

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA FOOTBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the football team at the University of Central Florida located in my congressional district.

The Knights finished the season ranked sixth in the Nation by the Associated Press. They had a perfect 13-0 record—the only team in college football to go undefeated. UCF won the American Athletic Conference championship with an exhilarating—and excruciating—double-overtime victory against a talented team from the University of Memphis.

The Knights shook up the world of college football in the Peach Bowl on New Year's Day when they beat Auburn University, one of the most storied football programs in the country.

I had a personal stake in the outcome of the Peach Bowl, having made a friendly bet on the game with Congressman MIKE ROGERS, whose Alabama district is home to Auburn. I am excited to collect my winnings from Congressman ROGERS later today, a bucket of delicious Florida oranges that he will deliver to me while carrying a UCF helmet.

I thank the football gods that UCF did not lose. Under the terms of the wager, I would have been compelled to blanket a tree on the Capitol grounds with toilet paper, pursuant to a time-honored and, frankly, bewildering Auburn tradition. I am grateful that the Knights saved Capitol Police from the trouble of having to arrest a Member of Congress for vandalism.

Even though UCF was not given the opportunity to play for the national championship, the players and coaches of this team are national champions in my book. The Knights didn't just win games, they also won our hearts. They didn't just beat opponents, they also beat the odds. Sports—in particular, team sports—have a unique power to captivate, to unify, and to inspire.

Under the strong and steady leadership of Head Coach Scott Frost, the Knights captivated the school's students and alumni, filling them with pride. They united our Central Florida University community from Orlando to Oviedo, from Apopka to Altamonte Springs, and they inspired countless people, young and old alike, both football experts and novices. Importantly, UCF the football team brought national attention to UCF the university, which has quietly become one of Florida's and our Nation's academic gems.

To be sure, the Knights' squad was filled with talented players, seven of whom won first team all-conference honors, including rifle-armed quarterback McKenzie Milton, fleet-footed running back Adrian Killins, and one-handed defensive warrior Shaquem Griffin, who personifies courage and character.

Many members of the team justifiably played with a chip on their shoulder, having been overlooked by more established college football programs coming out of high school. They had to earn respect through their actions. Ultimately, what made the Knights so special and so successful was not what they accomplished as individuals, but, rather, what they achieved together as a team.

It was clear from watching the coaches and players that they loved and respected each other. The bond they shared made them teammates in the truest sense of the word. The team's motto, which is the name of the UCF fight song, is "Charge on." It is a message whose power extends beyond the football field and applies to life itself. When you confront challenges, charge on. When others doubt your abilities, charge on. And when you think you can't work any harder, charge on.

As a proud fan, I thank the UCF football team for showing us all what it means to charge on.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize seven students from my district who have received the 2017 National Merit Scholarships.

The criteria required to receive a National Merit Scholarship is quite difficult. In fact, of the 15,000 finalists selected, only half will actually receive scholarships. The recipients of this prestigious scholarship are Connor Schmidt of Ham Lake, Benjamin Caswell of Shoreview, Raffi Toghrumadjan of Blaine, Rachel Cho of Blaine, Piper Christenson of Spring Lake Park, Catherine Lewis of Blaine, and Kenneth Truong of Coon Rapids. Each one of these students has big plans for the future which include careers in medicine, science, and engineering—all fields that are critically important to the success of our Nation.

I congratulate each of these students on receiving this scholarship, and we look forward to watching you achieve great success in your respective careers.

Good work, and good luck.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN JEFFREY VOLLMER

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of one of Minnesota's heroes. On Tuesday, December 19, 2017, Captain Jeffrey Vollmer of the Mayer Fire Department died in the line of duty.

A loving father and husband, Jeff is survived by his wife, Emily, and their two daughters, Anika and Kennedy. He was a 12-year veteran of the all-volunteer fire department in Mayer, Minnesota. Friends and colleagues knew him as a selfless and kind leader who was always willing to help others.

Fire Chief Rod Maetzold described Jeff as the kind of guy you could count on when it mattered most. Jeff was an avid muskie fisherman who enjoyed hunting and photography. Jeff loved to work with wood. He built signs, tables, and even a bed set for his daughter.

We pray for peace and comfort for his colleagues, friends, and family. He will be missed by so many.

RECOGNIZING JAKE HENRIKSEN

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding servicemember from my district, Jake Henriksen. As a Centennial graduate and resident of Lino Lakes, Minnesota, Jake always knew he wanted to serve in the military. As a third-generation member of the U.S. Army, his service as a specialist representing the 173rd Airborne Infantry Brigade Combat Team continues a family legacy of service to our Nation.

In just under 2 years in the service, Jake won the U.S. Army Europe Soldier of the Year award. Each company of the Army made up of about 100 people selects a soldier to compete in the Best Warrior Competition. Jake was chosen as his company's representative. The competition tests soldiers' abilities in a variety of areas, including a physical test, a written test, marksmanship, land navigation, chemical defense, and medical tasks. Jake excelled in all, which is why he went on to earn the title of U.S. Army Europe Soldier of the Year affirming his commitment to excellence.

Our community is very proud of Jake and his accomplishments. We admire his dedication and his commitment to serve. Congratulations, Jake.

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day to remember the men and women in blue who protect and serve our great Nation. The great State of Minnesota is home to many phenomenal law enforcement officers, men and women, who put their lives on the line each and every day to ensure the safety and security of our communities.

These are the true heroes, and some, tragically, have lost their lives in the line of duty. In 2016, Deputy Steven Sandberg was shot and killed in the line of duty in St. Cloud, Minnesota. While his death was both senseless and tragic, we remember the courageous way he chose to live and serve our local community.

In honor of brave officers like Deputy Sandberg today and every day, let us remember and honor the selfless service of our men and women in blue.

