

A&M University college student named Heather Hilton came across a brochure and wondered why there was no locally run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization. Heather contacted other pillars of the community who also noticed the lack of affordable housing in the Brazos Valley. Since its subsequent formation, the Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity has continued its mission of putting God's love into action by building homes, communities, and hope in Brazos County, Texas.

In 1990, Victor and Amelia Gonzalez purchased the first home built by Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity. This opportunity allowed them and their three children to move out of their small trailer with no heating or cooling and a large hole in the floor. In 2012, they paid off their mortgage on the home. The Gonzalez family is just one example of the more than 1,000 people the Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity has helped in their 30 years of existence.

The Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity has served 456 adults and 816 children by providing homeownership opportunities to individuals and families who earn between 35 and 80 percent of the area's median income. This past August, the Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity raised the walls of its 298th home, and will reach its 300th home milestone this year.

The Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity is able to provide these opportunities to those in need through financial donations, volunteer labor, efficient building methods, standardized designs, and zero interest loans. Over 70 percent of the land and construction costs come from the generous donations from businesses, individuals, and other private sources. Other costs are covered by mortgage payments of the existing Habitat for Humanity homeowners and revenue from the Bryan-College Station ReStore which opened in 1995 selling building supplies, furniture, appliances, and home décor.

In addition to constructing new homes, the Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity has also started a Community Home Repair program to serve low-income residents. Since the program's inception in 2015, it has served another 209 homeowners in the Brazos Valley.

The work Habitat for Humanity does is vital to the success of families in the Brazos Valley. A 2018 study conducted by the Bush School of Government and Public Service found that families in Habitat homes visit the doctor less for mold related illnesses, the children have increased performance in school, and parents are more confident in funding their children's education. The Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity does more than build and repair homes; they bring people from all walks of life together to work toward a common goal: demonstrating God's love by giving a hand up to those in need of decent, affordable places to live.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Bryan-College Station Habitat for Humanity has had a large and positive impact on the Brazos Valley in their 30 years of operation. I congratulate them on reaching this milestone and I look forward to seeing their continued success.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country, for our veterans, for our military men and women who protect us, and for our first responders who keep us safe at home.

HONORING KIRK-CASEY AMERICAN LEGION POST 366 IN SENECA FALLS, NEW YORK FOR ITS ONE HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 20, 2019

Mr. REED. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize and honor Kirk-Casey American Legion Post 366 in Seneca Falls, New York for its one hundredth Anniversary.

A charter was put in place by New York State for Kirk-Casey American Legion Post 366 in Seneca Falls on September 8, 1919. The post was named in honor of local citizens, Frederick Kirk and Maynard Casey, two military members killed in action during World War I. The first meeting of Kirk-Casey American Legion Post 366 was held on September 19, 1919 where the name was chosen. Six days later, Fata Martin was the first woman enrolled in the post. Fata Martin served as a nurse in France after training at Willard State Hospital in Romulus.

On February 22, 1921, a women's auxiliary was organized and a charter was received on May 23, 1923. Property was purchased on April 2, 1924, known as the Casey Property, which was located at 48 State Street, Seneca Falls, New York. This property was used to build the post home, which is still in use. The post home was dedicated on May 18, 1929.

The rich and varied history of this post is a long-lasting legacy that I wish to share with my colleagues here, the constituents in my district and the American people. Kirk-Casey American Legion Post 366 is the first chartered post in Seneca County and is one of the longest chartered posts in the American Legion's seventh district. I applaud the efforts of this post on behalf and for veterans over the years and wish them continued success in the future.

Given the above, I ask that this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations and join me to recognize Kirk-Casey American Legion Post 366 in Seneca Falls, New York for its one hundredth Anniversary.

IN HONOR OF JOHN POWELL

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 20, 2019

Mr. BARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a special man, Mr. John Powell of Lexington, Kentucky. Mr. Powell is part of a special group of heroes that served our nation during World War II. Mr. Powell celebrates his 100th birthday on September 22nd.

Mr. Powell was born in Pennsylvania. He was drafted into the United States Army on April 4, 1941. He was expected to serve for one year, but instead served nearly five years. He was an artilleryman who landed on Omaha Beach just 17 days after D-Day. He and his unit pushed all the way to the Rhine River in

Germany. Mr. Powell earned the rank of Master Sergeant and was awarded the WWII Victory Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the American Defense Medal, the Operation Overload Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Bronze Star.

Mr. Powell returned home and worked for businesses in upstate New York. He later landed a job with IBM as a manager and was transferred to Lexington, Kentucky where he worked for 28 years prior to retirement. Mr. Powell married his wife Betty and they were blessed with two daughters, Paula and Marsha. Mr. and Mrs. Powell will celebrate their 77th anniversary this New Year's Eve.

Mr. Powell and his fellow veterans are true heroes. As members of the "Greatest Generation", they willingly served to protect and defend the freedoms that we enjoy today. I am humbled to honor the service of Mr. John Powell and to celebrate his upcoming 100th birthday before the United States Congress.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 20, 2019

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to honor Sports Foundation, Inc. on their 50th Anniversary of tireless advocacy to improve the lives of Bronx residents. This organization is a great example of extraordinary contributions that community based groups and outstanding individuals have made in my district in the Bronx.

