

Mel enlisted in the U.S. Army. Thanks to his high aptitude, Mel advanced to Warrant Officer Flight School where he learned to fly helicopters. Arriving in Vietnam in October 1970. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sheldon volunteered to fly dangerous scouting missions as a member of Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. CWO2 Sheldon routinely exhibited bravery in combat alongside his fellow soldiers, accruing more than 900 hours of flying time, including 600 hours flying scouting missions, before returning home in fall 1971.

Not yet 21 years old and after more than two years in the Army, Mel had a difficult time transitioning home. As he put it, "I wanted to feel proud of serving our country," but, like many Vietnam veterans, he did not feel welcomed or acknowledged upon returning home from an unpopular war. To Mel and the many veterans who felt this way—including Tribal veterans, let me say how proud we are of their service and how grateful we are they returned home to serve their community for all these years.

After his Army service, Mel put his G.I. Bill benefits to use and furthered his education, attending Skagit College and then the University of Washington, where he earned his bachelor's degree in political science. His military service and education prepared him for a career as a commercial fisherman and, later, as a member of the Tulalip Tribes Board of Directors. Mel served for six years as Board Chairman, during which time he focused on protecting Tribal sovereignty and diversifying the Tribes' economy.

Today, the examples of Mel Sheldon, Jr. and proud Tribal veterans from my district and our country are an inspiration to current and future generations. Mr. Speaker, I raise my hands to Mel Sheldon, Jr., to the Tulalip veterans and to all Native women and men who served in the United States Armed Forces and who continue to serve their communities.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SPENCER LANCASTER

#### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of a local civic champion and trailblazer, Spencer Lancaster, also known as "Uncle Buddy," of New London, Connecticut. Spencer was a true leader for the New London community. A role model and a mentor, Spencer always wanted to make a difference and he did, playing an active role in the civil rights movement throughout his life. Aged 95, Mr. Lancaster sadly but peacefully passed away on October 24th lovingly surrounded by his family.

Born in March 1928 to Richard and Dorothy Conover Lancaster in New London, Connecticut, Spencer purposed his life toward strengthening his community. While still in high school, Spencer was recruited to build submarines by Electric Boat during World War II. After graduation, Spencer heeded our nation's call to action and served in the United States Army 98th Battalion Field Artillery, 82nd Airborne in Fort Bragg, NC. Spencer's time in the army served as a catalyst for his advocacy

in civil rights as he found himself disconcerted when soldiers in identical uniform were separated into groups based on race.

Upon the conclusion of the War, Spencer went back to school and attended Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina where he met his wife and the love of his life, Pearlestone Williams. After marrying Pearlestone in September 1952, Spencer and his wife returned to his home in eastern Connecticut, starting a legacy which would mold generations to come.

Once returned to New London after the war, Spencer wasted no time in picking up where he left off pursuing his passion to make an impact in the city, successfully championing conversations for the integration of formerly all-white public housing in New London. Spencer became active in local politics and, in 1960, became the first Black elected official in the city of New London where he served on the Board of Selectmen. Here, Spencer's devotion to bringing about positive change flourished. He served as an example for others in his community and continued to combat housing discrimination and create an atmosphere where New Londoners could function as equal citizens regardless of their race, ethnicity, or economic standing.

In New London, a Black Heritage Trail plaque stands on Rodgers Street to mark where Spencer and Pearlestone bought their house in 1963, becoming the first Black homeowners on their street. Although a neighborhood petition was created to force them off the street, the Chief of Police, a neighbor to Spencer and Pearlestone, immediately rejected the petition. Spencer was rightfully recognized by the city of New London as a living legend on the city's Black Heritage Trail for his persistent advocacy on behalf of New London residents.

As if his impressive works in local government were not enough, Spencer also served as the first Black Deputy Sheriff of New London and devoted his time to helping secure appointments for other Black men and women. Spencer's impressive dedication to public service was further reflected in his organization of protests to combat racial discrimination throughout Eastern Connecticut as Vice President of the New London Chapter of the NAACP. Spencer's wisdom was not limited to his advocacy work. He also had legendary sales skills that he showcased in his 60 years of work for Linder Dodge and Jeep where he became the top-ranked Dodge seller in New England and the fifth nationwide.

Spencer was also a devout member of the Walls Clarke AME Zion Church in New London, the second oldest historically Black church in the city. Here, he served as Chairman of the Trustee Board and enjoyed singing in the Senior Choir.

