

Grande Valley businessman, Baldomero Vela Sr., who passed away on Friday, June 2, 2017.

Baldomero, or “Baldo,” as he was known to friends and family, was born and raised in Hidalgo, Texas. After graduating from McAllen High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944, serving in the 29th Infantry Division during World War II. He then attended the University of Texas at Austin, graduating in 1949 with a degree in pharmaceuticals.

Following graduation, Baldo was a pharmacist for 50 years in the Rio Grande Valley. In 1957, Baldo opened the Professional Pharmacy in McAllen, Texas. In the 1970s, he purchased Lee's Pharmacy, which is now owned and operated by two of his five children. In addition to his role as a pharmacist, Baldo was deeply involved in a number of community organizations, including the Hidalgo Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, McAllen Public Utilities Board and McAllen Housing Services.

Baldomero will be remembered as a kind and generous man, whose contributions to his community will not be easily forgotten. His generous spirit will live on in the Rio Grande Valley, leaving those he loved better for having known him.

Mr. Speaker, South Texas lost a strong community member this month. He embodied the values of diligence, selflessness, and service. He will be sorely missed.

**HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STEPHANIE BARBER GETER AS SHE RECEIVES THE MEDGAR EVERS AWARD FROM THE BUFFALO BRANCH OF THE NAACP**

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Stephanie Barber Geter, recipient of The Medgar Evers Award at the NAACP—Buffalo Chapter's Medgar Evers Dinner. Ms. Geter has dedicated much of her life to serving others, especially the people of Western New York. She has left a lasting impact on our community by putting others before herself and combining her skills with compassion to improve the lives of others.

Ms. Geter served as Senior Vice President of Funds Distribution & Community Initiatives at the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County. In this role, she distributed approximately \$25 million annually to agency providers and community partners which played a vital role in community development within Western New York. Ms. Geter's tireless work for the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County has improved the quality of life of countless members of our community, and presented so many individuals with opportunities they would not have had without her.

The extensive background in community service Ms. Geter possesses speaks volumes to her drive to make a positive impact on the world. She has experience working in the legislative service branch of government, neighborhood housing programs and youth job services. Ms. Geter has served diligently on numerous non-profit boards, community and government committees and oversight groups as well.

Currently, Ms. Geter works at Buffalo State College as Director of the Head Start Partnership. As Director, she is a mentor and teacher to Head Start teachers who go on to help children. In addition, Ms. Geter serves as the President of the Hamlin Park Taxpayers Association, Board Chair of Restoring Our Community Coalition, Board Chair of Elim Community Corporation, and is on the Board of the WNY Food Bank. As the Board Chair of Restoring Our Community Coalition, she has used her leadership to revitalize neighborhoods along Humboldt Parkway in Buffalo, NY. Ms. Geter has worked with Elim Community Corporation, a bible-based ministry that offers worship to many in our community. In her role on the Board of the WNY Food Bank, Ms. Geter organized and helped provide services vital to the people of Western New York. The impacts of her work can be seen in many different forms. While Ms. Geter has been involved in many different causes and organizations, one constant is her devotion to people in Western New York.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the time to recognize the remarkable work Ms. Stephanie Geter has done for the Western New York Community. Ms. Geter has truly dedicated her life to helping the people of Buffalo & Erie County. Stephanie's devotion to serving others is admirable and I would like to congratulate her on receiving the Medgar Evers Award.

**EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR ROBERT LEE SIMMONS II**

**HON. MAC THORNBERRY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express appreciation for the work of Robert Lee Simmons II, Staff Director of the House Armed Services Committee. True confession—I don't like goodbyes, and I'm not very good at them. So I wrote down a few things I want to say and then will yield to others.

Bob Simmons has been a superb leader of the House Armed Services Committee staff for 12 years, across four chairmen. That longevity and continued confidence in him as chairmen come and go, as Committee members come and go, as the challenges that our military and our country face come and too often stay, is pretty remarkable, especially in the business we are in.

I would say his greatest achievement is that he assembled, led, and inspired an outstanding group of people to give their best for our country through not only changing security challenges, but through changing political environments. And he has always operated in light of the unique responsibilities that the Constitution places on Congress as a separate, independent branch of government. Our system is messy, difficult, usually inefficient—as Churchill said, it “is the worst form of government except for all of the others that have ever been tried.”

