

Here's what some former friends and colleagues had to say about Thelma: "A tremendous go-getter."

"You just had a smile on your face after talking to her," and,

"I would put a great deal of the success of the membership on her leadership."

But it's what SHE had to say to a group who showed up to protest a community forum that will go down in history. In 1994, members of the National Association for the Advancement of White People showed up at a forum in Howell and openly declared that they didn't want Black people living in their community.

Lett stood up, looked directly at the crowd, and calmly, but passionately informed them she would not be run out of her home.

"When I walk down the street, I'd like not to have cat calls or the N-word shouted at me," she said, staring into the eyes of men and women wearing hats emblazoned with "NAAWP" and "Anglo-Saxon."

She told the crowd how some of her family members served in the U.S. military, and were wounded in combat fighting for the American ideal that all people are created equal.

And when she called for some simple respect, saying "I give dignity and I want dignity," the crowd rocketed to its feet.

Lett never backed down from her devotion to diversity, continuing her activism and community involvement until her death at age 79. In fact, if you visit the Detroit Impact Youth Center on the city's west side, you'll find the Thelma Lett Library inside, a tribute to the many young people she taught to read and write.

And if you visit Howell, you'll find the Livingston Diversity Council continuing her work, inspired by the courage of her convictions, and still standing up to intolerance and hate.

Thelma Lett lived and died in Brighton, Michigan and made it abundantly clear her love for this country and all it stands for was far greater than the hatred she was shown. Brighton was her home, and today it is my honor in sharing her story.

#### RECOGNIZING THE NAMING OF AUTHERINE LUCY HALL ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

**HON. TERRI A. SEWELL**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 25, 2022*

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the naming of Autherine Lucy Hall on the campus of the University of Alabama. Autherine Lucy Foster was the first African-American student to integrate the University of Alabama in 1952.

After graduating from Miles College in 1952 with a degree in English, Autherine followed her aspirations of continuing her education by applying for graduate school at the University of Alabama. After sending in her initial request on September 4, 1952, she and her friend Pollie Anne Myers received letters welcoming them to the University of Alabama. However, upon submitting applications that indicated race, both women's admissions were revoked by university officials due to the university's "Whites only" policy. Once the community learned of both students not being admitted to

the university due to their race, two of the most prominent civil rights lawyers, Arthur Shores and Thurgood Marshall, began working on their behalf testing one of the most consequential Supreme Court cases in our history, *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*. On June 28, 1955, just over a year after the *Brown* decision, U.S. District Judge Harlan Grooms heard their case ruling in favor of the women upholding the precedent of the Supreme Court and solidifying the legal eradication of the "separate but equal" policy.

In hopes of further discouraging Autherine and Pollie, the university hired private investigators to look into their backgrounds to find information that would ensure they could not attend. As a result of their efforts, Pollie was disqualified from admission, leaving Autherine to attend the university alone. Upon her attendance, Autherine experienced high-intensity adversity. She was denied dining and dormitory privileges and suffered multiple verbal and physical attacks from her White counterparts, which resulted in her being removed from the university by the Board of Trustees, claiming it was for her protection. With Autherine fearing for her life, Attorney Shores and Marshall stepped in on her behalf once again, filing an official complaint stating that the university had been complicit in permitting the crowd to intimidate and threaten Autherine. Unfortunately, they were unable to prove the university's role in the mob action, and despite withdrawing the complaint, the administration argued that through their actions, Autherine had defamed the school and its administration resulting in her expulsion.

Though she felt defeated at the moment, less than ten years later, her efforts to integrate the University of Alabama finally became a reality. Vivian Malone and James Hood enrolled at the University of Alabama in June 1963. Vivian went on to become the first African American to graduate from the University of Alabama, continuing the work of Autherine and opening the door for more students to follow in their footsteps. However, unbeknownst to her, it would take over thirty years for her own story to be completed at the University of Alabama.

Thirty-two years after her expulsion from the University of Alabama, she was asked to come back to the university as a guest speaker. With multiple faculty members advocating on her behalf to overturn her expulsion, she returned in 1989 to enroll as a student. Enrolling the same year as her daughter Grazia, they graduated together in 1992 to receive their respective graduate and undergraduate degrees. Ensuring that her legacy of bravery and tenacity lives on, the University of Alabama awarded Autherine with an honorary doctorate in 2019, a \$25,000 scholarship in her name and honored her with two land markers on campus—a historic marker in front of the newly named Autherine Lucy Hall and the Autherine Lucy Clock Tower.

