

HONORING ERNESTO GÓMEZ

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Dr. Ernesto Gómez, who for the last fifty years has stewarded one of the premier health care organizations in Texas, CentroMed. Founded in 1973 as El Centro del Barrio, CentroMed began as a project on San Antonio's South and West sides to offer culturally competent mental health services to vulnerable members of the community. Since then, CentroMed has expanded the services it offers, providing much-needed medical care to tens of thousands of people every year.

This growth would not have been possible without the efforts of Dr. Gómez, who has served as CentroMed's President and Chief Executive Officer since its inception. He has helped grow the organization from a single clinic to twenty-seven clinics and two fitness centers across Bexar and Comal counties.

CentroMed has forged powerful partnerships, allowing it to serve even more of the South Texas community. CentroMed's collaboration with Methodist Healthcare Ministries allows it to provide services for low-income, uninsured, and houseless populations. Through partnerships with CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care, CentroMed has also expanded efforts to provide care for uninsured pregnant women and infants.

Mr. Gómez has also made sure his efforts continue through the next generation of social workers, health care professionals, and activists. For the last thirty-seven years, Dr. Gómez has taught graduate-level courses at San Antonio's Our Lady of the Lake University, focusing on public policy, administration, and human behavior.

The dedication that Dr. Gómez has demonstrated for the last fifty years has been an invaluable service to San Antonio. His efforts with CentroMed have improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to express my gratitude for Dr. Ernesto Gómez a man who has helped transform my city of San Antonio for the better.

REMEMBERING YOSSEI
HERSHKOVITZ**HON. RITCHIE TORRES**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, Yossi Hershkovitz was a man of extraordinary integrity and kindness. His commitment to family and community, and of course to defending his beloved Israel, formed the cornerstone of his life. He had a serious, steadfast, calm demeanor and a smile that warmed your soul. Resolute and principled, he balanced his strength with a soft-spoken, warm, and generously compassionate nature. Yossi was a deeply feeling and caring person and educator. There seemed to be an endless reservoir of goodness within him. Yossi personified the essence of being a "mensch" (a person of integrity). He consistently showed up for others

and sought to increase the feelings of unity, light, and positivity in the world. When Israel's innocent were targeted, there was no question that he would rise up to defend them; and, of course, he made the ultimate sacrifice in doing so.

Yossi was born in Jerusalem on May 31, 1979. He graduated from the Horeb School and the Birkat Moshe Yeshiva in Ma'ale Adumim and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Bar Ilan University and a master's degree in educational administration from Herzog College. In September 2012, he and his wife Hadas, along with their two children, arrived in the Bronx to work at SAR Academy, a Modern Orthodox Yeshiva day school. While this adventure took them away from Israel, its purpose was actually an extension of Yossi's deep commitment to Israel and the Jewish people, as they spent the next four years working with American students to deepen their connection to Israel, and instill a love of Hebrew and Jewish unity. They settled in Riverdale, leaving their family and support system behind in Israel. A young couple with two small children who did not speak English, they quickly found a supportive network within the Bronx and at SAR. Even as they worked to adjust to their new community, the Hershkovitz family generously opened their home to others, becoming an integral part of the community rather than "visitors." During their four year stay, they left an indelible mark on the neighborhood and hundreds of students.

Teachers from SAR Academy remember how Yossi truly saw the good in every single child he met. Central to SAR's mission is the idea that every child has a "divine spark," and it was immediately clear that this came naturally for Yossi, as he effortlessly connected with each child by believing in them fully. As SAR Principal, Rabbi Krauss, shared, "Yossi's approach to teaching was rooted in compassion and caring for each student as an individual. He was a man of strong ideals and Torah principles, living out his beliefs both in and out of the classroom." Yossi's previous work with at-risk youth in Israel gave him a soft spot for connecting with kids in need of extra care, and in his quiet way, he made a tremendous impact in the lives of so many students. His care was felt by all. As one student, Avi, described: "Moreh Yossi taught me to believe in myself. All of his students looked up to him and sensed he was unique in his courage and heroism." This was echoed by another student, Oren, who remembers, "he taught us discipline and exemplified a focused, serious mindset. At the same time, he laughed with us, and in doing so taught us that completing any task can be enjoyable and meaningful. He taught us important values of living a Godly life."

