim has had a lasting impact for generations to come and I would like to applaud him for his service.

Jim graduated from Rutgers University with a degree in Business Administration in 1979 and then joined the Local 322 Apprenticeship Program. He served his community tirelessly with the Camden County Improvement Authority and the Camden County United Way. As Vice President of the Southern New Jersey

AFL-CIO, a board member of the Union Organization for Social Service and president of the Southern New Jersey Building Trades Council, Jim worked to improve the lives of working families in New Jersey.

As a trustee at Rowan University, a board member on the Senator Walter Rand Institute of Public Affairs at Rutgers University and as chair of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, Jim has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of families and all of southern New Jersey. Jim has worked with multiple community service organizations, including the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Boy Scouts of America and the American Red Cross and I commend him for his social action and devotion to the betterment of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, James Kehoe is a great American whose dedication to community service is an inspiration to his family, friends, and our entire state. I join with his Plumbers & Pipefitters brothers and sisters and all of New Jersey in thanking him for his outstanding service and in wishing him continued success and prosperity in all his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF H. MARIE SMITH'S 90TH BIRTHDAY**HON. DEBBIE DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th birthday of H. Marie Smith, an institution in Monroe, Michigan.

Marie Smith, or Sweet Marie as she is known by many, was born on March 1st, 1926 in Monroe, Michigan, which remains her home to this day. She married William D. Smith on December 27th, 1947, and had four wonderful children; Mark, Paul W., Brian and Alison.

Marie Smith has been part of the fabric of the Monroe community for decades. As a young woman, she worked in the Betrus Market. This market was owned and operated by her parents for 47 years and was considered the "meeting place for the neighborhood". Marie lived in the building connected to the market until she married. In 1948, Marie and her husband cofounded the Monroe Community Players to produce theatrical productions for the people of Monroe and Southeast Michigan. To this day, the Monroe Community Players is still working as a nonprofit and volunteer organization to produce performances for the community. Even though "Sweet Marie" has retired, she still helps as a house manager for the Monroe Community Players.

To this day, she lives on her own, drives her own car, is active on social media and is critical in keeping people connected to ensure they are a part of the broader community. Her children have made her proud. Mark was a respected attorney in Monroe. Paul W. is known throughout America as the voice of the Great Lakes on the number one radio station, WJR. Alison is well-known in the healthcare community as a senior executive with ProMedica.

H. Marie Smith has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for the people of Monroe through her support of and passion for the arts in Monroe. She continues the tradition of one of the staple markets and community gathering locations, serving as the glue that binds people. We celebrate her birthday with

pride and gratitude for everything she has done for the good of her community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to celebrate the 90th birthday of my friend H. Marie Smith and wish her many more years of success.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

HON. KEVIN CRAMER

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, North Dakota's exceptional quality of life has often been recognized by those who live in my state and those who wish they did.

The secret to this quality of life can be found in the quality of our people, the many individuals who dedicate their careers and volunteer time to making their communities better.

Today, I want to recognize Rebekah Christensen, director of the Richland-Wilkin Kinship Program. She was presented with this year's Outstanding Citizen Award by the Wahpeton Breckenridge Area Chamber of Commerce for her work as head of this program.

This Richland-Wilkin Kinship Program matches young people with volunteer adults. Its motto is "Mentors are ordinary people doing ordinary things that produce extraordinary results." This motto holds true as well with dynamic leaders like Rebekah, her mentor volunteers and board members, and the many community members who support the program financially and with community engagement opportunities.

They are all contributing to supporting young people in the Wahpeton-Breckenridge area and helping them transition into successful adults.

55TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join in the celebration of the 55th Anniversary of the Peace Corps.

Since the program's establishment on March 1st, 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps has been working to promote peace and friendship, and to help nations tackle some of the most pressing challenges they face. As we celebrate, let's remember that the Peace Corps is now active in over 130 nations and its volunteers remain committed to tackling issues such as climate change, pandemic disease, food security, and gender inequality and empowerment.

