

Muslim East. Though it was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1920, Azerbaijan again declared its independence seven decades later in 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Azerbaijan's Republic Day serves as a time to highlight and reflect on some of the country's best qualities, including its strong relationship with Israel, its focus on energy security, and its key role in regional stability.

A Muslim-majority country, Azerbaijan also hosts a thriving, secure Jewish community, and the Azerbaijan-Israel bilateral relationship is strong.

Additionally, Azerbaijan is committed to protecting global energy security, especially through its efforts regarding the Southern Gas Corridor, which will decrease the Caspian region's dependence on Russian oil.

A stalwart U.S. ally, Azerbaijan has aided U.S. and NATO forces by providing critical refueling stations, and Azerbaijan's troops have fought side-by-side with U.S. troops in Afghanistan. In addition, Azerbaijan has contributed to the security of Kosovo and Iraq and supports peacekeeping operations under the United Nations and NATO. Azerbaijan is also committed to global nonproliferation efforts and participates as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Azerbaijan is a significant U.S. partner in a strategically important area of the world, and I urge my colleagues to join me to commending the people of Azerbaijan on their Republic Day.

HONORING PAULINE HO AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Pauline Ho is a U.S. Certified Public Accountant in both Florida and Washington, as well as a U.K. Chartered Accountant. Besides having a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Hong Kong, her hometown, Pauline has obtained a master's degree in administration from Andrews University of Michigan, and a master's degree in accounting from the University of Central Florida.

In 2008, she founded Laus Consulting Services LLC, a company providing accounting, payroll, tax, and consulting services to small businesses. During this COVID-19 pandemic, she proactively seeks to assist her clients by helping them navigate loans and secure financial assistance in these challenging times. Pauline is highly active in the local communities as well. She is the former President of the Chinese American Association of Central Florida, Vice Chair to both Finance and Business Development Committees of Asian American Federation of Florida in Central Florida, and a Board of Directors member at Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Furthermore, Pauline actively holds the positions of Advisor of the Chinese School of CAACF, Auditor and Past Scholastic Award Chair of Asian American Heritage Council of Central Florida, Chair of REACH of Central Florida, which is a high school non-profit organiza-

nization dedicated to serving the local communities, Board of Director of Mills 50, Board of Director of the Sharing Center, Board of Director of United Against Poverty, and CPA of numerous nonprofit organizations.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF ELMIRA V. GILBERT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of, and express sadness over, the passing of an extraordinary woman, Elmira "Nana" V. Gilbert: Elmira moved to West Palm Beach, Florida when she was five years old and lived there for nearly nine decades. She passed away on March 5, 2020, just a few months shy of her 105th birthday.

She was one of 52 members to graduate from the first high school for African Americans in Palm Beach County in 1935 and served as the vice president of her Class Reunion Committee for many years. She always lived her life to the fullest, embracing her role as matriarch of the Shederick, Gilbert, King, Brown I, and Brown II French families.

Elmira was an extremely resilient woman having survived the many injustices of segregation and numerous hurricanes, including the deadly hurricane of 1928. I extend my heartfelt condolences to Elmira's many family members and friends. Our nation grieves with you, and I pray that you may find comfort during this extremely difficult time.

FRATERNITY SERVES

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity has proven itself of serving the community as we all work to defeat the Wuhan virus. The Aiken Standard on May 25th in an article by Matthew Enfinger presented the following acts of kindness. A presentation photo highlighted fraternity members Ray Williams, Everett Chandler, Anthony White, and Will Jones. Fraternity buys lunch for Aiken police Officers.

"In an effort to show support and thanks to local police, Aiken Omega Psi Phi chapter provided lunch to officers at the Aiken Department Public Safety on Thursday.

Around noon, members of the local chapter carried boxes of food and drinks provided by Chick-Fil-A in Aiken. [Owned by Tom Johnson]

Ray Williams with the Sigma Pi chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., said it's a way to give back to area officers who work daily to keep Aiken safe.

In addition to serving Public Safety, another group from the fraternity served lunch to We Care Nursing Home in New Ellenton.

"We wanted to show some support for our Aiken Public Safety by providing them lunch because they're putting themselves out on the line every day to protect and serve us regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic. 'They're still out there doing our best to keep us safe.'"

