

PAYING TRIBUTE TO RETIRED BIG BEAR LAKE MAYOR NEAL HERTZMANN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS PASSING

HON. JAY OBERNOLTE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the passing of Neal Hertzmann, a constituent of my district and former Mayor of my hometown of Big Bear Lake, California. Neal was an exceptional and dedicated public servant. He served Big Bear Lake as its mayor from 1994 to 1998 and served Southern California for over twenty years including as a member of the Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power Board, a Councilman for the City of Big Bear Lake, and as Big Bear Lake's representative on the League of California Cities, just to name a few of his roles. In each position, Neal never lost sight of the unique qualities that make each of us proud to call our community home.

In addition to his extensive public service, Neal was an innovative mechanical engineer by trade, and diligently worked on several of the Falcon missiles for Hughes Aircraft, which were among the very first operational guided air-to-air missiles adopted by the United States Air Force. His creative originality and expertise also proved vital in the development and success of the Surveyor program, which consisted of seven unmanned lunar missions launched between May 1966 and January 1968, five of which successfully soft-landed on the lunar surface. The legendary success of the Apollo 11 mission would not have been possible if not for the crucial developments pioneered by great men like Neal.

Throughout his life, Neal sought opportunities to directly engage with neighbors, to meet new people, and to lend a helping hand wherever he could. I am honored to have had the chance to know him and call him my friend, and I can say from firsthand experience how impactful his continuous dedication has been for our community. My prayers are with his family and the City of Big Bear Lake as we mourn the loss of this dedicated public servant.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF LIEUTENANT PETER BLUME, JR.

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise today in recognition of the loss of a champion of his community—Fire Police Lieutenant Peter Blume, Jr., of Vernon, Connecticut. Pete, as he was known, tragically left this world, still active in his service as a first responder, on March 2, 2022, at the age of 53. A guardian to his fellow service members, Lieutenant Pete Blume has served with the Fire Police company for the last six years. He was known for his particularly infectious degree of optimism and was eating to all.

Born to Carolyn Bolk Blume and Peter Blume on December 24, 1968, in South Windsor, Pete was destined to live out his life as a source of energy within eastern Connecticut's communities. Upon graduating from South Windsor High, Pete went on to Eastern Connecticut State University where he achieved a degree in physical education in 1991. A true steward of the community, he devoted the next nearly 20 years of his life to teaching as an elementary school physical education teacher for Ashford and Union, Connecticut. He was deeply passionate toward the growth of our region's youngest generation, engaging with students as a youth program leader, the coach for the Ashford boys' basketball team and even by taking on the title of Chef Blume as a cook for Union's annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser.

Amidst his earlier days in teaching, Pete fostered a relationship with the love of his life, Wendy, who he married in 1996. It was through their relationship that Pete's love for raising children transformed him into quite the family man, with the birth of their two children Allison and Timothy. Together, the family moved to Vernon, Connecticut where the children became an inspiration to Pete, catalyzing an entirely new era of community involvement. It was throughout this new era that Pete grew in his already known love for youth sports, coaching and volunteering for his kids' teams in Vernon Little League, Vernon Soccer and Vernon Basketball.

Pete's involvement with the Town of Vernon did not stop with his coaching the next generation. As we all know, he took an interest in and joined the Vernon Fire Department as a fire police officer, becoming the man responsible for the safety of fellow first responders at the scene of an incident. Pete was the perfect man for the job—he was the kind of person who would give you the shut off his back if you needed it. As such, he was known for bringing an unmatched sense of diligence and care to the role, which he took incredibly seriously. For Pete, the safety of those who displayed similar care toward his own neighbors was paramount. He was most recently recognized for his diligence, becoming a 1st Lieutenant with the Vernon Fire Police company which he again served with for more than six years.

Madam Speaker, we ask firefighters and their families to do an enormously important job across our community, our state, and our nation. Standing by every day of the year at all hours, Pete, Vernon's "gentle giant," has given true example to the dedication that first responders arm themselves with while serving their respective communities. In Pete's case, he was also armed with a heart the size of Vernon. These brave men and women unquestionably deserve the very best we can offer as a small form of gratitude for their sacrifice. While we mourn the void left by Pete's loss, we find consolation in the memory he leaves behind. He is survived by his loving family, namely, his wife Wendy, who is also a teacher in Manchester, his two children Timothy and Allison Blume, his mother Carolyn Blume, his brother, David Blume, and his sister Kristin McCauley. While his family will undoubtedly carry the legwork in extending the reach of his memory, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting this effort, thanking Pete for a life of service and setting his name and character further into stone.

MEADOW MONDRAGON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Meadow Mondragon for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Meadow Mondragon is a student at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Meadow Mondragon is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Meadow Mondragon for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassador for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

PASSING OF DOROTHY L.W. SMITH

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. VARGAS. Madam Speaker, I rise on International Women's Day to honor the life of Ms. Dorothy L.W. Smith, a dedicated educator and San Diego community leader who passed at the age of 82 on February 16th. Ms. Smith was a native of Capleville, Tennessee. She attended the Historically Black College, Philander Smith College, and later received her Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern California.

In 1969 Ms. Smith and her husband Carl moved to California where she began her career as a teacher. After moving to California, she taught at Long Beach City College, Grossmont Community College, and later San Diego City College, where she was a professor for 24 years. While teaching at San Diego City College she designed various courses, including one entitled "Black Women in Literature and the Media." This course has now been taught in the San Diego Community College District for more than 45 years. She also lectured at San Diego State University, where she taught courses in teacher education, rhetoric, and writing. She also lectured at San Diego State University where she taught courses in teacher education, rhetoric, and writing.