Over the years, Bob has spent the hours, incurred the headaches, the time in the car, the frustrations of dealing with knucklehead Members like me with the next great idea. And he has done all of that with patience and a

cheerful disposition—usually. He has made this Committee, and helped make this Congress and this system of government, work. And our nation has benefited.

I believe that there is nothing more noble to which men and women can devote their lives than to the protection of their fellow citizens and the security of our nation. Bob Simmons has devoted his life to that cause, first in industry, then with us, now back to industry. But it has always been the same cause. And the guiding light has always been what's the right thing to do for our country, and for the men and women who serve it.

Everyone who serves in jobs like these does so at some sacrifice to family. And so I want to thank Donna and Rob for sharing Bob with us these 12 years and for understanding the missed anniversaries and birthdays. We were on quite a roll there for a while.

On behalf of the men and women who have been privileged enough to serve in this room at some point over the past 12 years, we are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with Bob, for what you have done for us, and for all you have done for that most noble cause.

**HONORING CAPTAIN JERRY LYNN TATE**

**HON. JEB HENSARLING**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Captain Jerry Lynn Tate for his courageous service to our country. While Captain Tate enjoys his retirement in Mabank, Texas, his exemplary military career leaves a far-reaching legacy of true, American exceptionalism.

Captain Tate joined the United States Army after graduating from the University of Oklahoma's Army ROTC. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in January of 1967.

Upon basic training and studies, Captain Tate was an instructor in the Armor School of Topographic Studies at Fort Knox. He went on to earn his Army Aviator Wings and received 18 Air Medals for meritorious achievement while participating in flight support for combat ground forces throughout the Republic of Vietnam. As a pilot as well as an instructor in the Grumman OV-1 Mohawk, Captain Tate flew 945 hours and 315 missions in combat. He also received both the 1,000 and 2,000 hour plaque from Grumman Aerospace, commemorating his accident-free flying hours. There is no doubt that Captain Tate saved countless lives during his outstanding service to our country.

His acts of bravery were commemorated with many awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal. Upon his release from active duty as an instructor pilot and flight commander at Fort Rucker, Captain Tate went on to have a successful career as a pilot for Delta Air Lines for 33 years.

Humbly, I echo the words of President Ronald Reagan, “We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we will always be free.” And humbly, I offer my sincere gratitude to Captain Jerry Lynn Tate for his service and acts of bravery that allow us the freedoms we enjoy today.

IN RECOGNITION OF ANDREA LUNA CERVANTES' RECEIPT OF THE 2017 HAMILTON SCHOLARS AWARD

**HON. PAUL A. GOSAR**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Ms. Andrea Luna Cervantes of Prescott, Arizona. Andrea is an accomplished and dedicated student who has devoted tremendous amounts of time and energy to her studies and to improving her community. I am excited to announce that Andrea is one of 35 national recipients of the 2017 Hamilton Scholars Award for outstanding academic accomplishments and community service. Her work ethic, academic aptitude and ability to connect with people of all ages renders her receipt of this award no surprise.

Currently, Andrea is a rising senior at Yuma High School, where she is well on her way to becoming a productive service leader. In reaching this point, she has overcome many hardships through determination and a supportive community. I fully expect she will continue to grow into a productive and engaged citizen—exactly the kind of leader our society is in need of.

Those who know Andrea recognize that she has the natural ability to reach out and connect with people of all backgrounds. Included amongst her work in the community is her service as the Vice President of Junior State of America (JSA)—an American non-partisan youth organization that helps high school students acquire leadership skills and the requisite skills to be effective debaters and civic participants. She also serves as the President of her chapter of the National Honor Society—an academic membership-based organization that fosters a commitment to academic excellence. Andrea has competed at high levels of debate moderation and math competitions, and was a participant in the selective Yuma Youth Leadership Program.

