

HONORING NAPA VALLEY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Napa Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) for its commitment to helping our community during times of disaster.

Napa Valley Community Foundation was founded in 1994 and since then has distributed more than 50 million dollars to important causes in Napa Valley. For more than a decade it has spearheaded relief and recovery efforts following disasters and filled in the gaps to ensure residents received needed assistance. NVCF is a vital organization that has supported our community time and time again.

After the New Year's Flood on the Napa River in 2006, the earthquake in August 2014 and the October 2017 Wildfires, Napa Valley Community Foundation provided aid and funded services for those affected and displaced. Following these disasters and recoveries, NVCF developed best practices for short-term, intermediate-term and long-term disaster relief. To address the many needs of our community and the inevitable gaps in the recovery process, NVCF partners with nonprofits and donors to ensure financial resources are available where they are most needed. Additionally, Napa Valley Community Foundation partners with associations, businesses, individuals and government agencies to provide aid to our community.

Napa Valley Community Foundation manages the Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund, which was established after the 2014 earthquake with a 10 million dollar lead gift from Napa Valley Vintners. The Fund raised an additional 15 million dollars after the October 2017 Wildfires, which greatly assisted local recovery efforts. Because of the Fund, 15,000 fire survivors received immediate relief services such as temporary shelter, meals and medical care; and over 2,000 workers, households and small businesses received direct financial aid.

Mr. Speaker, Napa Valley Community Foundation has been a lifeline to our community during times of disaster. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor it here today.

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOWNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND THE DOWNEY SYMPHONIC SOCIETY

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Downey Symphony Orchestra and the Downey Symphonic Society on their six decades of broadening the cultural and educational horizons of the people of Downey, California, and beyond.

On October 20, 2018, the Downey Symphony Orchestra (DSO), directed and conducted by Sharon Lavery, commences its 60th season of concerts. The DSO has moved and

inspired generations of Downey residents, and many from surrounding communities, who would otherwise not have access to live symphonic music. The orchestra has fulfilled the hopes of its founders, a group of civic-minded citizens supported by civic and government leaders, who created the DSO in 1957 to help make Downey a more desirable place to live and to do business.

Since 1958, the non-profit Downey Symphonic Society (DSS) has sponsored the DSO and its educational outreach programs. The society is governed by a volunteer board of directors, who organize and publicize the DSO concerts; seek support from foundations and government entities; solicit donations from individuals, businesses, and service organizations; and promote the symphony. The DSS also enjoys the support of a very enthusiastic and active guild of over 200 members.

Each year, the DSO presents three subscription concerts in the Downey Theatre in the fall, winter, and spring. The orchestra reaches a larger audience in the summer at its annual free "Concert in the Park" in Furman Park. The summer concert emphasizes selections from musical theatre and films.

DSO programs are designed to appeal to a broad audience in terms of age, musical sophistication and taste, and ethnic and cultural background. In addition to the standard repertoire, programs include works by Latino and Spanish composers and by contemporary composers. The symphony has premiered and commissioned major works, including Oscar Navarro's "Downey Overture," which has been declared the city's "Official Symphonic Music"; Bryan Curt Kostors' "To Dust"; and Lars Clutterham's "Downey Celebration Suite."

The DSO and its members have also worked to promote music appreciation among our youth. In 1995, the previous DSO music director, Thomas Osborn, started the "Music in the Schools" program, which introduces students to all instruments and sections of the orchestra. Today, the program reaches almost 20,000 school children a year, including visits during winter and spring by a quintet of DSO musicians to the 13 public and four private elementary schools in Downey. Musicians present a sequential, multi-year curriculum on fundamentals of music, such as rhythm, melody, and style, and they perform specially arranged pieces. In addition, two full orchestral concerts are presented for school children at the Downey Theatre.

Major funding comes from the City of Downey, the Los Angeles County Performing Arts Commission, the Music Performance Trust Fund of the Musicians Union, the Downey Kiwanis Foundation, and the Downey Unified School District. In addition, the society's noble mission has been recognized in recent years with two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Thanks to the efforts of these supporters and others, the DSO is able to make its ticket prices more affordable and accessible for local residents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in saluting the Downey Symphony Orchestra and the Downey Symphonic Society for providing 60 years of musical enjoyment to communities in my 40th Congressional District of California. Thanks to the continued work of these organizations, the people of Downey and beyond can look forward to many more music-filled years to come.

