

and socially, working with people of all ages, with a special emphasis on helping high-risk and at-risk youth, young adults and their families.

Today, because of Tammy Membreño's persistence and advocacy, the organization has grown from three staff members to one with over twenty-three employees and multiple programs serving over 20,000 children and families in Northeast Los Angeles.

Thanks to Tammy Membreño's vision, Barrio Action has a permanent home in the community of El Sereno. Barrio Action is the only youth and family center in El Sereno, a community of over 54,000 residents.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and celebrating Tammy Membreño.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MEL MERMELSTEIN

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reflect on and honor the life of Mel Mermelstein, a survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, later a U.S. immigrant who served our country in the Korean War, a pioneering voice in the legal fight against Holocaust denialism, and a proud champion and teacher of Holocaust education and remembrance.

Mermelstein died January 28, 2022, at his home in Long Beach, California. He was 95.

Mermelstein was born in Mukachevo, Czechoslovakia on September 25, 1926. His hometown was later occupied by the Hungarians and is currently part of the Ukraine. Mermelstein was 17 years old in 1944 when the Nazis rounded him up along with other Jews who had been stripped of their homes, denied education and were relegated to ghettos. They were transported by cattle car to the infamous Nazi camp, Auschwitz, in German-occupied Poland.

Mermelstein later recounted in numerous interviews, that upon arrival, his mother who was helping a woman with three or four small children, was immediately ushered to the gas chamber line. His two sisters who had been selected for slave labor, ran to be at their mother's side. They all perished that day in the Nazi death factory. Thereafter, his father and brother were also senselessly murdered by the Nazis, leaving Mel the sole survivor of his immediate family.

During his internment at Auschwitz, Mermelstein was forced by the Nazis to work as slave labor. In January 1945, as Soviet Troops advanced, the Nazis began mass executions and evacuations of prisoners from Auschwitz. Mermelstein was forced to march on foot for three weeks in the bitter snow in what has come to be known as the death marches. After surviving the 155-mile forced march to Gross-Rosen concentration camp, he was packed onto a train and sent to Buchenwald, another Nazi concentration camp.

On April 11, 1945, U.S. forces liberated Mermelstein and the other surviving Jews from Buchenwald. Upon liberation, Mermelstein was 18 years old and weighed 68 pounds. He remained in the camp while the Red Cross offered medical care and aid. After approxi-

mately three months, he returned to Mukachevo. With his entire family murdered and his family home occupied, Mermelstein made a decision to begin a new life in the country that had liberated him from hell.

Mermelstein knew he had an uncle and aunt in New York. Although he did not speak English at the time, Mermelstein immigrated to the U.S. through Ellis Island in 1946, where he eventually became a naturalized citizen. In 1950, Mermelstein was drafted into the U.S. Army. Although he was given the ability to forgo service, he proudly served in the American armed forces. After his initial training, and because of his extensive linguistic abilities including seven languages, he was selected to work Army intelligence during the Korean War. He later worked as a translator at the United Nations.

After his service to this country, Mermelstein began to pen his experiences in the Nazi camps in his memoir, "By Bread Alone." In 1960, Mermelstein met his wife, Emma Jane Nance, then a schoolteacher in New York. The couple moved to Los Angeles in 1961 to start their family. Mermelstein set-up and ran a successful manufacturing company that made wooden pallets. He went on to employ generations of workers, including his yard manager that Mermelstein employed for 55 years.

While running a successful business, Mermelstein, deeply scarred and traumatized by his experiences in the Nazi death camps, began traveling back to Auschwitz and other surrounding concentration camps. In 1967, with the advent of the Six-Day War, the conflict between Israel and seven Arab states, Mermelstein was compelled to make sure evidence of what happened to his family and to the millions of other Jews at the hands of the Nazis was not buried or destroyed.

Hearing the rising number of threats being made against Jews and committed to the promise he made to his father, Mermelstein life's work became to ensure that the world would never forget. He spoke to classrooms and school assemblies educating students and teachers of the atrocities he experienced as a teen, warning against man's inhumanity to man. He accompanied students to Auschwitz and spread a message of hope, peace, resilience and reconciliation. His focus was on intellectual curiosity and what can be learned from such a dark period in history. He lives on as an inspiration to many.