Andrea is an ambitious, high-achieving young woman. She embodies the characteristics which, when cultivated, give rise to the best of our society's leaders. It is an honor of mine to recognize this Hamilton Scholar, and I expect only the best from Andrea's future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BRIAN BABIN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 7, I joined the Vice-President for an important event at Johnson Space Center in my congressional district. As a result, I missed the following recorded votes:

On roll call Number 288, ordering the previous question on House Resolution 374, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 289, agreeing to House Resolution 374, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 290, ordering the previous question on House Resolution 375, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 291, agreeing to House Resolution 375, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 292, the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the chair, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On roll call Number 293, passage of an amendment to H.R. 2213, had I been present I would have voted "no."

On roll call Number 294, passage of H.R. 2213, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

I am pleased that my colleagues in the House voted to pass the Anti-Border Corruption Reauthorization Act of 2017 that will enable the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to fulfill its duty to protect the American people by waiving specific pre-employment requirements for certain qualified candidates to make the hiring process more expedient. The CBP is currently understaffed below its congressionally mandated level and this bill will help alleviate this staffing shortage.

DULLES HIGH SCIENCE TEAM GOES FAR IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dulles High School of Sugar Land, TX, for placing in the top 16 at the 2017 National Science Bowl Competition hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy.

The National Science Bowl is a prestigious academic competition that brings together thousands of middle and high school students from across the country. Students compete by solving technical problems and answering questions on a range of topics, such as biology, chemistry, earth and space science, physics and math. From January to March, regional elimination tournaments were held across the country. The top 111 teams from the regional competitions earned the opportunity to compete at the National Science Bowl. Dulles High School made it to the top 16, winning \$1000 for their school's science department. The team members included: Andrew Liu, Shree Mohan, Shreyas Balaji, Anish Patel, Abin Antony, Coach Judy Matney and Coach Chandra Mohan.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Dulles High School for earning a top 16 spot at the National Science Bowl. We're proud to have them represent TX-22 and look forward to seeing their future accomplishments.

HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ANTHONY WILEY JR. AS HE RECEIVES THE YOUTH AWARD FROM THE BUFFALO BRANCH OF THE NAACP

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to honor the accomplishments of

Mr. Anthony Wiley Jr., as he receives the Youth Award, which has been awarded to him by the Buffalo Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He is deserving of this award due to his involvement with his local Boy Scout Troop, and his volunteer work for churches throughout his community.

Anthony has been involved with community service as a member of his Boy Scout troop throughout his life, and has been promoted to an Assistant Scoutmaster of Troop 237. He attained this honor by earning his merit badges through service-oriented and camping experiences, and was further awarded the rank of Eagle Scout for his hard work and dedication.

Some of Anthony's achievements as a Boy Scout include performing his role as Crew Leader on an eighty-two mile journey at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, acting as a Patrol Leader and later as a Senior Patrol member, and becoming a member of the Arrow of the Arrow. His Eagle Scout Project involved supervising the building of a new supply cabinet for his church. Notably, he spent a total of 105 hours to complete this project, and was acknowledged and rewarded by the Eagle Scout board of review on December 22, 2015.

Anthony has shown dedication to the Scout Oath, exhibiting an exemplary sense of duty and admirable mental and moral aptitude. He is extensively involved with his community, as shown by his attendance at the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, where he plays the drums, volunteers regularly in the food pantry, and helps those who run the church in their duties by tending to the sanctuary in the evenings.

He is a graduate of Tapestry Charter High School, where he was a member of the Thunder Hawks Varsity Basketball Team and of the school band.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor Mr. Anthony Wiley Jr. for his hard work and his dedication to his community. I wish him the best in his future endeavors and look forward to seeing how he will continue to serve others.

GOREVILLE HS GIRLS SOFTBALL

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the achievements of the Goreville Black Cats softball team, which earlier this month brought home the Illinois Class 1A State Championship.

The Black Cats put together a 26-8 season this year, swept through the regional and the sectional, and knocked off two of the state's top teams at the state finals in order to claim the title. The team beat Hardin-Calhoun 2-0 in extra innings in the championship game.

These student-athletes and their coaches have represented themselves, their school, and their community in a first-rate fashion. I join with the other Members of this House in congratulating them and wishing them all the best in their future academic and athletic endeavors.

Congratulations to: team members Katie Schuetz, Camille Green, Shayna Elms, Morgan Dunning, Alexandria King, Payton