Chief Charles Barranco with ADPS said the support from the community through lunches and simple thank you's has meant a lot to the law enforcement division.

"We're part of the community and when the community partners with us it's pretty cool to see the engagement especially when there's a fire call or police call going on," Barranco said. "Many groups, such as the Omegas, have been part of COVID-19 response and we're very thankful."

HONORING THE LIFE OF ARTIST MARGARET HUDSON

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Mr. TJ Cox to honor and pay tribute to the life of local artist Margaret Hudson, who passed away on February 2, 2020 at the age of 93. Her iconic clay sculptures of California wildlife and young children were loved for generations.

Margaret Metzler was born to David and Sadie Metzler in Fresno, California. From a young age, Margaret enjoyed spending time outdoors with animals at her parent's home in Fresno's Old Fig Garden neighborhood. She and her family also loved hiking and camping, especially in Sequoia National Park. Her appreciation of the Central Valley's beautiful landscape grew from a young age, which would later influence her art.

Margaret attended college in New England and studied art and theology. She would go on to serve as a missionary in Japan for several years. Margaret met and married her husband Gilbert Hudson in 1955 and shortly after moved to South Korea as missionaries. Gilbert taught physics, and Margaret taught English, at the University of Daegu. They had four sons in South Korea and lived there until 1967.

After returning to the United States, the Hudson family lived in various parts of the country. Her love for art blossomed when living in New York, where she first began to experiment with materials such as decaying barn wood and automotive trims. In Maryland, she began working with red clay. Margaret finally found her style of art in red clay and began sculpting from her memories of South Korea.

In 1968, the family moved to Coalinga, California, but after her husband became ill with Valley Fever, they moved to Fresno to be closer to family. Margaret realized after Gilbert's recovery that she would need to help support the family financially. In 1972, she decided to open a business, Earth Art's Studio and became one of the first female arts entrepreneurs in Fresno.

In 1988, Margaret lost her father, son, and mother within one year. She used art as her therapy and created pieces that were much larger than her original work. After 20 years of working with clay, Margaret attended Fresno City College to expand her artistic abilities to include paint. In 1992, she went to London and Paris and was inspired to paint on canvas. That same year, Margaret held her first art show.

Margaret's artwork is a fixture throughout the Central Valley. Her "Mama Bear" sculpture is displayed at Valley Children's Hospital,

and several pieces are located at the Fresno Chaffee Zoo. Her clay sculptures are a staple in homes all over the county.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join us in recognizing the life of Margaret Hudson. Her artwork continues to inspire and is a cherished part of life in the valley. We join her family, friends, and members of the community in honoring her great life.

REMEMBERING JAMES J. "JIM"
LOFTUS, JR.

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor the life of James J. "Jim" Loftus, Jr., a member of the "Greatest Generation", who recently passed away in Pleasanton.

Jim was born in 1924 in San Francisco. He attended high school in Alameda, graduating from St. Joseph Notre Dame High School in 1942. Like so many he answered the call to service following the attack on our country, enlisting in the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in December of that year.

During World War II he worked as a mechanic. His service took him to action in the New Hebrides Islands, Solomon Islands, Kwajalein, and Peleliu, prior to his discharge in October 1945.

In 1947, Jim married the love of his life, Mary, joined the USMC Reserve Signal Battalion in Alameda, got a job as a lineman at the PAC Bell phone company, and settled in San Francisco. He had two young children before his country called on him once more.

His unit was called up in July 1950, and he was sent to fight in Korea. There he worked as a field radio operator and was attached to combat units going from Inchon to Chosin, which truly put him in harm's way.

Following his discharge Jim returned to California and his job at PAC Bell. He eventually rose to the level of supervisor before retiring after 35 years with the company.

Jim was an active member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic parishes in which he lived. He also very much enjoyed gardening and traveling, especially to see members of his family.

Jim and Mary had six children. He is preceded in death by his wife, Mary, and son James J. Lotus III. He is survived by five daughters—Jeanne O'Brien, Teresa Loftus, Rosemary Back, Eileen Manger, and Julie Trudell, as well as 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Jim constantly gave of himself—to his friends, his family, and his country. He will be deeply missed, and my deepest condolences go out to his friends and loved ones.