HONORING RICHARD ROMERO

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Seattle Credit Union's CEO, Richard Romero, for his work helping low income and immigrant families in and around Seattle.

Mr. Romero is an example of the American dream in practice. He and his mother immigrated to the United States from Peru when Mr. Romero was just four years old. He began kindergarten unable to speak English, but through perseverance, he received his Bachelors of Science in Organizational Management from La Verne University. Starting his career as a bank teller, Mr. Romero worked his way up through the banking system, and made a name for himself as Chief Operating Officer of the LA Firemen's Credit Union. Today, Mr. Romero serves as CEO of Seattle Credit Union (SCU) where he has led the cooperative to massive growth and expansion.

In his time as CEO, Mr. Romero has directed SCU according to the values of community engagement that he grew up with. Under his leadership, SCU has opened two new branches in low income neighborhoods, and begun to offer a variety of resources for immigrants and the underbanked. These resources include: a citizenship loan program and emergency financial planning information for immigrant families. Mr. Romero's empathetic approach to running a credit union has not gone unnoticed, as he was named Trailblazer CEO of the year by the Credit Union Times—an honor he has more than earned.

Mr. Romero's story serves as a reminder of the importance of perseverance and community involvement. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize the work that Mr. Romero, and the Seattle Credit Union have done for the Community.

CONSOLER-IN-CHIEF: MAYOR
MERLE AARON**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Mayor Merle Aaron has faithfully served the folks of Humble since his election to Humble City Council in 2005 and his election to Mayor in 2015. My friend, Merle, is a well-respected businessman, devoted family man, and a passionate advocate for the citizens of Humble, Texas. His patriotic spirit, love for God, and love of the community make him a natural promoter of the Humble area.

Merle was the middle child in a family of five boys and four girls that grew up in Edinburg, Texas, near the Texas-Mexico border. He was the first in his family to graduate from Edinburg High School. He was working in construction when he met the love of his life and best friend, Linda. They moved their family up to Humble from the Lower Valley in the early 1960s, back when the Bush Intercontinental Airport was nothing but trees. Merle supervised the crew that poured the runways at

Bush between concourses A and B for the opening of what was then the Houston International Airport in 1969. Merle poured concrete all over Houston, including the original Interstate 10. He came across a job with the Marriott Corporation, where he really got to focus on his construction and maintenance certifications. He took computer classes at Lone Star College—Kingwood, eventually earning the top HVAC license. When Marriott wanted to promote Merle and send him to Cincinnati, his family had already considered Humble home. He then quickly put that mechanical education to use and decided to start his own company. In 1978, family-owned and operated Aaron Mechanical opened.

Aaron Mechanical had water bill and permitting issues with the City of Humble. Rather than battling with the city, Merle ran for Humble City Council to help come up with solutions. In 2005, he turned over Aaron Mechanical to the experienced hands of his son. This gave him the opportunity to run for Humble City Council and eventually, mayor for the City of Humble. As mayor, Merle has placed a significant importance in infrastructure. He focused efforts into public safety by improving roads and drainage.

Merle has many times been described as “having a servant’s heart”, and that held true during the devastation of Hurricane Harvey. He worked tirelessly trying to fulfill the needs of the people of Humble, opening up the Humble Civic Center as a shelter, talking with people who lost everything, hugging and crying with them. Merle worked aggressively to have contractors ready as quickly as possible to begin the debris removal process.

The Lake Houston Chamber of Commerce has been selecting a Citizen of the Year since 1969, recognizing those who show selfless public service and sacrifice. It was no question that Merle most deserved to win the Haden E. McKay, MD Citizen of the Year for 2017. But if you ask him, he would tell you, “All the first responders and volunteers who went into the flooded areas of Humble to help people affected by Hurricane Harvey. These are our citizens of the year.”

The City of Humble is important to the Aaron Family. Merle and Linda have three children, eight grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren, who all have or are currently going through Humble ISD schools. For 55 years, their place of worship has been First Baptist Church of Humble. The Aaron family has deep roots in Humble, Texas. Always giving back to the place they call home.

