

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF PAT WOOTON

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of a long-time friend and advisor, Mr. Dennis Patrick “Pat” Wooton, one of Buckhorn, Kentucky’s most beloved sons. His experience in education, law enforcement, coaching, local government operations and politics made him one of the most well-known and well-versed leaders in the Kentucky River area. It was his charming, encouraging and quick-witted personality that enabled him to become an instant friend to everyone he met along the way, and I count myself blessed to have been a part of his expansive friendship circle.

When I needed someone to transition field operations in Eastern Kentucky from my Congressional Office in Hazard, Pat Wooton was my top choice. As the former Pen-y County Sheriff, Pat was one of the first leaders in law enforcement to partner with Operation UNITE. He was determined to impact the prescription drug abuse epidemic that first ravaged our region 20 years ago. During a time when the stigma surrounding drug abuse paralyzed our communities, Pat stood strong in the face of adversity, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Operation UNITE to save lives and transform our region.

No one knew or loved the intricate facets of Perry County and life in the mountains, more than he did. As my Eastern Kentucky field man, Pat worked directly with local leaders across more than a dozen counties, bridging communications and funding resources for vital projects like infrastructure expansions, roadway enhancements, local emergency disaster response, economic development projects, and much more. His advocacy for improving communities in Eastern Kentucky was inspiring. When Pat entered a meeting, no one had to guess where he was from, because the City of Buckhorn was always at the top of his list for project needs. Naturally, when he retired from his post in my Congressional office, he served as mayor of his hometown.

Pat thrived on serving others throughout his entire life, starting in the Vietnam War, when the U.S. Army honored him with several service medals, including the Bronze Star. After returning to American soil, he dedicated his service to educating and coaching students at Buckhorn High School, where he became one of the most highly respected and loved principals in the school’s history. He took education to a new level, focusing as much on mentoring and inspiring young people, as he did teaching textbook material.

Whether he was serving on local community boards, coaching young athletes, enhancing education and law enforcement in one of the most rural parts of the country, or simply meeting someone for the first time, Pat

Wooton made a lasting impression on everyone he encountered. His ability to recite memorable Eastern Kentucky expressions stirred many smiles and laughs over the years among friends and associates.

As we remember our dear friend, may we carry forward Pat’s legacy of service and kindness in the years to come. My wife, Cynthia and I, extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Veda, their children, grandchildren, and all those who were blessed to know and love such a great man.

HONORING ROBERT H. DOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Robert H. Down Elementary School, which has been recognized as a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School for fostering an engaging, community-oriented learning environment for students on the central coast of California.

Robert Down School has created a dynamic learning environment with an educational philosophy that emphasizes academic enrichment through community engagement and individualized learning objectives, catered to the emotional, social, and academic needs of each of its students. In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum, Robert Down Elementary features programs that promote learning in social-emotional studies, character development, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics), foreign languages, vocal and instrumental music, journalism, visual/performing arts, and other subjects to provide students with a robust and multifaceted learning experience.

In 2018, with the help of dedicated staff, courageous leadership, supportive family, and engaged community, all students and significant student groups scored in the highest band of academic performance for both English Language Arts and Mathematics on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress—a testament to Robert Down School’s deep commitment to fostering a comprehensive, transformative learning experience for all of its students.

Robert Down School is setting the bar for academic intervention programs across the country. The intervention program, which is fluid and adapts to students’ individual needs, works both within the general education classroom and outside the core curricula time, in the community and at home, to ensure that all students are set on a path of academic success. Students enter reading, writing, and/or mathematics intervention based on diagnostic information, analysis of assessments, evaluation of the student’s daily performance in the classroom, and teacher consultation. Students are given benchmark assessments three times

a year and are provided with monthly progress monitoring to ensure the program’s criteria is responsive to the ever-evolving needs of its students.

The teachers and staff at Robert Down School are deeply committed to developing bright and high-achieving students. Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the achievement and hard work of Robert H. Down Elementary School and their well-deserved recognition as a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School.

