

U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum said. "This shift laid the groundwork for important progress being made today that benefits all Minnesotans."

Labor leaders who worked with Knutson recalled her attention to detail, quiet resolve and ambition.

"She got her facts, and she moved forward," said Ray Waldron, Knutson's predecessor as president of the state AFL-CIO. "She was very decisive."

It showed, Waldron remembered, when he approached Knutson in 2009 with the news that he planned to retire. Knutson had been serving as president of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation and, previously, the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly for more than a decade. "I walked into her office and said, 'How would you like to run for president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO?'" Waldron said. "Shar didn't hesitate. She just said yes, reached across her desk, shook my hand, and I walked out."

Though self-assured, Knutson "was never a bully," said Harry Melander, former head of the St. Paul and statewide Building Trades councils. Rather, she built her career on a knack for bringing people into the decision-making process and working in coalition.

"We all love each other, we're family," Melander said. "But families have fights. Shar made a point to make sure everyone, whether you got along within the labor family or not, was at the table when we had a big item to discuss, so we could figure this out together."

Knutson grew up in a union household, but her ties to the labor and political communities deepened after leaving a public-health job with the City of St. Paul in 1990 to work for Mayor Jim Scheibel. At City Hall, she shared an office and a budding friendship with Molly O'Rourke, who said the two "bonded over that experience of working in a very fast-paced and energized office."

Knutson was the mayor's liaison to organized labor and other constituent groups, including the emerging immigrant and refugee communities. It was a good fit, O'Rourke said, given Knutson's "belief that everyone, no matter their station in life, needed to be treated with dignity and respect."

Scheibel declined to run for re-election in 1993, and Knutson went to work for the Trades and Labor Assembly. Delegates elected her president in 1998, and within weeks of taking office, St. Paul's new mayor, Norm Coleman, stunned the city's unions with a proposal to privatize a swath of city services, from golf courses to the water department.

Coleman's "Compete St. Paul" plan threatened hundreds of city jobs, and union leaders looked to the Assembly to fight back, said Barb Kucera, then editor of The Union Advocate newspaper. Knutson worked quickly to convene the St. Paul Works Alliance, a coalition of groups that would oppose the privatization scheme.

"Right away, Shar brought in as many stakeholders as possible to be part of the discussion, leading with the unions but inviting other organizations too," Kucera said. "She really decided to mount a public campaign, and that's what eventually stopped the whole idea in the fall of 1999. 'Shar really pushed the organization to focus and get a clear message across, and she did a lot of media appearances and events and public speaking. They talked about jobs, but they didn't make it about jobs only. They very wisely chose to make it clear this was going to be a real threat to public services in the city, particularly the water service.'"

Defeating Coleman's plan drew national attention, and Knutson was among a handful of local labor council presidents invited to serve on an advisory committee to the AFL-CIO Executive Board. "She was willing to

try to do some things differently, and she projected a different image, being the first woman and first public employee in that job," Kucera said.

"She surprised a lot of people in Washington, D.C.," Waldron added. "She was courageous." Knutson's profile continued to grow after another successful, coalition-based campaign in 2006, this time to save 500 jobs at a paper recycling plant in the Midway. The plant, then owned by Rock-Tenn, needed a new power source after Xcel Energy stopped burning coal at its High Bridge plant. But opposition from neighborhood groups put Rock-Tenn's future—and the jobs of Steelworkers like Bob Ryan—in doubt.

Ryan, who now works as the rapid response coordinator for his union, called Knutson "instrumental" in keeping USW Local 264 members working in St. Paul.

"It was a lot of public meetings, and Shar was at a lot of them with us, speaking on our behalf," he said. Both Knutson and her father had worked at the facility, he said, "so Shar could talk to people with true emotion about how long the plant had been there and its connection to the city. She just delivered."

By then, the Assembly had merged with surrounding labor councils to form the Regional Labor Federation, with Knutson as president. She won a three-way race for president of the state AFL-CIO in August 2009, and guided the union campaign to elect Minnesota's first labor-endorsed governor in 20 years, Mark Dayton, a year later.

As her list of accomplishments grew, Knutson continued to prioritize her work to mentor women and young workers pursuing leadership roles in the labor movement and in politics.