In 1981, she was elected to serve on the board of the San Diego Unified School District, becoming the first African American woman to be elected to the board. She served on the school board for eight years and twice was the President of the board. In March of 2019, she was recognized and elected to the San Diego Women's Hall of Fame in the Trailblazer category. Today, we celebrate her life and her commitment as an educator and mentor to future teachers.

IN RECOGNITION OF HARDIN
WATKINS

HON. TED BUDD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. BUDD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Hardin Watkins' recent retirement as City Manager of Burlington, North Carolina.

With his retirement on March 4, 2022, Mr. Watkins ended a 32-year career in public service. For the past six of those years, he has diligently worked to better the lives of the people of Burlington. Residents and city employees alike will miss his wealth of experience and institutional knowledge.

A native of Hendersonville, North Carolina, Mr. Watkins attended the University of North Carolina where he earned both his Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy Analysis and his Masters of Public Administration. After completing his education, he accepted a position as a city planner in Bennettsville, South Carolina. He was soon offered a new challenge in Decatur, Georgia, where he was hired as an assistant to the city manager. Mr. Watkins was rewarded for his hard work and dedication to the communities he served, and he was offered the position of City Manager of Suwanee, Georgia. However, after nearly a decade in that role, he returned to his home state in 2007 to manage the Town of Garner, North Carolina. Finally, in 2016, he was hired as the City Manager of Burlington.

The breadth of his work to improve the City of Burlington is remarkable. Within his six years at the helm of city government, Mr. Watkins was instrumental in creating the city's Economic Development Department, establishing the Community Police Advisory Team, and launching Link Transit in Burlington. Residents of Burlington will also be thankful for his efforts to restore the city's antique Dentzel carousel and overhaul the city's publicly owned golf course.

Although Mr. Watkins has begun a new stage of life, he does not intend to idle in his retirement. Instead, he intends to continue his long record of improving communities. But perhaps most importantly, he will have well-deserved time to spend with his family.

Madam Speaker, please join me in thanking Mr. Hardin Watkins for his three decades of public service and wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

TRINITY GARCIA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Trinity Garcia for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Trinity Garcia is a student at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Trinity Garcia is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perse-

verance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Trinity Garcia for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassador for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

SHADOW WOLVES ENHANCEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 7, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5681 the Shadow Wolves Enhancement Act, to authorize the reclassification of the tactical enforcement officers (commonly known as the "Shadow Wolves") in the Homeland Security Investigations tactical patrol unit operating on the lands of the Tohono O'odham Nation as special agents.

The "Shadow Wolves" are a Native American tactical patrol unit assigned to Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) unit in Sells, Arizona located on the Tohono O'odham Nation and was established by Congress in 1974.

These officers specialize in the interdiction of human and drug smugglers in the rugged terrain of the Sonoran Desert.

Under this bill, Shadow Wolves serving in these positions would be reclassified as GS-1811 special agents.

As GS-1811 special agents, these officers would gain the statutory authority to carry firearms, conduct searches & seizures, make arrests, and receive a pay increase from an average of \$37,000 a year to \$50,000.

Under existing authority, "Shadow Wolves" can only be hired as tactical officers at a lower paygrade, and those who wish to become HIS special agents receive no special consideration, which has caused pay and mobility limitations.

Due to these limitations, the Shadow Wolves program is at risk of becoming non-operational as officers retire.

There are currently eight Shadow Wolves employed by ICE, five of whom meet the training requirements for conversion to the new pay status.

The Act would also require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a strategy to retain existing Shadow Wolves, recruit new officers to the unit, and expand comparable units along the Canadian and Mexican borders.

One year after the development of the strategy by the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) would be required to submit a report, as well as annually for the following 2 years, that will assess the effectiveness of this strategy and provide recommendations for improvement.

I would like to personally thank the eight members of the Native American Tactical Patrol Unit in the Tohono O'odham Nation for their work on preventing human trafficking and drug smuggling along our borders. Their work is of vital importance to the security of our Nation and our citizens.

And on behalf of the constituents of the 18th Congressional District of Texas, I would also

like to thank all tactical enforcement officers from the United States Secret Service, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Homeland Security Investigations.

It is our duty as Members of Congress to ensure that these officers are receiving fair pay for the hard work that they have undertaken.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this legislation and urge all Members to vote in favor of H.R. 5681, the Shadow Wolves Enhancement Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LIFE OF
JENIFER JEAN WRIGHT JOHNSON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize the life of Jenifer Jean Wright Johnson. Jean passed away on February 6th, 2022.

Jean was born on January 25, 1938, in Rockledge, Alabama. She attended classes at Jacksonville Teachers College on the GI Bill and met her husband, Earl "PeeWee" Johnson at a school dance.

The two were married on March 5th, 1957, at West Side Baptist Church. They were blessed with four children.

After Jean graduated college, she worked as a substitute teacher. She took a job at Johnston Junior High in Anniston as the physical education teacher responsible also for the cheerleaders and girls' sports teams.

A few years later, she was approached by church elders and city council members from Jacksonville to start a low-income day care program. She worked to help raise funding to update the former Eastwood High School as well as working with the State of Alabama help secure funding.

On September 30, 1970, the Jacksonville Day Care Center opened and also created a summer program. Jean took over as Director of East Alabama Child Development Centers and was responsible for over 20 day care centers across 11 counties.

Jean had a heart for children and a great love for accessories. She will be missed.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing Jean's life of service.

DHS BASIC TRAINING ACCREDITATION
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 7, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5616, the "DHS Basic Training Accreditation Improvement Act of 2021" which addresses issues involving accreditation and law enforcement training, research, and development at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

This bill requires DHS to report annually to the congressional homeland security committees on the accreditation status for each basic training program within DHS.