And that’s just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY BATISTA

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor Nancy Batista as a distinguished leader in Central Florida for Hispanic Heritage Month. Nancy Batista is a Guatemalan immigrant who came to the U.S. at a very young age. She is the Florida State Director of Mi Familia Vota. Nancy was raised in a single parent home, she understands the sacrifices her mother had to make as she worked three shifts in different factories to sustain the family.

Growing up, her family experienced many hurdles due to their immigration status. Now she uses those experiences as a driver.

Nancy is a wife and mother of two kids, Anthony and Natalie; they are her biggest inspiration.

She obtained her Master’s degree in Business Administration dual concentration in Human Resources and Project management with a scholarship from Herzing University and her Bachelor’s degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Central Florida.

She is thrilled to be a part of the Mi Familia Vota team. She hopes to be an advocate and voice for those who are oppressed.

Under her leadership as Florida State Director, she has led her team to register over 27,000 people to vote this year alone and they are working hard to register 30,000 people by October 9th.

Mi Familia Vota is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, it is their mission to build Latino political power. This year, Mi Familia Vota partnered with the League of Woman Voters to help translate a Voter Guide for Orange county.

Nancy is focused on partnering with other organizations that share the same values and agendas to help promote unity in our communities.

She believes that our communities will greatly benefit from being continuously involved in our government and election processes and she ensures that Mi Familia Vota will be supportive through civic engagement participation.

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY’S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 60th anniversary of Florida Institute of Technology (“Florida Tech”). Dr. Jerome P. Keuper founded this private, non-profit university as a “night school for missilemen,” allowing workers at Cape Canaveral to pursue graduate education. Initially named “Brevard Engineering College,” Florida Tech held its first classes on September 22, 1958.

Since its humble beginnings, Florida Tech has soared to great heights. The university now serves nearly 10,000 students through its Melbourne campus, its extended study sites across the nation, and its online facilities.

Boasting more than 60,000 alumni around the world, Florida Tech has earned a spot in U.S. News & World Report as the number one national university in attractiveness to international students. This is the fourth year in a row that Florida Tech has been recognized for its diverse student body.

Florida Tech has also been recognized for the remarkable leadership of President T. Dwayne McCay and First Lady Mary Helen McCay. This past November, the couple was inducted into the Florida Inventors Hall of Fame in honor of the 15 joint patents they hold in the field of metallurgical engineering.

Mayors Kathleen Meehan of Melbourne and Hal Rose of West Melbourne have testified to

the significant educational and cultural contributions that Florida Tech has made to the region, the state, the nation, as well as the globe. Through “the university’s core values of research to benefit all humankind; student success for a lifetime; and good global citizenship,” Florida Tech has raised the bar for every institution of higher education.

Last month marked 60 years since the founding of the university that began its life as “countdown college.” Mayor William Capote of Palm Bay delivered remarks at the anniversary celebration, and, in a fitting touch, Florida Tech commemorated its achievement by launching fireworks into the sky, reminding many graduates of the rockets and satellites they have helped launch beyond Earth’s atmosphere.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Florida Tech, as well as its faculty, staff, students, and graduates. Please rise in honor of the university’s 60 years of educating excellence.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT LOCOMOTIVE CHASE FESTIVAL IN THE CITY OF ADAIRSVILLE, GEORGIA

HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Great Locomotive Chase Festival in the city of Adairsville, Georgia.

In 1968, Marion Lacey, principal of Adairsville High School wanted to host a Festival in the fall for students and members of the community to come together. Two years later, the festival was moved to the downtown Adairsville area, and was renamed the Great Locomotive Chase Festival to commemorate the event during the Civil War when “the Texas” pursued “the General” for eighty-seven miles, passing through the city of Adairsville.

This longstanding Adairsville tradition is the 2nd oldest festival in the state of Georgia, and hosts over 30,000 people during the three-day event. The parade, pageants, live entertainment, rides, a wide selection of southern fare, and fireworks, offers something for every member of the community. The 50th anniversary GLCF will be held this year on October 5–7.

On behalf of Georgia’s 11th Congressional District, I recognize the City of Adairsville, the Mayor, and the City Council on this 50th anniversary of the Great Locomotive Chase Festival.

IN HONOR OF M.B. SMILEY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1968

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2018

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the vibrant history and spirit of M.B. Smiley High School Class of ‘68 as