HONORING COMMANDER MICHAEL D. CASSADY

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. STIVERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the work of a public servant who has spent his life in service to our country, Commander Michael D. Cassady. On March 1, 2020 he will retire from the United States Navy after nearly thirty-five years of active duty service.

Commander Cassady, a native of Millersport, Ohio, began his military career at the Naval Training Center, San Diego, California as a Seaman Recruit. During tours in the Philippines, Diego Garcia, Maryland, and Connecticut, Commander Cassady also dedicated time to pursue off-duty education at the University of Maryland, University College in 1991. He then received his commission as an Ensign, Medical Service Corps, United States Navy in 1993. Commander Cassady utilized his degree to better his community by supporting the health of his fellow servicemembers during tours in Iceland, Japan, Thailand, Australia, and Virginia.

In 2006, Commander Cassady deployed to Baghdad, Iraq to support combat operations as the Civil Affairs Public Health Section Lead, Multi-National Division. He later embarked on two tours of duty as the Environmental Health Officer, U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and U.S. Naval Hospital Naples, Italy.

A firm believer in the importance of education, Commander Cassady earned a Master of Science in Management from Troy State University, a Master of Public Health from The Ohio State University, a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategy from the Naval War College, and a Master of Science in Education from Old Dominion University.

He and his family have made incredible sacrifices and contributions in defense of our great nation. Endless support comes from his wife Rohini, and their children Rhyan, Cassandra, Briana, and David, and we owe them an additional debt of gratitude.

There is no doubt his contributions have made our community, Ohio, and our nation a better place. I offer my congratulations, and sincere appreciation, to Commander Cassady for his service. I wish him all the best in his next chapter.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAA FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS
OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the FAA family and Medical Leave Act. This legislation will ensure that employees of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are extended the same paid parental leave benefits afforded to other government employees under the conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020.

The conference report to the NDAA, which was announced earlier this week and passed in the House of Representatives Wednesday evening, secured a critical provision for federal employees that will provide 12 weeks of paid parental leave in the case of birth, adoption, or fostering. The provision will help the federal government retain talent and remain competitive with private industry.

Unfortunately, this section was drafted to apply to Title 5 only, which has resulted in FAA employees being left out of this very important benefit. More than 35,000 federal employees across our nation are responsible for managing air traffic control, aircraft, and airport safety. I believe we must move quickly to address this oversight and ensure that FAA employees receive the paid parental leave benefits they rightly deserve under the NDAA agreement.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to introduce this measure and urge this body to provide for its immediate consideration.

IN HONOR OF ALFRED PRESTON “WHITEY” BIRDWELL’S 101ST BIRTHDAY

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. BRADY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize and celebrate the 101st birthday of a remarkable Purple Heart recipient and outstanding member of the Eighth Congressional District of Texas, Mr. Alfred Birdwell, or “Whitey.”

Born on November 18, 1918, Whitey was the second of six boys in his family and grew up on a farm in Minden, Texas. He had a traditional East Texas upbringing, from growing crops and raising animals to hunting with his family. Though he traveled the world while training for and serving in World War II, Whitey has remained a lifelong Texan.

In 1940, Whitey married his first wife, Edith Husband. Together, they had two children before basic training. While at training in 1945, he received a letter that their infant child, Jimmy, was sick and passed away. He went home to help his family through the tragic loss and returned to training more motivated than ever to serve his country. Edith and Whitey would end up having seven beautiful children together before Edith’s passing on August 8, 1960.

Whitey began his service in the Army on May 26, 1944. He served as a Medium Tank

Crewman to the 3rd Armored Division, 3rd Regiment and drove the lead tank. Whitey quickly became known for his quick wit and expert rifle skills, and soon became friends with his commanding officer, Colonel Lovelady, who he was charged with protecting during battle. The two bonded over morning coffee and would often joke, “Do you think this cup will carry us to Berlin?”

Whitey earned the nickname “Crazy Texan” for his actions under fire throughout his service. During a mortar barrage, his assistant tank driver sat up out of the tank to try to get a better vantage point but was instead hit by the incoming fire. Whitey grabbed him and ducked into a foxhole, getting hit by the mortar barrage himself. Stubborn and hard-headed as ever, he insisted on fighting although he was wounded. Whitey was sent to the hospital after the battle, and was later awarded a Purple Heart for the incident.

