

CONGRATULATING ILLINOIS BASKETBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION COACH OF THE YEAR CALEB BATSON

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Caleb Batson, the seventh and eighth grade girls' basketball coach at Abingdon-Avon Middle School, who was named a Coach of the Year by the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association.

The 2021–2022 season was Caleb's second as a coach at Abingdon-Avon Middle School. Both the seventh and eighth grade teams went 19–3 overall, with the 7th grade team winning the Class 3A sectional championship, and the 8th grade team winning the Class 3A regional title. Caleb is no stranger to developing young talent. In 2016 Caleb joined Monmouth College's men's basketball coaching staff, where, in 2018, he helped the Fighting Scots win the Midwest Conference regular season championship and the Midwest Conference tournament, giving Monmouth its first NCAA Division III Tournament berth since 1990. As a former athlete, I commend Caleb for his determination and hard work. Caleb has shown us all the importance of dedication and a strong work ethic. I am proud to see him represent our community so well throughout the state and the country with his talent and passion.

It is because of leaders such as Caleb that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Caleb Batson on being named a Coach of the Year by the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association.

HONORING DIANE PORTER COOLEY

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the vibrant life of Diane Porter Cooley, a pillar of the Pajaro Valley and Santa Cruz County community, who passed away on March 10, 2022.

Born to a family that settled in Santa Cruz County in the 1850s, and raised on Las Lomas Ranch in Watsonville, Diane had a deep connection to the land and people of the central coast of California. Her father Tom was one of the four founders of Driscoll Berries, and Diane continued her involvement with agriculture until her death. Diane and her husband, Don, were active members of the community, constantly engaged in the issues they cared about.

A deeply passionate civic leader, Diane worked tirelessly to protect and preserve the environment, and was an outspoken advocate for the people of the Pajaro Valley. She once said, "I care for the trees but for humans, too. People should have the chance to thrive just like the Sequoia should stand tall."

She was a dynamic agent of change who championed the creation of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, the Pajaro Valley Arts

Council, the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. She was involved with the Nature Conservancy, served on the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency board, and was a supporter of many other causes, including Pajaro Valley Shelter Services, Salud Para la Gente, the University of California, Santa Cruz, Cabrillo College, and Second Harvest Food Bank in Watsonville. We may never know just how many lives she touched, or how many people received an education, braces, medical care, a home, or love when they needed it most thanks to her.

Madam Speaker, Diane Porter Cooley's outreach and philanthropy extended far and wide throughout our community. As Santa Cruz County bids farewell to its beloved daughter of 95 years, may her legacy of giving continue to inspire us for generations to come.

HONORING AIDAN SAMUEL HAMILTON

HON. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Aidan Samuel Hamilton for earning the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 89 of Brandon, FL.

Only four percent of Boy Scouts reach the highest honor of Eagle Scout. This special recognition requires years of effort to develop leadership, outdoor, and service skills. To earn it, Aidan led his Troop to construct a large landscape planter at a local high school. Aidan has also volunteered at a local ministry to feed the homeless in the Tampa area and worked to raise funds for ZooTampa at Lowry Park.

Friends and fellow Scouts have described Aidan as a hard-working and dedicated member of his local community. On behalf of the Fifteenth Congressional District of Florida, congratulations again to Aidan Samuel Hamilton on earning the rank of Eagle Scout. We are proud of his continued success and appreciate his dedication to making our community a better place.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF CELESTE "CLETE" BOYKIN

HON. RALPH NORMAN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. NORMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Celeste "Clete" Boykin for her outstanding service to our state.

A native of Lancaster, Clete has selflessly served the state of South Carolina and Clemson University for decades. Throughout her time as an undergraduate student, she proudly played in the Tiger Band and graduated from Clemson University with a degree in horticulture in 1979. Since then, she has dedicated much of her life to Clemson University and its students. She currently serves on the Clemson Regional Board of Directors for the Baltimore/DC Clemson Club to ensure the Club is one of the best in the nation. Clete also serves as the Chairperson of the Board

of Advisors for the Clemson Institute for Parks, which provides research, education, training, and outreach to enhance parks and protected areas.