In the late 70's Mermelstein actively debated Holocaust deniers on the radio and television. In 1980, a Holocaust denier organization claimed the planned extermination of Jews by the Nazis was a myth and offered a reward publicizing it in Jewish newspapers. Mermelstein was incensed and wrote a letter to the editors of various newspapers who published the advertisement expressing his disgust. The Holocaust denier organization turned its focus to Mermelstein and challenged Mermelstein to prove that Jews were gassed in gas chambers at Auschwitz. The Institute for Historical Review, a known hate group "offered a \$50,000 award to prove Jews were gassed at Auschwitz," recounted William Cox, a Long Beach attorney. Cox was so moved after reading Mermelstein's memoir, "By Bread Alone," he offered to represent Mermelstein to take on the so-called revisionists pro bono.

In 1981, in the Mermelstein v. IHR case, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Thomas T.

Johnson took judicial notice of the fact that Jews were gassed in gas chambers at Auschwitz. The ruling was a "personal vindication" for Mermelstein, his attorney Cox recounted. In 1985, the IHR and Mermelstein reached a settlement agreement, and Mermelstein received a damage award and a letter of apology from the organization. This became the subject of the movie "Never Forget," starring Leonard Nimoy.

Over five decades, Mermelstein returned to Auschwitz and surrounding death camps obtaining artifacts and other items. Mermelstein processed his trauma and pain creating pieces for display in an exhibit which was formerly housed on his business property. Tens of thousands of students toured his exhibit for free over the decades. Currently, Mermelstein's extensive collection of artifacts is being curated for permanent display. Among the physical reminders of the Holocaust he collected are uniforms worn by inmates, pieces of barbed-wire fence and even parts of a Jewish prayer book found buried near an incinerator.

In a collaboration between the Auschwitz Study Foundation (a non-profit founded by Mermelstein in 1978) and the Chabad Jewish Center in Newport Beach—the Orange County Holocaust Education Center will house Mermelstein's collection for access by students, teachers and the public. A documentary based on his life, "Live to Tell" is slated for release later this year.

Mermelstein is survived by his wife, Jane Mermelstein; his children, Bernie, Edie, Ken and David; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DIXIE CLEM

HON. VAN TAYLOR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor and celebrate the life of Dixie Carolyn Clem.

The youngest of four children, Dixie was born on October 30, 1930, in Booneville, Arkansas. In 1948, she would marry Emmitt Mason Clem, and they would remain firmly united in marriage for 53 years until his passing in 2001.

In 1955, Dixie relocated to Plano, Texas after her husband was appointed the Band Director for Plano High School. Upon settling in the area, Dixie began a lifelong involvement in her beloved Plano community including her membership at First United Methodist Church in Plano, the Plano Chapter Order of Easter Star, Mother Advisor of Plano Rainbow Chamber, Plano Good Sam Travel Club, Past President of Plano Business and Professional Women, and as the first woman to serve on the Plano Planning and Zoning Commission. Dixie also maintained employment with the Plano Star Courier.

Always invested in her community, Mrs. Clem maintained a deep commitment to the Girl Scouts and could oftentimes be seen supporting her husband from the stands at band marching contests and football games. Dixie and Emmitt maintained a passion for travel and were known to spend summers journeying

in their RV to Colorado. A beloved fixture in her family, Dixie was particularly known for creating treasured memories with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Dixie is often considered a pioneer in helping to establish the Collin County Republican Party. For 55 years she focused her efforts on mentoring others to work towards bettering their communities and to become politically active at all levels of government. Greatly admired by those around her and as a testament to her efforts to train up the next generation of leaders, she received several notable recognitions including the Texas Federation of Republican Women's "Ten Outstanding Women Award" and "The Legacy Leadership Award."

While we mourn the loss of this respected matriarch of Collin County conservatism, we celebrate her many contributions to shaping the political landscape. Likewise, we rest in the knowledge her legacy will continue on as the award that bears her name—the highest honor bestowed upon a member of the Collin County GOP—will continue to be presented to those who embody next generation ideals of servant leadership.

While many in Collin County will miss her gumption and steadfast presence, together we recognize a life well lived. Now as we honor the life of Mrs. Dixie Clem, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating her rich legacy.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 1300 CAMPAIGN

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, it is with delight that I rise to honor the 1300 Campaign for their outstanding efforts to close the college achievement gap in the Sacramento region. The 1300 Campaign, a community-led and systems change initiative, is dedicated to permanently transforming the historical systematic barriers that have limited opportunities for young men of color.

In 2013, Improve Your Tomorrow was founded with the mission to increase the number of young men of color to attend and graduate from colleges with the vision of a world where men of color are overrepresented in higher education and underrepresented in the criminal justice system. The 1300 Campaign is an initiative of the Sierra Health Foundation, My Brother's Keeper Sacramento, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative with backbone support provided by Improve Your Tomorrow, a homegrown organization within my district. Working together with local leaders and organizations, the 1300 Campaign strives to increase the number of young men of color from Sacramento who attend and graduate from the Los Rios Community College District, California State University, Sacramento and the University of California, Davis.