Those fields were even more male-dominated 22 years ago, when McCollum became just the second Minnesota woman elected to federal office, than they are today. The 4th District congresswoman remembered Knutson and longtime friend Robin Madsen, an AFSCME leader who died in 2017, teaming up to host a "Working Women for Betty" campaign-kickoff event after McCollum announced her first run for Congress.

Knutson and McCollum remained friends as their careers progressed. Knutson attended President Barack Obama's first State of the Union address as McCollum's guest, and the congresswoman presented her friend with a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol upon her retirement from the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

"I am thankful I had the opportunity to know and work with Shar Knutson," McCollum said. "Her presence will be missed, but her legacy lives on."

Jennifer Guertin, president of AFSCME Local 2508, called Knutson a source of "quiet support" going back to the days when delegates to the Trades and Labor Assembly were "75 to 80 percent men."

"There were times when I was so frustrated by the guys that I was like, 'I'm done, I can't do this anymore,'" said Guertin, now the federation's sergeant at arms. "Shar would take me aside and say, 'You have to learn how to deal with people that don't know what you're capable of. You can't let them win.'"

Current Regional Labor Federation President Kera Peterson counts herself among the countless other union members Knutson took time to mentor.

"President Knutson helped us grow as people, advocates and leaders, and she fostered connections among us," Peterson said. "I don't know that many of us realized it at the time, but Shar was building a network of union and community activists with an eye towards our future. 'I'm grateful that she took a long view on what our labor move-

ment can accomplish together, and for the investments she made in all of us.'"

Knutson was also quick to remind young activists about the importance of work-life balance. "A lot of times during campaigns, when I was pretty much living at the Labor Centre because that's what we did, she was the one to tell me that I needed to go home sometimes, too," Guertin said. Knutson, who raised two daughters as a single working mother, "was really dedicated to her family," O'Rourke said. "I think they gave her a lot of strength."

Although Knutson spent more time with family and friends after retiring in 2015, Alzheimer's disease progressively limited her independence.

"It was hard to see such a strong and powerful and articulate woman not really know the amazing impact she had on people around her," O'Rourke said.

"She was a friend of mine, a good friend to me and to a lot of people," Melander added. "It's hard because she didn't have enough time to enjoy the fruits of her labor."

Knutson's family has published an obituary at BradshawFuneral.com. They plan to hold her memorial service later this spring.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to work with Shar Knutson and to call her a friend. Her presence will be missed, but her legacy lives on.

#### HISTORY IS REPEATING ITSELF

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, inflation is a thief, and many of us believe that the Federal Reserve is behind the curve in fighting that thief.

History is repeating itself, Madam Speaker, and Jay Powell is now fighting and facing precisely what his predecessor Arthur Burns called the "anguish of central banking" in 1979.

Sustained stagflation, high current inflation, growing high inflationary expectations, and now a commodity shock, these are all of the problems that Chair Burns faced in the 1970s.

While I welcome the Fed's action to shrink the balance sheet and start with the 25 basis-point increase in short-term rate targets, this process should have started in 2020. In my view, they should have been more aggressive this week and supported a 50 basis-point increase in short-term rates.

It is time for Congress to reassess and debate the central bank's mandate. In my view, the Fed should have a single mandate focused on containing inflation and keeping prices in check for Americans at the pump, at the grocery store, and whenever they pull out their wallet.

#### A VITAL FUNDING PACKAGE

(Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the passage of this year's omnibus spending bill and to express my excitement

for the community project funding the Fourth Congressional District of Illinois will receive.

These crucial funds, totaling over \$10 million, will expand affordable housing; improve access to healthcare; support violence prevention and counseling; and even build an enclosure around a community swimming pool, an absolute must-have in the windy city.

Working class, immigrant neighborhoods like mine have never gotten the kind of investment and resources that other neighborhoods enjoy.

I started as an activist to change that, to bring resources to my community, and I am proud to announce that this vital funding package will transform countless lives.

#### RECOGNIZING TODD AND LOUISE MALECHA

(Mrs. FISCHBACH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Todd and Louise Malecha, the 2022 winners of Farm Journal's Top Producer of the Year award.

Located in the heart of Minnesota's Seventh Congressional District in Villard, Minnesota, Malecha Enterprises is a multi-generational, family-run dairy, pumping, and custom work operation.

Both Todd and Louise grew up on dairy farms, and now five of their seven children are in the family business. Louise loves being able to see the next generation getting involved and taking up the reins.