DEFENDING THE AMERICA WORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, this morning, a high school senior sat attentively in a Chicago classroom while

this country held her college dreams hostage.

This morning, a fourth-year medical student started her rotation as an aspiring thoracic surgeon in Cambridge while this country took her talent for granted.

This morning, an enlisted soldier living in Queens eagerly awaited his basic training assignment while his country shrugged their shoulders at his service.

This morning, 800,000 young men and women woke up, offered a brave smile to their loved ones, and sought to better the only home they have ever known.

You can call them DREAMers. You can call them immigrants. You can call them Americans. You can call them husbands, wives, sons, daughters, neighbors, doctors, students, servicemen and -women.

You can call them human beings who deserve to live in a place that they call home; whose lives shouldn't be horse-traded for big walls, petty tweets, and bad campaign ads; who have offered us their talent, their tirelessness, their ingenuity, their empathy, their loyalty, and their patriotism; who have earned their government's protection in return.

We gave those 800,000 human beings our word, and if those of us here in this room who have the incredible privilege of serving in these halls bestowed with the title "Representative," if we aren't willing to defend the American word and make sure that it still means something, then who will?

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, today is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, and so I rise to honor our men and women in blue. My oldest son is a local police officer, so I am acutely aware of the risks and sacrifices made by the men and women in law enforcement.

They assume risks every day—risks we sometimes take for granted in order to keep our communities safe. Being a law enforcement officer isn't a job. It is a calling. It is a service to the community.

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Despite the very real risks, they respond to the call always knowing they may not go home.

Just last week, a deputy in the community my son serves in was struck by a car during a traffic accident. Yes, he was responding to a traffic accident, and he was hit by a car. It broke his back, broke his neck, and crushed his face. The last update I received, he was in critical condition. All he was doing was trying to protect people at a traffic accident.

We can't take that for granted. Today we need to pause and simply

offer a thank-you to law enforcement officers across the country and to their families. We offer a prayer for those who have reached the end of watch.

Join me today in thanking police officers across this Nation. Take a moment to simply say thank you.

RECOGNIZING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR OF MACOMB COUNTY

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the bicentennial year of Macomb County, Michigan.

On January 15, 1818, Macomb County was formally organized as the third county in the territory of Michigan. Macomb County was designated nearly 20 years before Michigan even gained statehood. It was named in honor of General Alexander Macomb, a decorated veteran of the War of 1812. Macomb's rich history of service to our Nation doesn't stop there.

In July 1917, almost 100 years after Macomb's founding, Selfridge Field was established. Everyone in Macomb County and the National Guard knows the importance of Selfridge Air National Guard to our national security. Its founding just 13 years after the Wright brothers' first flight is a true testament to the commitment to national security and to innovation that has defined Macomb County for 200 years.

In addition to being the auto capital of the world, Macomb led the manufacturing that resulted in the arsenal of democracy in America's victory in World War II. Our defense industry helped the Allies win World War II and continues to provide necessary resources to maintain our strength and security in the world.

I am proud to represent Macomb County in Washington, D.C., and eager to celebrate the 200th anniversary of this great county.

HONORING AND PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay honor and pay tribute to the Honorable Dr. Martin Luther King, and, Mr. Speaker, I am so proud and honored to have the preeminent privilege of doing so here in the well of the Congress.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. King was born at a time, to quote Dr. Benjamin Hooks, when he could buy a hat but he couldn't try it on.

He was born at a time when he could only sit in the balcony of a movie, and that was in some movies. There were others that he wasn't allowed in at all.

He was born at a time when he had to sit in the back of the bus or he might be barred from riding the bus totally.

He was born at a time when he would have to wait in line and others of a different hue could always stand in front of him.

He was born at a time when invidious discrimination and when segregation was apparent and lawful.

Dr. King was born at a time when there were few who were willing to challenge the hate and the bigotry that was emanating from this country in all of its arenas for the most part.

But Dr. King was a person who understood that that which you will tolerate you will not change. Dr. King refused to tolerate bigotry and hatred. He refused to tolerate it, and, in fact, that is what separated him from a good many other people, for the most part.

Dr. King, if I may recall, went to Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963. He went there to do something about the conditions, about the discrimination, about the hate and the bigotry. When he went there to do something about it, there were people who were tolerating hatred and bigotry.

There were people there who were very prominent members of the clergy—eight of them—who decided that they would write Dr. King a letter and explain to him that what he was doing was unwise and untimely. They explained to him that law and order should prevail. They commended the constabulary for protecting the city.

These were persons who were considered honorable people, but they were people who were willing to tolerate hatred and bigotry. They, in fact, insisted that we should let the courts handle this: Let's work it through peaceful means by which we might sit and negotiate with those who would perpetrate hatred and bigotry.

Dr. King, on the other hand, sought to use nonviolent protest as a methodology by which change might take place. The things that he could not tolerate he was willing to protest to bring about change.

There were other great orators of the time. Dr. King was indeed a great orator, one of the greatest ever, but there were other great orators. There were other persons who were knowledgeable, had Ph.D.'s, and who were very well versed in what was happening with discrimination and could have spoken up on it. Many did speak up, but many of them were willing to tolerate it. Dr. King was not, and that separated him from a good many people who were orators, who were learned, and who understood invidious discrimination. In fact, they were opposed to it, but they tolerated it in quiet ways.

So when Dr. King went to Birmingham, these eight clergypersons having written him a letter, he found himself incarcerated in the Birmingham jail, and he decided to respond to them. The "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is a response to eight notable clergy members in Birmingham.

So he decided to respond to their letter. In responding to their letter, he gives us this masterpiece that really addresses what invidious discrimination is all about, why you can't consider yourself an outside agitator if you are an American, and why you have to do this not only for yourself, but for the generations to come.