Yossi and his wife Hadas were a power couple. They gave 110 percent to everything that they did while at SAR. Yossi was an elegant musician who added depth to any musical performance in school, especially on Israel's Memorial Day. When he played the violin, he did so with his whole soul. His colleague in Israel, Shalom Weil, later wrote of his playing: "He was a strong, solid fellow, but when he played the violin, his whole soul peaked out from his heart." He and Hadas took their mission seriously and were roll-up-your-sleeves, "can-do" people who endlessly gave of themselves. Teachers spoke about

how when chaperoning a trip, having Yossi around was like having 10 people. No task was beneath him. He was always on board. The entire family would join the students on weekend retreats. Yossi remarkably balanced being a fully engaged teacher and a present father. Students and teachers remember watching him sitting on the floor with the babies to give his wife time to relax and enjoy during the school trips. As their family grew with the arrival of their new baby in 2014, they continued to make the most of their time in America. They regularly took advantage of time off to travel, packing into their car and traveling cross country to see the great American sights.

Upon his return to Israel in August 2016, Yossi and Hadas moved to Gush Etzion's G'vaot. As Rabbi Krauss described, "This community integrates people with special needs—in and of itself a testament to Yossi's inclusive spirit and commitment to fostering a supportive environment for all." He also became the principal of ORT Pelech for Boys in Jerusalem. While the head of school, Yossi was instrumental in introducing the use of an app named 'good point' which encourages teachers to spend a few minutes a day writing positive notes about a student into an app which automatically sends the compliment directly to the student and their parents. The app exemplifies Yossi's commitment to seeing and growing the good in people. Israeli Education Minister Yoav Kisch expressed his deep sorrow, describing Yossi as "a well-known and beloved educator who inspired his teachers and students . . . a first-rate educator. The entire education system aches and mourns his fall."

Above all, Yossi's enormous heart and belief in humanity could be seen in his deep commitment and connection to his family. "Hershkovitz was as devoted to his wife, Hadas, and his children as he was to his students," his former principal wrote. "He truly loved his wife. I learned about how to be a father and how to be a spouse from him." Yossi and his wife, Hadas, were true partners in life, making decisions together that exemplified their commitment to each other, their family, and to Israel. His legacy will live on in his five children, Be'eri, Harel, Tal, Shire and Neta, each of whom either spoke or wrote something to be read at his funeral. They spoke of his deep devotion to them, thanking him for studying with them and for being their hero. While they questioned who would now be strong for them, it was also clear that although there is no way to fill the gaping hole that has been left in this world, his family would certainly carry on his legacy.

Yossi's deep commitment to Israel shaped his entire life, and he knew that this war may mean the ultimate sacrifice. When he left to join the war, he shared with Hadas that this would probably be the last time he went into battle. As a member of the 551st brigade, he was killed alongside four of his fellow unit soldiers as they approached what turned out to be a booby-trapped tunnel next to a mosque in Beit Hanoun.

As Zvika Peleg, CEO of the ORT network put it, "Yossi's fall in the war of light against the dark, unjustly, is a symbol of the extraordinary man and educator he was." Yossi's students will need to adjust to entering school without being greeted by his warmth and deep belief in them. Yossi's children will need to

learn how to be strong in his name and live without their hero. Yossi's wife will need to learn to make her way through life without her partner, her rock, her anchor. Medinat Yisrael will have to learn to forge on without one of their champions, a man molded by the nation's values and who gave his life protecting them. And, the world will need to learn how to go on without Yossi's light, and must make a promise to do whatever it can to make sure that all he stood for is never extinguished.

May his memory be a blessing.

HONORING HAL DAVIS

HON. TIM BURCHETT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Hal Davis, an East Tennessean who has served the United States and the State of Tennessee for over 50 years.

Hal Davis was born on July 18, 1947 in Ashland, Kentucky. After graduating from South High School in Knoxville, Hal attended the University of Tennessee and took classes from multiple other universities while deployed as a United States Marine. While Hal was a U.S. Marine he was stationed in South Carolina, North Carolina, California, as well as overseas in Spain, South Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic.

Hal served in the United States Secret Service in Washington, D.C. where he was tasked with the protection of President Nixon, President Ford, multiple presidential candidates, and vice presidents and their families throughout the years. He was also employed as a special investigator with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and a Special investigator with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In addition to his military and federal service, Hal was a Tennessee State Trooper in both Chattanooga and Knoxville's districts.

He has authored and published two books about travel and his years serving his country. I thank Hal for his service.

RECOGNIZING OGEMAW VETERAN OF THE YEAR MR. CHARLIE PUZJAK

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the Ogemaw County Veteran of the Year, Mr. Charlie D. Puzjak of West Branch, Michigan. Charlie's dedication to supporting his community is an inspiration to Veterans and makes him a deserving recipient of this recognition.

