

paper the Southeast Missourian. For my whole life—literally—Mark has been a stoic reporter of news both local and national, and our community has been made better off by his work.

I was fortunate to work with Mark as he reported on politics in Missouri and Washington, DC. He accompanied me to many farm visits and trips to local businesses, and I knew to expect his call when issues affecting our country arose. At every meeting, his sharp thinking and dogged determination to find the best story for his readers was apparent, and he challenged me to work harder, ask more questions, and match his incredible tenacity and enthusiasm for the people around us.

Before he ever shook my hand or typed my name in one of his columns, however, I, and many in our community, knew him intimately. He tempered his no-nonsense reporting of the news with a tender, emotional, humorous weekly column titled “Mark My Word,” which touched on topics including politics, business, family, and food—in one word: life. He introduced himself to readers at the same time as he informed them about the goings-on of their town, state, and world.

Mark’s reporting is a perfect example of why a healthy, local press is essential to the flourishing of any community. Because of Mark’s natural inquisitiveness and wealth of historical knowledge, his columns put events in context and made them matter to his community. He not only reported on current events but understood them, and he was able to report the news in a way that helped his readers understand them as well. At a time when it felt as if a different local paper was closing every other month, Mark reminded us of what local news could and should be—and why it is so important to support these vital organizations. For this reason and many others, I am sad to see him retire, but I am thankful for the long record of service he leaves behind.

HONORING THE PARNAGIAN
FAMILY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Parnagian family as they are honored at the 2019 Fresno State Ag One Foundation Community Salute for their contributions to the Central Valley and California agriculture. The Parnagians are champions in our Valley and have played an integral role in transforming California agriculture for the 21st century.

The legacy of the Parnagian family began in 1943, when Gladys Girazian, a lieutenant in the United States Navy Nursing Corps, met a young Marine, Sam Parnagian, at the San Diego Naval Hospital. Sam, a World War II veteran, had just returned from Pearl Harbor. Just two weeks later, the couple knew they were meant for each other and were married on December 2, 1943. The couple were blessed with four sons, Dennis, Kenneth, Randy, and Philip.

In 1950, Sam established Fowler Packing Company in Fowler, California. With Sam at the helm, the help of his four sons, younger brother Pete and nephew Jim, Fowler Packing quickly found success. Today, the family fruit

farms and state-of-the-art packing facilities have grown into one of the largest packers and shippers of tree fruit, citrus and table grapes in the industry. Sam was involved in the day-to-day operations of the business until his passing in 1980. Thereafter, Sam’s four sons held executive roles in the company and managed day-to-day operations. After 40 years of success, the Parnagian brothers passed along leadership responsibilities to Justin and Leland Parnagian in 2017, making the way for the third-generation.

The family places an emphasis on social responsibility and creating a welcoming work environment. They have an on-site cafeteria, with free meals provided daily to their employees. Additionally, they have added a health clinic at their headquarters and offer free healthcare and medications for employees and their families. They have also established the Fowler Packing Scholars Program to help bring the dream of a college education for their employees’ children closer to reality. The Parnagians stay true to their commitment to excellence as they put the best interests of customers, growers and employees first.

The Parnagian family holds core values of family, honor and strong work ethic. They have always been generous with the community. In 2015, the Parnagian family made a \$1.5 million-dollar gift to Valley Children’s Healthcare, establishing the Sam and Gladys Parnagian Child Life Endowment. Additionally, Fowler Packing has been a longtime supporter of the Community Food Banks.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Parnagian family for their contributions and exemplified leadership in the Central Valley. I wish the Parnagian family continued health, happiness and prosperity.

NATIONAL DIABETES AWARENESS
MONTH

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I am proud to join the American Diabetes Association and millions of doctors, nurses, health professionals, and concerned Americans to recognize American Diabetes Month.

Diabetes remains the seventh leading cause of death in the United States. It affects more than 30 million Americans—seven million of whom are undiagnosed. By the end of this year, more than 40,000 people will be diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes—which is identified as the body’s inability to produce insulin. Type 2 diabetes—which indicates a deficiency in the way the body uses insulin—remains the most common form of diabetes, and makes up more than 90 percent of all diabetes cases. In addition, 10 percent of all women develop gestational diabetes during pregnancy, which blocks a mother’s ability to use insulin and can complicate the health of both the mother and the baby. Without proper treatment, diabetes can lead to serious and sometimes deadly complications, including heart disease, nerve damage, blindness, lower limb amputations, kidney failure, high blood pressure, and even stroke.

