

Adamary Hernandez, Melissa Gutierrez and Moises Fernandez.

Thanks to the dedication of patriots such as these, we are able to meet here today, in the United States House of Representatives, and openly debate the best solutions to the diverse issues that confront our nation.

On behalf of myself and all my constituents in Florida's 20th Congressional district, I thank them for their service. I wish them the very best of luck now and in their future.

**HONORING JACK WALSH, RECIPIENT OF THE 2017 CHARLES H. FLYNN HUMANITARIAN AWARD**

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to join the communities of the Naugatuck Valley as they pay tribute to the outstanding and incalculable contributions of Jack Walsh by honoring him with the 47th Annual Charles H. Flynn Humanitarian Award. The oldest award of its kind, this prestigious honor is bestowed each year to a member of the Valley community in recognition of their lifetime commitment to service.

A life-long resident of Derby, Connecticut, Jack dedicated his personal and professional life to enriching the many communities of the Naugatuck Valley and improving the quality of life for all of its residents. Jack began his career as a teacher in Shelton and Derby, a high school basketball coach in Shelton, and the Director of the Derby Recreation Camp. In each of these roles, Jack helped to shape the hearts and minds of the next generations of Valley residents, ensuring that they had access to educational opportunities and provided a strong foundation on which to build their future success.

In 1989, Jack began his tenure as President & CEO of the Valley United Way—a career which spanned nearly thirty years until his retirement just last November. Under his tenure the organization grew as a community resource with the addition of the Youth Leadership Program, the Volunteer Action Center, and the partner Agency Council, which has since expanded to become the Valley Council for Health & Human Services. Jack also helped to spearhead the Valley's successful effort in the All-America City competition.

In addition to his professional contributions, Jack is an active member of the community. His seemingly innumerable titles include Chair of the Electronic Valley project, President of the Board of Directors at the Derby Neck Library, member and past president of both the Derby/Shelton Rotary Club and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, past President of the Board of Directors for the Derby Historical Society and former member of the board of directors for the Hallock's Landing Senior Housing Project. He served on the Valley Advisory Committee for the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, is a Corporator for Griffin Hospital and a member and past Co-chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Yale/Griffin Prevention Resource Center. Jack is a member of the Board of Directors for the Online Journalism Project, the parent organization for the Valley Independent Sentinel as

well as one of the founders and a committee member for the Commodore Hull Thanksgiving Day 5K Road Race. Past Chair of Derby's Park & Recreation Commission, current Chair of the City's Greenway Committee, as well as co-Chair of the Naugatuck River Greenway Committee, his efforts have changed the very face of the Naugatuck Valley.

Jack's incredible service has been recognized by many over the years with a myriad of awards and commendations. He is recipient of the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce's Gold Seal Award, the Lewis Savitsky Staff Excellence Award, the Hazel Knapp Award for regional leadership as well as the Derby Historical Society's Dr. John I. Howe Award just to name a few. He was named to the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley Alumni Association Hall of Fame and honored by the Lower Naugatuck Valley Bar Association with their Liberty Bell Award. The YMCA presented him with their Strong Community Builder Award and the Women and Heart Disease Committee at Griffin Hospital presented him with their "Caring Heart" Award.

Tonight, marking his lifetime of service, Jack Walsh is presented with the Charles H. Flynn Humanitarian Award—and I cannot think of a more deserving individual to recognize for their commitment, dedication, and extraordinary good work. I am honored to join the communities of the Naugatuck Valley in thanking Jack for his unparalleled public service—his is a legacy that will not soon be matched and most certainly will continue to inspire service in others for generations to come.

**HONORING RAYMOND RANGERS BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM**

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Raymond Rangers Boys Basketball Team, from my District, on the victory over Leake Central Boys Basketball Team in the Mississippi Boys Class 4A Championship Game (52–46).

I would like to recognize the team beginning with the coaching staff; Head Coach Robert Green, and the Assistant Coach, Terrell Anderson. Because of their hard work and dedication, the Rangers' 23–5 record has captured their second state championship in the school's history, and first state title (2017 District 3–4A Champions), since 1999.