The Ogemaw County Veterans Alliance, a nonprofit organization representing all Veterans of Ogemaw County, annually honors a hero for their outstanding service to the United States and their continued activism in their community post-service. This year, the Veterans Alliance has chosen Mr. Charlie D. Puzjak to receive the highest honor the organization can bestow.

Charlie served honorably for 18 and a half years in the United States Army as a MOS

H63. In December of 2004, he answered the nation's call once again, this time for deployment to Iraq. After completing his training in El Paso, Texas, Mr. Puzjak was deployed to Camp Arifjan in Kuwait and subsequently served at 12 other bases in the Middle East. Following an unfortunate accident in 2005, he received an honorable medical discharge. Despite this, Mr. Puzjak maintains that he would re-enlist in a heartbeat.

Mr. Puzjak's commitment to service extends beyond his military career. After his honorable medical discharge, Charlie immediately began advocating for other Michigan Veterans. Since 2005, Charlie has served as the Director of the Ogemaw County Veterans Museum, founder of the nonprofit "A Soldiers First Aid from Home", and organizer of many other Veterans' fundraisers and community events. It is incredibly heartening to see how Mr. Puzjak consistently puts others before himself.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Mr. Charlie Puzjak on this well-deserved award. I extend to him my gratitude for his continuous efforts to uplift Veterans in his community and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING EVANGELIST BARBARA GREEN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Evangelist Barbara Green, a devoted Crossing Guard in Clinton, MS.

Barbara Green is a native of Bolton, MS, and now resides in the City of Raymond. She is a mother of 2 children, a grandmother of 3 and a great grandmother of 2. Barbara Green started her first job right out of high school at Blackstone restaurant on Farris Street in Jackson, MS. She then went on to work at Hunter Engineering for 17 years.

After retirement a friend of Barbara Green's informed her of an open position at Sumner Hill for a Crossing Guard, she then went to try it out and fell in love with the job.

She has been a Crossing Guard for 14 years in the Clinton Community. Some of Barbara Green's most genuine moments are seeing the kids and parents every day as she directs them safely through traffic with a smile on her face.

Outside of her inspirational job as a crossing guard, she is a devoted community servant. Mrs. Green is a choir member and Evangelist at Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church and Corner Stone Missionary Baptist Church.

When asked what words she lives by, Evangelist Green expressed her favorite Bible Scripture which is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Evangelist Barbara Green for her hard work and dedication to her community.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF FLORENCE "FROSTY" TAYLOR

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of a fellow patriot and beloved editor of the Republican Briefs, Mrs. Florence "Frosty" Taylor.

Two weeks ago, Arizona lost a dear friend. With two beautiful children, two grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and a husband of 68 years, Frosty lived a life full of love, service, and passion for adventure. She would never lie idle when there was more work to be done for our country.

Born on April 7, 1937, Frosty grew up on her grandfather's cattle ranch in South Dakota and married her high school sweetheart. In 1964, she won the Mrs. Nebraska pageant and subsequently embarked on a career in public media. Beginning as a columnist, she quickly advanced to the position of editor and earned the titles of first female reporter to ride in a Phoenix Police helicopter and honorary Phoenix firefighter.

After great success in the media industry, Frosty worked in the Arizona Attorney General's office and the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Fund.

But Frosty's true service was performed within her community. She served as President of the Wickenburg Republican Club and was one of her district's precinct committee-women and state committeeman, while reporting Arizona news as editor of the Republican Briefs, a role from which she retired only this past August.

She had a thirst for knowledge, but not for her own benefit. Whether it was working for the media or humbly publishing a 500-page family cookbook, Frosty strived to share all she learned with others.

Every time we met, she amazed me. She knew politics through and through, from the local to the national level. If you visit the Republican Briefs website, you will find countless testimonies to Frosty's advocacy on behalf of Arizonan Conservatives.

On November 4, 2023, Frosty passed away at the vivacious age of 86. Although this is a time of mourning, her life and legacy will be celebrated for years to come.

She will be remembered as a woman of principle, but most of all, a long-time supporter and friend of mine. When you have a friend in Frosty, you have a friend indeed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL GUARD FEDERAL EMPLOYEE LEAVE FAIRNESS ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia National Guard Federal Employee Leave Fairness Act, which would prohibit the Department of Defense (DOD) from recouping pay from District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) members who