In my home state of California, more than 4 million people—approximately 13 percent of

the adult population in our state—have diabetes. What’s worse, more than 1 million Californians have diabetes, but have not been tested and are unaware that they are living with the disease. An astounding 10 million Californians have prediabetes, which is a health condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but are not high enough to be diagnosed as Type 2 diabetes. By the end of this year, 263,000 residents of our state will be newly diagnosed with diabetes.

The troubling increase in the number of Americans living with diagnosed diabetes has also increased the overall economic costs of treating the disease. According to a 2018 American Diabetes Association report, in 2017 the cost for treating diabetes was an astounding \$327 billion. Americans diagnosed with diabetes had medical expenses that were 2.3 times higher than Americans without diabetes, and spent, on average, \$9,600 on healthcare expenditures. That same report found that in the state of California, the overall cost of medical expenses and treatment of diabetes was \$27 billion.

For minority communities around the country, the risk of developing diabetes or suffering from complications of the disease is devastatingly heightened. Diabetes affects 15 percent of American Indians and Alaska natives, 13 percent of African Americans, 12 percent of Hispanics, and 8 percent of Asian Americans. Though they are most impacted and at risk of developing diabetes, it’s no secret that minorities often lack access to quality health care, are more likely to have prediabetes, are more likely to suffer from complications of diabetes, and in some cases, are nearly twice as likely to die from diabetes.

To this end, for many years, I have proudly authored and fought for support of H.R. 4550, the Minority Diabetes Initiative Act, which is supported by the American Diabetes Association and 60 of my House colleagues and fellow members of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus. My bill will provide grants to physicians and community-based organizations for diabetes prevention, care, and treatment programs in minority communities. It will also provide grants for a variety of diabetes-related health services, including public education on diabetes prevention and control, routine health care for diabetic patients, eye care, foot care, and treatment for kidney disease and other complications of diabetes.

I am also a strong supporter of increased federal funding for diabetes programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and have supported many legislative measures that ensure that Americans living with diabetes have the quality and affordable healthcare they deserve.

During American Diabetes Month, and every month, we must continue to raise awareness of this disease and show our strong support for research, innovations, and healthcare services that improve the lives of the millions of Americans who are living with or at-risk of being diagnosed with this disease. Diabetes will continue to ravage our communities and lead to the premature death of Americans if we fail to act. While both genetic and environmental factors can contribute to the development of diabetes, it is imperative that every American regardless of their age, race, or geographic location get tested for diabetes, and speak with their doctors about actions they

can take to prevent or postpone the progression of the disease.

I thank the millions of doctors, nurses, health professionals, and concerned Americans who are engaged in the fight against diabetes, and I am proud to continue to join with my colleagues in the Congressional Diabetes Caucus to do all that we can to develop and pass legislation that will aid in the treatment and prevention of this disease. Americans must get tested, get informed, and spread the word about the dangers of diabetes. The sooner we know, the sooner we can act to prevent or postpone the impact of this disease.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIDDEN OAKS NATURE CENTER

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the Fairfax County Park Authority and the staff and volunteers of Hidden Oaks Nature Center on the occasion of the Center's 50th anniversary.

Founded in 1969, Hidden Oaks Nature Center has become an invaluable part of the Annapolis Community Park and serves as an example of Fairfax County's ongoing commitment to the preservation of our natural environment. The Center offers a variety of programs and activities designed to promote the engagement of the public with their surrounding environment including live animal displays and a trail network featuring ponds, creeks, woodland and a rain garden. Hidden Oaks Nature Center also offers programs throughout the year to teach children and families about nature, including summer camps, tea parties, campfires, and animal feedings.

This rich bounty of natural resources has led to Hidden Oaks Nature Center becoming a staging location for community groups looking to assist with connecting the community with the natural world. One of the key partners has been the Boy Scouts, who use the Center for hundreds of hours of merit badge classes each year, as well as for support for Eagle Scout projects. Fairfax County's Environmental Quality Advisory Council, the citizen volunteer group charged with advising the Board of Supervisors on environmental matters, holds their monthly meetings at Hidden Oaks. These meetings are open to the public, providing another avenue for Hidden Oaks to continue its important mission.