Their company values include integrity, trust, and a commitment to constant and never-ending improvement. With values like that, it is no wonder they received such a prestigious award.

Congratulations to the Malechas for this impressive achievement.

#### CONDEMNING HATE CRIMES AGAINST ASIAN AMERICANS

(Ms. BOURDEAUX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 1-year anniversary of the Atlanta spa shootings.

Across our country, the Asian-American community has been under attack because of misinformation and xenophobia that wrongly blamed them for the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 16, 2021, 1 year ago, in Atlanta, eight innocent people, six of whom were women of Asian descent, were senselessly murdered. The victims of this attack included mothers and grandmothers, fathers and sons, teachers, and veterans. These are lives that cannot be restored, leaving pain that cannot be forgotten.

These attacks in Georgia were a wake-up call for the public to the reality the Asian-American community is facing each and every day.

Acts of violence like these demonstrate why we must always call out bigotry and hate whenever or wherever we see it. We must all speak out against it.

I would like to thank CAPAC Chair JUDY CHU for her leadership on this issue and encourage my colleagues to continue to speak out as we stand together with the Asian-American community.

#### PRESIDENT BIDEN'S ENERGY PLAN

(Mr. ROSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, the Biden administration has a backup plan to address rising gas prices, if their Secretary of Transportation's comical recommendation for every American to buy an electric car doesn't pan out. Unfortunately, the plan includes secret talks with Venezuela, led by corrupt dictator Nicolas Maduro, about lifting sanctions on importing Venezuelan oil into the United States.

Of course, if that doesn't work out, there is always Saudi Arabia and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, otherwise known as OPEC, because, surely, begging an oil cartel to make a deal to increase oil production could never go wrong. What is next? Buying oil from Iran, the world's leading exporter of terrorism?

This begs the question: Is this all that the Biden administration has to offer the American people in a time of crisis? Buy oil from corrupt dictators or buy a costly electric vehicle that you can't afford?

These are not the ideals on which America was built. Regrettably, this is President Biden's America.

#### AID TO UKRAINE

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, as Vladimir Putin attempts to drape the Iron Curtain over Russia once again, I stress the importance of working together with our European allies to support Ukraine's sovereignty and democracies around the world. Make no mistake about it: This is the test of our time.

As the co-chair of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue, I work closely with my European Co-Chair Radoslaw "Radek" Sikorski. Congress and the European Parliament have taken steps to deal with this pariah Putin.

Congress passed \$13.6 billion last week for Ukraine, which provides support for humanitarian aid, military assistance, and economic resolve. American allies, such as Poland and other

European countries, are doing a great deal to deal with the refugee problem.

President Biden separately provided an additional \$800 million for Stinger missiles and other anti-aircraft, anti-armor weapons to help the valiant, brave Ukrainians. Members of the European Parliament have also done their part with another \$500 million in assistance.

NATO, today, is stronger than at any time since the Cold War. But there is much more work ahead of us. We must continue to unite the front against Vladimir Putin with our European allies.

As President Zelenskyy reminded us: The cost of freedom is not free.

#### UNJUST IMPRISONMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II

(Mr. OBERNOLTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Madam Speaker, several weeks ago, we witnessed a very unfortunate milestone, the 80th anniversary of the signature of an executive order by the President of the United States to incarcerate over 100,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

This was a direct violation of the founding principles of our country that say that no one should be deprived of their liberty without just cause.

That is why I was so proud to see this body pass my bill, H.R. 6434, this week that would create a historic network of sites linked to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Madam Speaker, the power of history is to gain perspective and learn from the mistakes of the past. I am in hopes that this network will call attention to this unjust imprisonment and ensure that this injustice never occurs in the United States again.

#### DEMOCRATS ARE BUILDING A BETTER AMERICA

(Mr. LIEU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LIEU. Madam Speaker, Democrats are building a better America for the people. Last year, we passed the American Rescue Plan that has helped to create 7.4 million jobs in 13 months, the most in U.S. history. Under the Biden administration, wages are up, jobs are up, and unemployment is down.

What are Republicans doing? I don't know, but I do know that two of them attended a white nationalist conference last month.

Let me now tell you all the actions that House Republican leadership took against these two Republican Members who attended and spoke at a white nationalist conference last month.