On a personal note, as Alabama's first Black Congresswoman, it is a source of tremendous pride to celebrate the courage and sacrifice of Autherine Lucy Foster in integrating the University of Alabama. The naming of a campus building in her honor 70 years after she first enrolled in the university shows that delayed justice can lead to racial healing and reconciliation. It was because of her bravery and sheer audacity in the face of an incredible injustice that Black students attend

and graduate from the University of Alabama today. The university, the State of Alabama, and the nation owe Autherine Lucy Foster a debt of gratitude that can never truly be repaid. The naming of Autherine Lucy Hall will stand as a powerful reminder of the progress that can be achieved when this nation lives up to its best ideals of equality and justice for all.

On behalf of Alabama's 7th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary courage of Autherine Lucy Foster and the naming of Autherine Lucy Hall on the campus of the University of Alabama.

#### COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 JUAN ALEJANDRO ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

**HON. MICHAEL F.Q. SAN NICOLAS**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 25, 2022*

Mr. SAN NICOLAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true public servant, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Juan Alejandro, and congratulate him on his retirement from the Guam Army National Guard (GUARNG) after over 21 years of service to our island and nation.

Launching his military career in 1998, CW4 Alejandro first enlisted as a Military Occupational Skill (MOS) 25R, Audio, Visual Electronics Technician. He then served two years with the 3rd Psychological Operations Battalion in Fort Bragg, NC, and went on to complete both Warrant Officer Candidate School and the Army Aviation Flight Training Program. With a firm determination to build on his skills and expand his professional capacities, he later earned a bachelor's degree in Professional Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University alongside a minor in Management. Stepping into the field of aviation, CW4 Alejandro served as a Pilot in Command with the 1-25 Attack Aviation Battalion and 2-6 Cavalry Squadron, participated in three Operation Iraqi Freedom campaigns, and accumulated over 2,000 flight hours across 350 missions in combat.

Resigning from Active Duty in 2009, CW4 Alejandro joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as a Maintenance Test Pilot, Instructor Pilot, and Commander of the Pennsylvania Counterdrug Joint Task Force Aviation. Throughout his six-year tenure, CW4 Alejandro coordinated numerous local, state, and federal counterdrug operations responsible for over \$20 million in drug and illegal weapon seizures, facilitated the successful transition between aircraft models, and developed crucial training and maintenance programs for the State's integration of the Lakota helicopter.

In 2015, CW4 Alejandro brought his expertise to the GUARNG and has since been a critical asset in standing up its Army Aviation program. Taking on significant roles as a State Aviation Safety Officer and Standardization Pilot, he has provided valuable guidance and support to our unit and enabled them to attain nearly 2,000 hours of flight, pass a multitude of high-level inspections, and assist the community with the completion of 13 Search and Rescue missions.

Having earned a wealth of recognitions that include two Meritorious Service Medals, five

Air Medals, six Army Commendation Medals, an Army Achievement Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal with 3 stars, Master Aviator Badge, Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, and 2 Valor Devices, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Juan Alejandro demonstrates an outstanding commitment to excellence and leadership.

Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of the People of Guam, his beloved wife Magdeline, and daughters Miranda, Melody, and Miriah, offering my greatest appreciation for his dedication to our island and country. I sincerely thank CW4 Alejandro for his many years of service and sacrifice, congratulate him on his well-earned retirement, and wish him the best during the next chapter of his life.

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HONORING THE PAGE FENCE  
GIANTS BASEBALL TEAM

**HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 25, 2022*

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Page Fence Giants, an all-black baseball team that was founded in 1894 in Adrian, Michigan. At a time when Jim Crow laws swept the nation and racial segregation largely divided sports, the all-black Page Fence Giants persevered, ultimately claiming their place in history in the Michigan Baseball Hall of Fame.

The team was founded by Bud Fowler and Grant "Home Run" Johnson, both of whom went on to play for the Giants. The team was a knockout, winning over 100 games in each of their four seasons. And in 1897 they went on a winning streak, claiming 82 consecutive victories. The team's four-year run was an early success towards integration—but was phased out of the league decades before Jackie Robinson's 1947 debut.

The Page Fence Giants traveled around the Midwest and Canada on a 60-foot railcar. While the team was celebrated and welcomed in some communities, they were discriminated against and disparaged in others, often barred from eating at the local restaurants or sleeping in the hotels. This railcar provided the basic necessities for the ball players when they were unwelcome to stay or dine in the whites-only establishments.

One of the full-time cooks on the train was William Wendell Gaskin, who is believed to be Lansing-born. Gaskin traveled with the team, cooking meals and even joining the team in a couple of games as the Giants' pitcher.