The efforts of the staff and volunteers at Hidden Oaks have produced significant results. Chief among these is the designation of the greater Mason District as the fourth-largest certified Community Wildlife Habitat in the United States by the National Wildlife Federation. As Fairfax County continues to grow, with a population now exceeding 1 million, the continued preservation of our natural capital will only become more important. Even in the midst of the concrete jungles of New York City, the architects of that metropolis knew that it was critical for the wellbeing of the city's residents to have access to green space. The same is true for Fairfax County and the work done by the staff and volunteers at Hidden

Oaks Nature Center helps to ensure that the environment remains a priority for our community. This prioritization of nature and of access to green space is one of the many reasons why Fairfax County residents continues to enjoy such a high quality of life.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in once again congratulating the Fairfax County Park Authority and the staff and volunteers of Hidden Oaks Nature Center for their continued stewardship of our natural environment. The fact that this stewardship has continued unabated for half a century is a testament to the impact that Hidden Oaks Nature Center has had on our local community and how deeply it is valued as a resource. I thank them for their service to our community and wish them continued success in all their future endeavors.

IN MEMORY OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH C. MCCONNELL, JR.

HON. PAUL COOK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Mr. COOK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life of United States Air Force Captain Joseph C. McConnell, Jr. Before his tragic death in a flight-testing accident, Captain McConnell served his country in both World War II and the Korean War, where he was a triple jet ace and still holds the American record for most jet kills.

Captain McConnell entered the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1943 during World War II; flying 60 combat missions in Europe as a B-24 Liberator navigator. Following the war, he went on to earn his pilot wings in 1948 and subsequently fought in the Korean War. Captain McConnell served as a pilot with the 39th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing, Fifth Air Force and was stationed at George Air Force Base in Victorville before being assigned to K13 in the Republic of Korea. Within four months, Capt. McConnell had shot down 16 enemy fighter jets, becoming the leading jet ace of the Korean War and the first triple jet ace in American history. "For his extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations", President Eisenhower presented Capt. McConnell with the Distinguished Service Cross, the Nation's second highest decoration for valor. On August 25, 1954, Capt. McConnell was killed while service testing the newer, more powerful F-86H Sabre at George Air Force Base.

Captain McConnell's skill and daring over foreign battlefields in defense of our nation was unmatched during the Korean War. Although he was tragically taken from this earth far too early, his spirit lives on in the dedication and professionalism of the men and women of the United States Air Force that continue to follow in his footsteps today.

HONORING MRS. LILLIAN AUDREY SEAYS

HON. VAL BUTLER DEMINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Mrs. DEMINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of someone I consid-

ered my sister and friend, Mrs. Lillian Audrey Seays, who passed away on November 20, 2019, three days before seeing her 82nd birthday.

Always a champion for reading and education, Lillian served for 22 years as the librarian at Memorial Middle School. The Orlando community could not have been prouder when in 2016, the Media Center was renamed in her honor.

Lillian Seays had a mission in life, and it extended well beyond her commitment to the youth of Central Florida. Lillian understood the importance of educating other cultures about the accomplishments and challenges of African Americans throughout Florida. In 1997, she and her husband, Lester Seays, co-founded ONYX Magazine, through their own publishing company, LBS Publications. Rooted in strong tradition, style and grace, ONYX Magazine continues to be a premier magazine that empowers, entertains and inspires persons of diverse backgrounds from around the world. The LBS Foundation has awarded thousands of dollars in scholarship to deserving youth.

Lillian Seays was actively involved in her community where she served as a charter member of the Orange County Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., President and Treasurer of the Orlando Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Under her leadership, Orlando experienced several "firsts," including the first sickle cell screening clinic, health fair, Minerva Awards, and the very first and unforgettable Ebony Fashion Fair Show. Please note that the Ebony Fashion Fair Show raised thousands of dollars for scholarships. In addition, Lillian led the initiative to develop the Delteens of Orlando, now known as the Delta Gems, a mentoring group for young women.

Moreover, Lillian Seays was a member of the Links, Inc., publisher and co-author of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., and an active member of New Covenant Baptist Church.

Lillian Seays was a true public servant who never forgot that service to humankind was a direct reflection of her service to God. We truly believe Central Florida is better, stronger and kinder because of her unselfish love for her community.

Madam Speaker, Mrs. Lillian Seays will be missed by all who knew her, but we are forever grateful for her service, and join her family and the Orlando community in celebrating a life well lived.

RECOGNIZING THE 2019 MVLE ANNUAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize MVLE and its 2019 Award Recipients.

For 48 years, MVLE has provided employment opportunities and support services to individuals with disabilities and thereby created an environment which has allowed its clients to live in dignity and as independently as possible. MVLE has achieved this success by partnering with local businesses as well as with government agencies and other not-for-profit organizations. MVLE, its staff, and dedicated volunteers and supporters can be proud