The 1300 Campaign partners with school districts to incorporate the A-G requirements as a default curriculum for all students. This will help ensure that all graduates, particularly young men of color, are eligible for post-secondary options. A-G eligibility for all students addresses a systematic barrier to college that contributes to the divergence in educational

outcomes, particularly for young men of color. Additionally, the 1300 Campaign works with school districts to incorporate ethnic studies as a graduation requirement, to establish a place-based mentorship model, hire additional counselors that represent the diversity of the student population, develop an organizational racial equity assessment tool, design and implement an ongoing countywide professional development training centered around culturally responsive pedagogy, to incorporate required implicit bias training for K-12 educators, and districts to implement a moratorium on school suspensions related to willful defiance for all schools in Sacramento County for no less than one year.

Madam Speaker, today we honor the 1300 Campaign for their outstanding efforts to close the college achievement gap and I thank their partners for their dedication and successful efforts.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF VICE ADMIRAL ROBERT D. SHARP

HON. JASON CROW

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. CROW. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and accomplishments of Vice Admiral Robert D. Sharp and congratulate him on his upcoming retirement.

A Veteran of the war in Afghanistan and the Gulf War, Vice Admiral Sharp bravely served our country during a highly decorated 34-year career with the United States Navy—receiving two bronze stars, the Legion of Merit award, two Defense Superior Service medals, and the Navy Distinguished Service Medal. Additionally, Vice Admiral Sharp's incredible leadership earned him the Vice Admiral Rufus L. Taylor award for excellence in instruction, the U.S. Army's Knowlton Award for Military Intelligence, the Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton leadership award, and the Naval Intelligence Foundation award for excellence in operational intelligence support to the Fleet.

Beyond his many personal, unit, and campaign awards, Vice Admiral Sharp's service included operational deployments with USS *Ranger* (CV61). Carrier Air Wing 2 embarked on USS *Constellation* (CV 64) and Carrier Group 2 embarked on USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75). Additionally, in April 2016, Vice Admiral Sharp was tasked with serving as Commander, Office of Naval Intelligence and Director, National Maritime Intelligence-Integration Office.

In February 2019, Vice Admiral Sharp began serving as the seventh director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). Under his leadership, the department worked diligently to collect, analyze, and distribute geospatial intelligence that decision makers, military service members, and first responders needed to stay safe and get the job done.

I think Vice Admiral Sharp would agree that—even beyond his own incredible service and personal achievements—he is most proud of the relationships he built and the future leaders he guided and shaped during his decades of service. In my role on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Armed Services Committee, I was

lucky enough to work closely with Vice Admiral Sharp, where it was clear he not only worked incredibly hard and with the utmost honor but left a lasting impression on every person he met.

Vice Admiral Sharp's many years serving our country in combat zones, keeping American servicemembers safe, and responding to national security threats before they strike epitomizes what it means to go above and beyond the call of duty. I congratulate Vice Admiral Sharp on his retirement and thank him for his service to our country.

STEVEN LECLAIRE

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation and the citizens of the Texas Twenty-Fourth Congressional District, the 2021 Congressional Veteran Commendation is hereby presented to Stephen LeClaire, Airman 1st Class, United States Air Force of Bedford, Texas for his honorable service in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and for his continued dedication to his community.

Mr. LeClaire enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1961, having served in an engineering unit until being honorably discharged in 1967. His decorations include the National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

After leaving the Air Force, Mr. LeClaire has brought the same love he had for his country and poured it into making his community a better place. He has served on several boards, commissions, and committees. Among these are as a member of the commission for Boy Scouts of America Troop 499, a volunteer for Boy Scouts of America Troop 387 for 7 years, a soccer coach for the YMCA, an organizer for the Ronald McDonald House charity, and a member of the HEB Community Emergency Response Team.

Mr. LeClaire's career is marked with heroism and is consistent with the finest traditions of the United States Air Force and reflects great credit upon himself, the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

HONORING ROBBIE HUNTER

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 7, 2022

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the contributions of Robbie Hunter upon his retirement as President of the California Building and Construction Trades Council.

Robbie grew up in Sailertown, Belfast, the son, nephew, grandson and great-grandson of the mariners, steeplejacks and dock workers that built Belfast's historic shipyards and ships, including the *Titanic*. Although Robbie has lived in America for decades, he has never lost either his Belfast brogue or his love for the families and Irish culture that made him who he is today and empowered him to lift up workers throughout California and across the country.