Mr. Robert Williams and Mr. Claude "Buddy" Young founded Sports Foundation, Inc. in 1969. Mr. Williams was born and raised in the Bronx, attended Theodore Roosevelt High School and was captain of NYU's basketball team while earning a bachelors in education from there. Mr. Williams was also the first African-American assistant basketball coach at NYU. Throughout his career, basketball and scholarship were two of his biggest priorities. Mr. "Buddy" Young was one of the first black men to play pro football. He started playing at the University of Illinois, and then was drafted into the Armed Services, and played with one of the service teams. At the end of his military service, Mr. Young played for ten years in the All-America Football Conference and National Football League.

The dedication of Sports Foundation, Inc. to promote social responsibility to disadvantaged and at-risk youth has facilitated their ability to foster, develop and encourage positive youth development using sports as a method of change. Their work has created a lasting impact in my community and participants have been all the better for it. The variety of programs such as prevention counseling, sports and fitness activities, music/entertainment, and educational and community service, has helped to develop healthy bodies and strong minds in the youth from this community. Their location in the South Bronx placed this organization on the front lines in the war against poverty, obesity, hunger, drugs, and violence. Sports Foundation, Inc. is now focused on transforming the foundation into the premier

youth services provider capable of reaching an ever-expanding and greatly underserved youth population.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Sports Foundation, Inc. for their steadfast dedication and years of service to our Bronx residents, and for their long-standing commitment to improving our community.

HIDDEN FIGURES CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2019

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, Katherine Johnson, Dr. Christine Darden, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson; most people know them as the “Hidden Figures.”

Well, Madam Speaker, I think it’s safe to say they are “hidden figures” no longer.

Thanks to them and many other women, we were able to reach for the stars and put a man on the moon.

We honor these brave, brilliant women. They accomplished what many thought impossible and proved—to paraphrase Katherine Johnson—that “Girls are capable of doing everything men are capable of doing. Sometimes they even have more imagination than men.”

In that spirit, I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Hidden Figures Congressional Gold Medal Act and urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JENNIFER WEXTON

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 20, 2019

Ms. WEXTON. Madam Speaker, I was on the floor but missed the vote on H.R. 535, the Department of Veteran Affairs Expiring Au-

thorities Act (Roll Call 536). Had I voted, I would have voted YEA.

HONORING PRESIDENT MOHAMED BEJI CAID ESSEBSI

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 20, 2019

Mr. FLORES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mohamed Beji Caid Essebsi, the first democratically elected president of Tunisia, who passed away on July 25, 2019.

President Caid Essebsi was born November 29, 1926, in Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia. In 1950 he went to study law in Paris, France, and when he returned, he joined the independence movement led by future President Habib Bourguiba. Following Tunisia’s independence from France in 1956, he served as Bourguiba’s adviser and in his cabinet from 1957 to 1951. His posts included Chief of Regional Administration, Interior Minister, Defense Minister, and Ambassador to France.

Ten years after being sidelined for advocating for democratization, President Caid Essebsi returned to public service in 1981, serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1986. In 1987, Prime Minister Zine el Abidine Ben Ali staged a bloodless coup against President Bourguiba. Under the new regime, President Caid Essebsi was appointed as Ambassador to Germany. He later returned to serve from 1990 to 1991 as the President of the Chamber of Deputies, the former lower chamber of the Tunisian parliament.

In 2010, the citizens of Tunisia took part in a campaign of civil resistance against President Ben Ali. Their demonstrations against high unemployment, food inflation, and lack of political freedom led to the eventual ouster of President Ben Ali. The Tunisian people’s revolutionary success sparked a wave of protests and government overthrows across the Middle East, resulting in the Arab Spring. In the aftermath of their success, Tunisians were in need of leadership while trying to form a new and democratic form of government. In early 2011,

acting President Fouad Mebazaa appointed President Caid Essebsi, after almost 20 years of private life, as the new Prime Minister for his record of patriotism, loyalty, and commitment to democracy.

In 2011, following elections for the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, the body charged with writing a new constitution, President Caid Essebsi left office. As the country’s new constitution was being written, President Caid Essebsi founded a new political party named “Nidaa Tounes” which translates to “Tunisia’s Call.” He founded this party as a democracy-oriented alternative to the Islamist Ennahda party which had recently taken power.

In early 2014, the country’s new constitution was passed and ratified; followed by elections to form a new system of government. Parliamentary elections were held in October of that year and Nidaa Tounes won a plurality of the seats. The next month, President Caid Essebsi was elected as President of Tunisia in the country’s first free and fair elections. During his presidency, he supported a secular society and legislation that promoted women’s rights.

Last year, I had the pleasure of meeting President Caid Essebsi on a House Democracy Partnership trip to Tunisia to promote their continuing democratic progress. I enjoyed his company and was saddened to hear of his passing. It is my fervent hope that in the upcoming elections to replace him, Tunisia continues to build upon the democratic processes that he so strongly supported.

Madam Speaker, President Mohamed Beji Caid Essebsi’s life was defined by his service to his country. He will be forever remembered as a husband, a father, a selfless public servant, a champion for democracy, and a friend.

My wife, Gina, and I offer our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Caid Essebsi family. We also lift up the family and friends of President Caid Essebsi in our prayers.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country, for our veterans, for our military men and women who protect us, and for our first responders who keep us safe at home.