In the 1960s, Whitey worked in Texas City. While dining at a local restaurant, he met Patsy Grimes. The two married later that year and blended their families, raising their 11 children in one household. Although the family was large and the house was always hectic, life as a Birdwell was full of love and laughter. Shortly after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in 2015, Patsy fell ill and passed away.

Anyone that knows Whitey can testify that he’s never lost his energetic spirit. Last year, he decided to celebrate his 100th birthday walking a mile. The event garnered so much attention that he decided to turn his birthday celebration into a charity event, and successfully raised hundreds of dollars for the Blinded Veterans Association and the Brazos Valley Veterans Memorial, two causes close to his heart.

His service to our country, compassion for others and joy for life serves as true example for us all. I am proud to join his 18 grandchildren, 46 great grandchildren, 9 great great grandchildren, and the entire Eighth Congressional District of Texas in wishing Whitey a happy 101st birthday.

ANITA SMITH—AN AMAZING HERO IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST HIV-AIDS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, Anita Smith is a woman who has made a remarkable and lasting contribution to the global battle against HIV/AIDS, who along with her husband, Shepherd, was instrumental in rallying the faith-based community—in particular, evangelical Christians—to the cause.

She has been heralded as an “early voice” within the Christian community calling for the need to bring God’s love and tangible assistance to those stricken by a disease which all too often—particularly in the developing world—led to a wasting away of the body, a social ostracism and a lonely death.

Anita began her HIV/AIDS work in 1986 with Americans for a Sound AIDS/HIV Policy, which became the Children’s AIDS Fund in 1996. Vulnerable children were a special focus of her ministry, and to give one example of

that, in one year alone her Holiday Gift Program sent over 10,000 presents to AIDS-impacted kids living here in the United States.

Knowing that the call to be one’s brother’s keeper knows no boundaries, Anita expanded her work overseas, particularly to Africa. Having become the President of Children’s AIDS Fund International—or CAFI—in 1996, she opened CAFI’s first clinic in Africa in 2002. Ultimately she established fifteen clinics in Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Malawi.

Serving along with Louis Sullivan as the co-chair of President George W. Bush’s President’s Advisory Council for HIV/AIDS from 2002 to 2006, Anita was also there—and a tenacious advocate—when President Bush undertook one of his greatest lifeworks, the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR. Anita was not only instrumental in garnering Christian support for PEPFAR, but in many respects helped lead the way, as her Africa work was already a shining example of how the faith-based community was effectively responding to the global pandemic.

At that time I was serving as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Africa and Global Health subcommittee, and I saw first hand Anita’s passion, wisdom, efficacy and commitment. Hers was the voice of wise counsel and compassion, which helped guide not only the White House, USAID and Congress but my subcommittee as well as we oversaw the work of PEPFAR and USAID.

In 2006, my wife Marie and I joined Anita and Shepherd and Marilyn and Ray Ruddy on a trip to Uganda and we saw firsthand how her work was helping to prevent HIV for many while bringing healing and hope to those infected.

Today, those clinics which Anita founded serve over 100,000 HIV patients. Anita’s clinics have had a reputation for the high retention of patients, high engagement of males—which is oftentimes a hard-to-reach segment of the population in Africa—high adherence to courses of medication treatment and high morale.

In sum, more than simply being an early voice, Anita’s was a powerful voice which consistently responded “Here I am, Lord,”—I am available—when she heard the appeal “Whom shall I send?”

Anita’s lifework is an exemplification of Matthew 25—“when I was sick you looked after me.”

Anita Smith is an amazing hero in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

Thank you—I say again thank you—Anita.

CELEBRATING HARLAN FRANK PLUMMER ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. STIVERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Ohio’s 15th Congressional District to celebrate Mr. Harlan Frank Plummer as he celebrates his 100th birthday.

For over a century, Mr. Plummer has chosen to serve, to lead, and to make his community a better place. For over thirty-six years he served in the United States Army Air Corps