The players' teamwork and athletic abilities are also evident with this victory. The players are: Keyundra Downs, Tremayne Watts, Keivonte Watts, Tavian Coleman, Cameron Woodall, Jiris Killingsworth, DeMarius Daniels, SharDarrion Allen, TraDavis Thompson, JeKeivious Williams, Girrod Harris, Jared Keyes, Alvin Brown and Jakorie Smith.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating one of the basketball teams in my district, Raymond Rangers Boys Basketball Team.

RECOGNIZING STAFF SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER G. BARADAT ON RECEIVING THE AIR FORCE CROSS

**HON. MATT GAETZ**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to pay tribute to Staff Sergeant Christopher G. Baradat upon being awarded the Air Force Cross, the service's highest combat medal of valor.

During his third deployment, Staff Sergeant Baradat called in close air support from A–10 Thunderbolt II fighter jets and AC–130 gunships while exposing himself directly to enemy gunfire. His efforts resulted in the safety and rescue of 150 troops and the destruction of 50 enemy and 13 separate fighting positions.

The courage shown by this dedicated Special Tactics Airman is a true testament of his character. Staff Sergeant Baradat embodies the selfless commitment to service, sacrifice, and exceptional skill of our Nation's service members.

The entire Northwest Florida community is immensely proud of our areas tradition of military service and support for those who wear the uniform. It is a true honor to recognize Staff Sergeant Baradat upon this most notable distinction.

**HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF ELLA FITZGERALD**

**HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor "The First Lady of Song", Ella Fitzgerald on her 100th birthday.

Born on April 25, 1917 in Newport News, Virginia, Ella Jane Fitzgerald went on to define Jazz music for more than half a century. Fitzgerald's career first began when she performed at an amateur night contest at the Apollo Theater in 1934. She was just 17 years old and received first place. After overcoming a tumultuous childhood, Fitzgerald recorded her first major hit, "A-Tisket A-Tasket," in 1938 just four short years after her appearance at the Apollo Theater.

In 1958, during the inaugural Grammy Awards, Fitzgerald won best jazz performance and best female vocal performance. Remembered for her humble demeanor, effortless stage presence, and inventive voice, Fitzgerald recorded more than 200 albums in her lifetime and sold over 40 million records. During her impressive and lengthy career, Fitzgerald worked with many other great jazz artists of the time including Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, and Dizzy Gillespie.

Ella Fitzgerald won 13 Grammy's during her lifetime, and was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Ronald Reagan in 1987 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George H.W. Bush in 1992.

Mr. Speaker, although Ella Fitzgerald is no longer here with us, her music is still celebrated throughout the world, especially in her

birthplace of Newport News, Virginia, and I hope that it continues to inspire well beyond her 100th Birthday.

RECOGNIZING MAYOR DAVID K.  
PENDERGRASS

**HON. JIMMY PANETTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize David Pendergrass, the Mayor of Sand City, on his retirement after serving as mayor for thirty-five years. As an outstanding citizen and public servant, Mayor Pendergrass made a significant impact on the lives of citizens and the business community in Sand City in his four decades of public service.

As Mayor, he has achieved high praise for his accomplishments in the local, regional and business community on the Central Coast. In addition to his time as mayor, David was a professional artist and illustrator. He also had a thirty-two-year tenure working for the United States Army Training Division, in the Directorate of Plans, Training, and Mobilization Support Center.

Mayor Pendergrass entered public service in 1978 and twice served as Chair of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District. Further, he served on the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, the Monterey-Salinas Transit Board of Directors, the Regional Taxi Authority, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority and the Association of Monterey Area Governments.

During his tenure, Mayor Pendergrass has turned Sand City into a hub of economic and commercial activity. The accomplishments he has made to the Central Coast community will be felt for generations. His involvement in local and regional governance has provided a positive economic impact to the local business sector.

As Mayor, he has worked diligently on the challenging issue of water supply quantity and quality for the Monterey Peninsula. He also provided leadership in the community effort to deal with the closure of Fort Ord and establish CSU Monterey Bay. Mayor Pendergrass has deep roots in the community by raising three children, fourteen grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. I am proud of the mayor's many personal and professional accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize the dedication and hard work Mayor Pendergrass has given to Sand City and the Central Coast region. I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing Mayor Pendergrass and to congratulate him on his well-earned retirement.

IN HONOR OF DETECTIVE BRENT  
AKIN

**HON. KEVIN BRADY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I am honored to recognize and thank Brent Akin for his selfless commitment to the safety and

well-being of the Montgomery County community.