HONORING MITAL HALL AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Mital Hall, PMP, LEED APO+M, has 20 years of experience in sustainable development including working with universities, federal, state, and local governments and businesses. Her expertise lies in strategic planning, policy development, and implementation of programs that focus on high efficiency, low impact building design and operations, impacting over 50 million square feet of space, and through the management of small and multi-million-dollar programs. Mital's ability to synthesize the discipline of professional project management with the multifaceted, stakeholder intensive process of sustainability has led her to success in some of the largest institutions in Florida.

As Vice President for ecoPreserve, Mital oversees all programs and strategic direction. Her skill set includes the incorporation of cost-effective and sustainable solutions into organizational structure, policy development, energy efficiency program administration, and much more. She is also responsible for helping to create a company environment that embodies social responsibility through decisions that are both tactical and strategic in nature. Her leadership style is distinguished by a team-oriented approach that uses solutions-based strategies paired with a high level of positive morale.

Mital is a published author and currently serves as President on the US Green Building Council—Central Florida. She serves on several other boards including University of Central Florida's (UCF) India Center; UCF's Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity Center; University of Florida Sustainable Design and Construction; SmartCities Chair for the Indian American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida; Airports Council International—Sustainability Working Group; ARCP Environmental Impacts Review Committee, and Project Management Institute. She has even served as a United Nations Delegate, representing Orlando and offering a private sector perspective to sessions. She has also recently been accepted into the National Renewable Energy Lab Energy Executive Program.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING
LIEUTENANT COLONEL (LTC)
THAD THOME ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. DUSTY JOHNSON

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Thad Thome for his retirement from the United States Army after over 20 years of service.

LTC Thome's record of service with the U.S. Army is truly impressive. He began his career

after enlisting in 1989 by working in the 103rd Military Intelligence Battalion. He ended his enlisted service in 1992 as a Sergeant. LTC Thome earned his commission in 2000 and served with the 2nd Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment in Friedberg, Germany. After which, he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and from 2006 to 2007 to advise intelligence personnel.

LTC Thome deployed as the Deputy J2 for CJTF-10 in Afghanistan during operations from 2014 to 2015, which brought the combat phase of U.S. operations to a close and began a new phase of Operation Resolute Support. He also served in the CENTCOM J2 Operations Division as the Global Force Management Team Lead, frequently traveling to Kuwait, Qatar, and Afghanistan from 2015 to 2017 to support combat deployed HQs with critical intelligence personnel support to counter strength issues. LTC Thome's contributions to U.S. Army and Joint Forces Intelligence throughout his career ensured successful operations and the national defense of our nation.

Originally from Rapid City, LTC Thome is a native South Dakotan and I am proud to have such an exceptional servicemember call South Dakota home. Our state and country are better because of citizens like him. I thank LTC Thome and his family for their tremendous sacrifice, and I extend my deepest congratulations for his retirement.

HONORING COLONEL THOMAS G.
FALZARANO

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Colonel Thomas G. Falzarano, USAF, who passed away on May 12, 2020 after a lifetime of distinguished service to his country. Colonel Falzarano was a devoted husband, a caring father, a leader of character, and a champion for our nation's ideals.

Thomas G. Falzarano was born September 20, 1972 in Nashua, New Hampshire to George Marshall and Joan Denise (Campagnone) Falzarano. Growing up with five siblings meant that he had to hone his competitive spirit and leadership skills early. Such skills prompted him to seek an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, which he acquired.

His career in the Air Force shaped Colonel Falzarano's personal leadership style. His three R's (Respect, Readiness, and Responsibility) complimented the service values of the Air Force. His embodiment of these characteristics was seen in every sphere of his life. None more prevalent, however, than the relationship that he had with his wife Stacey and children Trevor, Spencer, Michael, Thomas, and Valentina.

Competence in every aspect of the profession of arms is a moral obligation for those accepting a commission. For those under his command, Colonel Falzarano set the example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and service. He did not take lightly the responsibility of mentoring, inspiring, and challenging the sons and daughters entrusted to him. His strategic assignments and personal decorations after