In addition to her involvement with Clemson University, Clete has educated the South Carolina Delegation on numerous federal issues, including cybersecurity, trade, agriculture, industry, and transportation. Clete is a respected, dependable, and humble community leader. She has exceeded expectations in service to our nation, highlighted by her receipt of numerous honors and accolades. In 2014, Clete received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Tin Cup Awards for her work in the Washington Government Relations Group (WGRG), one of the nation's oldest volunteer organizations for Black government employees. More recently, Clete received the Clemson Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor the Association can bestow upon an alumnus or alumna. The Distinguished Service Award is given to alumni who have not only dedicated their life to professionalism and public service, but who have also continued a lifelong dedication to Clemson University.

On behalf of the 5th District of South Carolina, it is my most sincere pleasure to recognize Clete for her outstanding leadership and public service. I wish her the best of luck throughout her future endeavors, as I am confident she will continue to serve and find great success in all that she does.

CONGRATULATING HEDY WEINBERG

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Hedy Weinberg, who is retiring in June as the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee after 38 years advancing and protecting civil rights. Ms. Weinberg, a native of Chicago, has been at the forefront of legal battles to protect the rights of LGBT people, prison inmates, immigrants and those seeking access to legal abortions. She has stood up for voting rights and religious freedom, while challenging laws restricting the teaching of evolution. She has worked to end racial profiling by law enforcement. Ms. Weinberg's tenure at the ACLU has run concurrent with my service in the state Senate and in Congress. It has always been gratifying and comforting to know that the ACLU and Hedy were there supporting the issues that needed support to protect our Constitution and our fundamental rights. Ms. Weinberg has been recognized for her advocacy work and is the recipient of the Human Relations Award from the National Conference on Community and Justice—Nashville Chapter; the Tennessee Library Association's Freedom of Information Award; and the Human Rights Campaign Equality Award. In 2012, she was inducted into the Academy for Women of Achievement by the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee and in 2016 received the Bridge Builders—LifeTime Achievement Award from the American Muslim Advisory Council. Ms. Weinberg was a founding and steering committee member of "Nashville For All of

Us,” which successfully organized the campaign to defeat an “English-Only” ballot initiative in Nashville, and of Healthy and Free Tennessee, a statewide coalition focusing on promoting reproductive and sexual health. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, the Steering Committee of the American Constitution Society—Nashville Chapter, and the Steering Committee of Our Muslim Neighbors. Ms. Weinberg is a graduate of Grinnell College and received her master’s degree from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. Ms. Weinberg has done so much to advance civil liberties in Tennessee and her service has been invaluable. I am proud to call her my friend and wish her every happiness in retirement.

CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MAYOR BOBBIE SINGH-ALLEN

HON. AMI BERA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. BERA. Madam Speaker, I rise today during Women’s History Month to recognize the contributions and achievements of Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen of Elk Grove, California.

Mayor Singh-Allen has been a great friend and partner in public service for years, when we began working together when she joined the Elk Grove School Board. She has been an exemplary citizen of Elk Grove, a city I have had the honor of representing throughout my time in Congress. She has lived in Elk Grove for over 30 years and been a strong leader in strengthening our public schools.

She was appointed to the Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Trustees in 2012 and went on to serve as Board President for 2 years. Her work involved maintaining strong financial reserves, supporting robust career and technical education programs, increasing graduation rates, creating a more inclusive curriculum, and enhancing visual and performing arts.

Mayor Singh-Allen is also an accomplished attorney, a graduate of Lincoln Law School of Sacramento, and represented the private sector for over twenty years. She has worked with associations representing the hospitality industry, special educators, and affordable housing issues.

Her election made her the first directly-elected Sikh-American woman mayor in the country. Mayor Singh-Allen is not only a dedicated servant of Elk Grove and Sacramento County, but she is also a wonderful wife and mother. In 2015, she was selected as “Woman of the Year” for California State Assembly District 9 and was recognized for her achievements in front of the California State Legislature. I am honored to call her a friend and ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing her today in front of the U.S. House of Representatives.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
GERARD “GERRY” M. THIERS

HON. ANDY KIM

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the retirement of Gerard “Gerry” M. Thiers, a non-profit leader and champion for private special education in New Jersey for over three decades.