In the 55 years since its' founding, over 220,000 U.S. citizens, including current Members of Congress, have served their nation in the Peace Corps. And many more are eager to serve. In 2015, the Peace Corps received its highest number of applications (over 23,000) since 1975.

Peace Corps volunteers go abroad for deployments of 2 years aid in the social and

economic developments in some of the world's poorest countries. They serve as teachers and health care providers in communities that lack access to various necessities like food, water, education, healthcare, equality and disease prevention. They also help our nation by becoming the face of America to those they interact with while themselves gaining a better understanding of the culture and people of other nations. Volunteers often immerse themselves in the communities that they are sent to and play a unique role in shaping the lives of the individuals permanently living there.

I want to take a moment to congratulate the 22 residents of my congressional district who currently serve as Peace Corps volunteers. They have been deployed to South Africa, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and Ecuador, just to name a few. I wish these young men and women the best of luck as they begin to make a difference in the communities they have been deployed to. And I have no doubt that these talented and skilled young people will make an incredible difference as Peace Corps volunteers.

I strongly support the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps represents the best of America and the undimmed potential of "soft power" initiatives that help make our world a better place. In the midst of poverty and through war and conflict, the Peace Corps has shown the world a hopeful, uplifting side of America that reflects our fundamental values of peace, prosperity, and progress. The Peace Corps will be a vital part of the U.S. diplomatic and development response and a sign of our nation's long term commitment to help alleviate suffering around the globe.

Let us work to keep this program strong and in business for another 55 years.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, on February 12, 2016, I was unable to attend House Roll Call Vote Numbers 79 through 82. If present, I would have voted Yes on vote numbers 79 and 82 and voted No on vote numbers 80 and 81.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY OF POGROMS AGAINST ARMENIANS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the pogroms against people of Armenian descent in Sumgait, Azerbaijan.

Peaceful demonstrations descended into chaos when Azerbaijani rioters attacked Armenian men and women advocating for democracy on February 27, 1988. After three days of unspeakable violence, hundreds of Armenians lost their lives and thousands more no longer had a place to call home.

Undeterred by Soviet oppression, the Armenian community and its dedication to democratic self-determination sparked a movement that finally helped bring an end to the dictatorship of the Soviet Union. The courage demonstrated by the Armenian people of Nagorno Karabakh in demanding their rights even after all of the adversity is admirable and should never be forgotten.

Today, authoritarian leaders in Azerbaijan continue to aggravate efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group to achieve lasting peace in Nagorno Karabakh and the surrounding region. This ancient Christian land has borne witness to several crimes against humanity over the years, and I have hope the United States will take on its moral responsibility to ensure the people of Armenia do not live in fear.

On behalf of the thousands of Armenian Americans living in my congressional district, I invite my colleagues to stand with me and the proud people of Nagorno Karabakh in remembering the lives lost and reinvigorating our commitment to freedom and democracy.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF BILL BAILEY

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man, and an icon of our Houston community, retired Harris County Precinct 8 Constable Bill Bailey.

Bill Bailey has been the voice of RodeoHouston for the past three decades. He has brought unparalleled enthusiasm and depth of expertise to his craft, honed by years of experience. Bill has been involved with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for over 50 years, where he serves as both a board member and a lifetime vice president.

Bill's iconic voice and announcing talent were honed by an equally prodigious career in broadcast radio, which saw Bill inducted into the Country Radio Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2010. Through the medium of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Bill Bailey has also been instrumental in raising millions of dollars for educational scholarships to benefit Texas area youth and to enrich countless other worthy causes across Southeast Texas.

Let me extend my most hearty congratulations to Bill Bailey as he retires from RodeoHouston and turns the page on another chapter in his storied life.

RECOGNIZING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

HON. KEVIN CRAMER

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, North Dakota's research universities are nurturing bright students in a variety of programs that encourage them to learn, grow, innovate and even change the world.

Today, I congratulate North Dakota State University student Andrew Dalman, a graduate