Last year, on June 19, our very own Lansing Lugnuts paid tribute to the Page Fence Giants by wearing historically accurate black and burgundy Giants jerseys.

While the Giants dissolved after four solid seasons in 1898, their contributions to sports and to Michigan's history will be forever remembered.

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TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF ROY  
TAYLOR

**HON. HAROLD ROGERS**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 25, 2022*

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of

Roy Taylor, a long-time friend and business leader in Somerset, Kentucky.

Roy and I shared a passion for broadcasting and advancing communications in rural southern Kentucky. He was incredibly talented in the world of technology and telecommunications. In fact, during his time with the U.S. Army, he was part of Special Forces and worked with the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he led highly classified military operations. Our nation owes Roy a great debt of gratitude for his brave service and dedication to our country.

When he returned home, Roy used his military training and education to advance telecommunications in the Lake Cumberland region. He first worked in sales and transmitter maintenance with WSSC radio and later invested in WTLO radio in Somerset, Kentucky. A visionary for telecommunications in our rural region, Roy was always one step ahead to connect our communities to the rest of the world through broadcasting access. He became a forerunner in the cable television industry through Burnside Comex Cable TV, writing franchise agreements and expanding access in our small communities. Thanks to his foresight and diligence, he literally crossed bridges for the first time, bringing cable to the city of Burnside and Burnside Marina. Following his success in the cable industry, Roy established CNI Wireless to focus on broadband connectivity in our rural region.

I frequently sought Roy's advice over the years and counted him as a trusted confidant and advisor. We sorted out a number of challenges and strategies together over lunch or a round of golf, because he believed in making the most out of every day; work was the main topic of conversation for Roy in every situation. He always stayed busy, focusing his time and energy on projects that could create more jobs and develop new opportunities for the Lake Cumberland region.

We have made great strides to advance technology across southern and eastern Kentucky over the last 40 years, thanks to leaders like Roy Taylor, who committed a lifetime of work and expertise to help make our rural region a better place to live. My wife Cynthia and I extend our deepest heartfelt sympathies to the Taylor family and all those who were blessed to know our loyal friend.

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HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS. CHANNING HILL

**HON. MARC A. VEASEY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 25, 2022*

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the accomplishments of Ms. Channing Hill of Texas' 33rd District. Channing is an aspiring lawyer pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Strategic, Legal, and Management Communication at Howard University. She also has used almost all her life advocating for social justice and equality for all.

At only 20 years old, Channing has organized and led protests in public schools in her home state of Texas since her adolescence. Channing first found her voice in her NAACP Youth Council in Arlington, Texas. She now leads as the Howard University NAACP Chapter President and the Region 7 National

Youth-Works Committee Representative. This past fall, Channing continued her fight for social justice when she was one of eight student leaders to participate in the #Blackburn Takeover.

Now this month, her work is being honored at the highest level. On February 26th, she proudly received the NAACP Award for Youth Activist of the Year. This award recognizes NAACP members for their work to improve their community, educate the masses, identify the problems, and lead the revolution to fix them.

We are so proud of Channing for her work and for this accomplishment. We know her continued commitment to social justice and equity will make our community a better place for all.

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HONORING BARBARA ROBERTS  
MASON

**HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 25, 2022*

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Barbara Roberts Mason of Lansing as an internationally recognized voice for education, equality, and justice.

This exceptional public servant made Michigan history by becoming the first African American woman to be elected to statewide office. Serving 24 years on Michigan's State Board of Education, Barbara worked tirelessly as a child advocate to push for equal educational opportunities and high academic standards for all.

In 1986, she founded the Black Child and Family Institute in Lansing, which she considers one of her proudest accomplishments. She met with President Jimmy Carter on Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, and was a trailblazer for the Equal Rights Amendment campaign alongside legends like Gloria Steinem, Dorothy Height, and Mildred Jeffrey.

Barbara's advocacy and dedication to the service of others has taken her all over the globe. She has lectured abroad and led humanitarian, business, and education exchanges to Japan, Germany, Korea, Ghana, Cameroon, and South Africa. During her time as the President of Lansing's Regional Sister City Commission, she established an HIV-AIDS project in Ghana, as well as the construction and renovation of health clinics, schools, libraries, and worked towards clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Clearly, Barbara's humanitarian heart knows no bounds. For her outstanding merit and life accomplishments in service of her community, and the international community, Barbara received the honor of being inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 2014. When asked to give remarks, Barbara stated that she "strongly believes that if everyone would reach out and give help to someone in need, we'd all be better off." I agree, and I am so thankful for her commendable actions that made Michigan a better place.

For her tireless service to all those in need, it is my privilege to add her story so that many more will answer her call to service.