Mr. Speaker, the loss of Spencer leaves a deep void in Connecticut. Spencer was simply awe inspiring and will be an inspiring addition to eastern Connecticut's pantheon of revolutionally change-makers. An advocate for making a difference where you can, Spencer's work has positively impacted and will continue to benefit members of our community and their families. Though we mourn this incredible loss, we can appreciate that Spencer's legacy and memory will live on through his family and the countless individuals who were influenced by him. Spencer is survived by his brother, Albert Lancaster, his sons Spencer Lancaster, Jr. and Robert Lancaster, his daughters Gilda

Butler, Margaret Lancaster, and Tricia Lee, nine grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, and a large extended family. As we memorialize his service to our region, I ask my colleagues and this Chamber to join me in expressing our deepest respect for Spencer Lancaster's work and life.

#### HONORING FORMER ARMY RANGER AND KOREAN WAR VETERAN JAMES ARTHUR PARKHURST

#### HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize James Arthur Parkhurst, a former U.S. Army Ranger and proud veteran of the Korean War.

Since before 1968, Jim has been a committed and selfless member of the Oxford American Legion. In 1990, he began its Veterans' Museum. In its early beginnings, older veterans donated their uniforms for display—but as time passed, its collection was built into a full-blown museum with a plethora of military memorabilia.

For many years, Jim has helped his community with parades, always making sure to include his fellow veterans. Year after year, Jim ensures that families are aware of both Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. From placing flags to cleaning headstones, Jim is well known throughout eastern Michigan for his support and commitment to veterans' causes.

Jim also helps many families throughout the community throw birthday parties for children, delivering toys, food, and other gifts. Even through the personal tragedies in his life, Jim is always there to serve others.

Jim gave his youth in service to our country: he has served with honor, distinction, and pride. To many, Jim is a profound inspiration.

Above all else, Jim has selflessly donated his time to make sure others are safe, our veterans are taken care of, and everyone can get the help they need. In the words of the Legion's Auxiliary Department Americanism Chairman Darlene Jones, "Jim just keeps going—he has no quit."

On November 11th, as part of their Veteran's Day observation, the American Legion will dedicate the Veterans' Museum in his honor. On behalf of Michigan's 9th Congressional District, I am proud to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to recognize James Arthur Parkhurst for his lifetime of service, both in and out of uniform. It is my sincere hope that the James Arthur Parkhurst Veterans' Museum of Oxford, Michigan, will prosper for many years to come.

#### RECOGNIZING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2023 ARTSFAIRFAX ARTS AWARDS

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize ArtsFairfax and the recipients of the

2023 Arts Awards. These awards recognize the extraordinary contributions of artists, arts organizations, individuals, and businesses in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Falls Church that support the arts in our community.

Founded in 1964, the formally named Arts Council of Fairfax County, Inc. is a non-profit organization designated as Fairfax County's local arts agency. Today, ArtsFairfax operates programs and Initiatives that include grant opportunities, arts advocacy, education, and professional development opportunities for more than 23 arts and culture organizations.

ArtsFairfax envisions a thriving arts and culture community accessible to all of Fairfax County. To support this vision, ArtsFairfax awards over \$795,000 in County, public, and private funds through competitive grants and awards to more than 60 organizations annually.

The Arts Awards honors supporters of the arts in four categories: the Jinx Hazel Arts Award, the Impact Award, the Education Award, and the Arts Philanthropy Award.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD the following names of the 2023 Arts Awards Recipients:

The 2023 Jinx Hazel Arts Award, ArtsFairfax's premier award recognizing an individual or organization whose vision and commitment has helped shape the cultural life of Fairfax County, will be presented to the Workhouse Arts Center.

The 2023 Impact Award will be presented to Inova Schar Cancer Institute in partnership with Smith Center for Healing and the Arts.

The 2023 Education Award will be presented to The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University.

The 2023 Arts Philanthropy Award will be presented to Lola Reinsch.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2023 Arts Awards and recognizing the visionaries, leaders, and supporters who help to make our Northern Virginia communities rich with cultural opportunities.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LIVONIA SYMPHONY

#### HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Livonia Symphony Orchestra, the premier professional orchestra serving the people of Livonia, Wayne County, and Oakland County, as they celebrate 50 years of musical programming.

Founded in 1973 (originally as the Oakway Symphony), the Livonia Symphony Orchestra has been a musical force that brings a wide array of music, from Broadway to the classics, as well as world-renowned performers to the community. The Livonia Symphony has only had two musical directors in its entire history, founder Francisco Di Blasi and currentjy Maestro Volodymyr Shesiuk who also serves as the orchestra's conductor. Under their leadership, the orchestra has thrived.