Gerry has dedicated his life and career to champion policies that benefit children in New Jersey. He began his career researching for the United Way in Philadelphia while also representing Catholic Charities agencies for the New Jersey Catholic Conference and assisting with the management of a large social services agency. After developing a robust advocacy background, Gerry proudly served as the Executive Director of the Association of Schools and Agencies for the Handicapped (ASAH) for 38 years. Under his leadership, ASAH’s membership increased from 25 to 95 schools at more than 140 locations across our state. Through his work, he not only supported thousands of educational professionals through development conferences and programming opportunities, but also ensured that children in New Jersey had the resources they needed in quality education to reach their fullest potential.

Gerry led a successful effort to implement a new funding system for private special education schools. With more than 232,500 students receiving special education instruction in the state during the year 2020, this has benefited New Jersey’s special needs students’ accessibility to a meaningful, accommodating education. He also helped start “Special Education Week” in New Jersey, which commends school board members, educators, and parents for their dedication to ensuring quality education for students with disabilities and most importantly, to recognize the hard work of the students themselves.

In addition to his work with ASAH, Gerry also served as Chairperson of the New York Society of Association Executives, Chair of the Advocates for Children of New Jersey in Newark, and was a Board member for the National Association of Private Special Education Centers in Washington, D.C. Through these numerous volunteer roles, Gerry earned respect and a prominent reputation as a non-profit leader on both state and national levels.

I know I speak for the 3rd District in wishing Gerry a happy retirement filled with days of doing what he loves—biking, golfing and reading. He can retire knowing that his life’s work will not go unnoticed by our community, filled with the students, teachers, and parents of those impacted by a disability. It is because of Gerry that New Jersey can continue to pride itself on providing one of the highest quality educations through destigmatizing best practices that continue normalizing special education programs students deserve. New Jersey is grateful for the work that he has done, and I hope that he can inspire others to carry on his legacy as a champion for special education students across the country.

HONORING THE LIFE AND PATRIOTIC SERVICE OF THOMAS E. COPPINGER

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. FALLON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commemorate the life and service of Thomas Edwin Coppinger. Thomas honorably served in the United States Marine Corps during the Second World War and the United States Army during the Korean War. Today, he is survived by his brother Don Coppinger, his sisters Sandra Tate and Sharon Reilly, and many more nieces, nephews, and cousins. All of whom carry on the memory of this great American hero.

Thomas was born on March 22, 1922, in Greenville, TX to Thomas ‘Tom’ Richard and Eula Belle Coppinger. He attended high school in Greenville and worked on his grandparents’ farm and as a delivery man. Ultimately, in April of 1941 at the young age of nineteen, Thomas decided to enlist in the Marine Corps to serve his country in the Second World War. He saw combat during his missions in the Pacific theatre from early 1942 to 1944. Moreover, he served in Samoa, Hawaii, and the Gilbert Islands and was honorably discharged in December 1945. After returning home to Texas, Thomas again heeded the call for duty and reenlisted into the United States Army in 1948, where he valiantly served in the Second Armored Division to defend our Nation and allies. On September 1, 1950, Thomas tragically lost his life on a combat mission in Korea, and he posthumously received the Purple Heart for his service and bravery.

On July 27, 1951, Thomas Edwin Coppinger was laid to rest with full military honors in Wieland Cemetery, Greenville, TX. At the time of his death, Thomas was survived by his parents and 12 siblings. On March 22, 2022, we celebrate what would have been Thomas’ 100th Birthday. I pray that the memory of this patriot will live on for yet another hundred years and beyond.

I have requested the United States flag be flown over our Nation’s Capital to recognize Thomas Coppinger’s patriotism and devotion to God, Family, and Country. Furthermore, Madam Speaker, I extend my personal condolences to the Coppinger family for the loss of such an extraordinary man of service and duty. May God rest the soul of this great American.

TRIBUTE TO CELESTE DE LAINE
“CLETE” BOYKIN

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a trailblazer, a role model for many, and a strong advocate for her alma mater, Clemson University. Celeste De Laine Boykin, known to her friends and associates affectionately as “Clete,” is being honored by the Clemson Alumni Association with the Distinguished Service Award, and I echo their recognition of her tremendous work.