On April 30th, Detective Akin of the Montgomery County Sheriffs Department will enter a well-deserved retirement after almost thirty years of dedicated public service.

A native Texan, Brent was born and raised in Houston by his parents, JoAnn and Rowland Akin. Together with his five siblings: Joe, Ricky, Bill, Deronda, and Rowland, Brent grew up in the Houston community. In 1983, Brent married the love of his life, Catherine Parada and, two years later, packed their belongings and moved to The Woodlands, TX where they have resided ever since. In 1987, Brent and Catherine welcomed a beautiful daughter, Emily, who has blessed them with a son-in-law, Stephen Richards, and a grandson, Noah.

Brent officially began his career in law enforcement when he graduated from the police academy in 1987. Just one year later, he joined the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, where he has served for nearly thirty years, working under five sheriffs. Most recently, Brent works as a Detective, but during his many years of distinguished service, he held various positions within the department as a Patrol Officer and Internal Affairs Officer.

Throughout his career, Brent has helped countless members of our community conducting criminal investigations, providing security for community events, and patrolling the cities and roads of Montgomery County. Brent has worked to solve many high profile cases, including the 1999 Wanda Pitts murder case. His close attention to detail, perseverance, commitment to the law and serving his community is evident in every case he has worked on.

Brent has honorably dedicated himself to Montgomery County as is evidenced by countless first-hand accounts and the many commendations he has received, such as the Public Safety Hero Award in 2009.

I am pleased to join Brent's family friends, the citizens of Montgomery County, and the entire Eighth Congressional District of Texas to give thanks and wish him well as he begins his retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. JAY  
TAMSI

**HON. DAVID G. VALADAO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Mr. Jay Tamsi for his dedicated community service and to congratulate him for being selected as the Grand Marshal of the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta in Delano, California.

Mr. Tamsi was born August 17, 1978 in Bakersfield, California to his parents, Olivia and Jimmy Tamsi. Mr. Tamsi has strong Kern County roots, having attended Cecil Avenue Middle School in Delano, Delano High School, and later the California State University, Bakersfield, where he graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications and Marketing.

As the President and Chief Executive Officer of Kern County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a successful business owner of his own company, Tamsi Consulting Serv-

ices, Jay has been generous in giving back to his local community. A strong man of God, Jay serves as a member at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Delano and was responsible for organizing the induction of rites celebration for Father Loji Pilonas as the new priest of St. Mary's. Jay was an organizer for the St. Mary's Thanksgiving Community Feed, where he helped provide meals for less fortunate families during the holidays.

His community service extends past his parish; Mr. Tamsi works as the Director on several community boards including the Greater Area Delano Youth Foundation and the Philippine Weekend Executive Committee. He is also a Lifetime Member of Delano Harvest Holidays. Mr. Tamsi's love of service and community involvement extended into his creation of the only Filipino Hall in the State of California, which works to promote Filipinos' needs in the community.

Mr. Tamsi is being honored as the Grand Marshal of the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta of his home city of Delano, California, which holds one of the largest and oldest celebrations in the United States. This high honor is being bestowed upon a great man who has spent countless hours helping his community and neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in thanking Mr. Jay Tamsi for his years of community service and congratulating him on being the Grand Marshal of the Cinco de Mayo Fiesta in Delano.

HONORING MILLS ACADEMY

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable organization, Mills Academy.

With Mississippi schools mandating fundamental tests for kindergarten through third grade students to pass in order to advance to the next grade, one woman has made it her mission to help the children in the Greenville Public School District. Airnecia Mills, founder and director of Mills Academy, an after-school tutoring program for students in pre-K all the way through college, has started a free third-grade reading comprehension program in an effort to prepare area children for upcoming state tests. "We're encouraging students to read passages and comprehend what the questions are asking them with the same strategies they will be tested on," Mills said.

Last year, all of Mills' third-graders passed the reading gate and many of her students showed exceptional growth in their star literacy and reading test, she said. Aside from the reading program, Mills Academy provides after-school help for students in pre-k through 12th grade from 4:00-8:00 p.m. every weekday. While helping students to enhance their educational experience, the academy focuses on promoting academic achievement, developing stronger academic skills, test-taking and studying skills. Homework assistance, test prep and tutorials are given to students after school to help eliminate the illiteracy in the community.

Mills started this program towards the end of 2015 and her family was super supportive