The Livonia Symphony Orchestra is also a champion for music education. The group encourages all young people to engage in music

education. Their Musical Outreach Program helps provide musical instruments to students across the Livonia and Clarenceville upper elementary and middle schools. In keeping with the Symphony's belief that accessibility inspires interest and engagement, the organization encourages young people to explore music by providing these instruments free of charge to those in need.

Please join me in recognizing the Livonia Symphony Orchestra as they celebrate 50 years of music and community engagement in Michigan's 12th District.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF NEAL BROOKS BIGGERS, JR.

#### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of the Honorable Neal Brooks Biggers, Jr., who died at his home in Oxford, Mississippi, on October 15, 2023, at the age of 88. Judge Biggers was born in Corinth, Mississippi, to Neal B. Biggers, Sr., and Sara Cunningham Biggers. He was a graduate of Corinth High School and Millsaps College where he received his bachelor's degree in 1956.

After graduation, Judge Biggers enlisted in the United States Navy, subsequently graduating from Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Newport, Rhode Island. He served four years on active duty during the Cold War, attaining the rank of Navy lieutenant. For a young man, he later recalled, it was the experience of a lifetime. When his active duty ended, this grandson of a Methodist preacher attended the Union Presbyterian Seminary before deciding the church was not his calling. It was at the University of Mississippi School of Law, however, that he found the work that would intrigue and challenge him for the next 60 years.

In law school, Judge Biggers was associate editor of the Mississippi Law Journal and president of the judicial committee. After graduating cum laude with a Juris Doctor degree, he went back home to Corinth, Mississippi, to set up a solo law practice. After five years of private practice, Judge Biggers ran for public office, winning elections as Alcorn County's prosecuting attorney and district attorney for the First Judicial District. Later, he was elected as circuit court judge for that district. In these positions, he served his county and state for a combination of 20 years. President Ronald Reagan nominated Judge Biggers for the federal bench in 1984. After Senate confirmation, he began his almost 40-year career as a federal district judge in Mississippi's Northern District.

Judge Biggers served as chief judge of the court from 1998 to 2000. He was a member of various councils and committees of the Fifth Circuit, including the Judicial Council, the administrative arm governing federal courts in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. He also was a member of the American Judicature Society and The American Inns of Court. In 2010, the Alumni Association of Corinth High School honored Judge Biggers as its distinguished alumnus of the year. Millsaps College presented him with the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 2012.

One of his great pleasures as a district judge involved the selection and mentoring of interns and law clerks over the years. Many were from the University of Mississippi School of Law and Mississippi College School of Law; some were from other states. All, he hoped, would become better lawyers because of their experiences in his chambers and courtroom. Each year, the University of Mississippi School of Law presents the Judge Neal B. Biggers, Jr., Constitutional Law Award to the top first-year students showing excellence in the school's constitutional law classes. In 2000, Judge Biggers took senior status, serving as a senior district judge until his death.

Other than the law, Judge Biggers' great passion was the game of golf. As a boy in Corinth, he caddied for his father and played the game through his time in high school, college, and military service. Throughout his life, he regularly took trips with golfing friends, playing notable courses across the country from Florida's Sawgrass to Torrey Pines in California. He traveled to Scotland several times to watch the Open at St. Andrews, sometimes playing golf himself at the Old Course and other renowned Scottish courses like Carnoustie. Judge Biggers was a Presbyterian, brought up in Corinth's First Presbyterian Church; a long-time member of Sigma Chi; and a man who cared deeply about his country and the rule of law.

He is survived by his beloved life partner, Robin Hendrickson of Oxford, Mississippi; his daughter, Sherron Biggers of Collierville, Tennessee; his brother, the Ret. Rev. Jack Cunningham Biggers, Bishop Emeritus of Northern Malawi, Africa; and numerous cousins.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes on November 2, 2023, due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: NAY on Roll Call No. 592; NAY on Roll Call No. 591; NAY on Roll Call No. 590; NAY on Roll Call No. 589; NAY on Roll Call No. 588; NAY on Roll Call No. 587; NAY on Roll Call No. 586; NAY on Roll Call No. 585; NAY on Roll Call No. 584; NAY on Roll Call No. 583; NAY on Roll Call No. 582; NAY on Roll Call No. 581; NAY on Roll Call No. 580; and NAY on Roll Call No. 579.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 3, 2023*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, I was unable to physically attend proceedings in the House Chamber due to illness. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

YEA on Roll Call No. 559 (Motion to Table H. Res. 807—Censuring Representative Rashida Tlaib);

YEA on Roll Call No. 560 (H. Res. 559—Declaring it is the policy of the United States that a nuclear Iran is unacceptable);