

In Afghanistan, he directed military communications with the Afghanistan Army and provided security for important Afghan military leaders in their fight against the Taliban. Additionally, Sergeant Ladd also partook in dangerous supply runs so that our troops were able to fulfill their duties. On numerous occasions, he volunteered for combat missions so that other soldiers would not be put in harm's way. For his outstanding service and actions, Sergeant Ladd was awarded the Bronze Star three times, along with several other awards.

After retiring from the Army in 2016, Sergeant Ladd continued to positively impact his community in many ways. Sergeant Ladd is passionate about animals, and he would take time to assist animals on the street if he saw they were at risk. Without question, he truly embodies the values of an upstanding American soldier. Sergeant Ladd's exceptional display of heroism and selfless service in the line of duty has saved the lives of fellow soldiers and protected our great Nation.

I am honored to represent Sergeant Ladd in Texas' 4th Congressional District. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and to the people of North Texas.

RECOGNIZING DONALD "TOBY" PETERSON

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a remarkable man, Mr. Donald "Toby" Peterson.

Born in 1933, Toby spent his childhood growing up in rural Oconto County in the Oconto Falls area, known as "Swedetown." Toby attended Oconto Falls High School and while in school, met Shirley Jean Elbe who he affectionally called his, "Lovely Lady". Following their marriage in 1956, Toby and Shirley started a family that would grow to six children: Lynette, Mike, Kathryn, Mari Jo, Jan, and Beth, who were the center of their world.

Throughout his life, Toby's strong work ethic resulted in his professional success as he and his father owned and operated two gas stations in Oconto Falls that serviced and sold cars and trucks. In 1973, Toby and Shirley purchased the local Ford dealership, which was operated by the family for the next 48 years. Toby and his family built a lasting business that provided many individuals throughout Northeast Wisconsin with stable jobs. Throughout the years, the dealership provided exceptional service and support for the entire Oconto Falls community. I commend Toby and Shirley for their unwavering commitment and dedication to their business and community throughout the years.

As his business grew and nourished, so did his efforts to give back to his community. Toby cherished and devoted much of his time and efforts to his hometown. Toby was a member of the River Island Golf Course, served on the Oconto Falls Fire Department, and on the Community Bank Board. Toby undoubtedly made a lasting impact on the entire Oconto Falls community and built a legacy that will be remembered for years to come. I thank Toby for his years of dedication to our community

and offer my sincere condolences to his family during this time.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Northeast Wisconsin thank Donald "Toby" Peterson for his extraordinary commitment and dedication to the Oconto County community and Northeast Wisconsin. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and to all of the lives he touched.

CELEBRATING THE KANSAS CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY'S 150TH ANNI- VERSARY

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the Kansas City Public Library (KCPL) for one hundred and fifty years of service and commitment to the community. For over a century, the Kansas City Public Library has served as a gateway for people to gain knowledge and wisdom. The library offers resources and services that cultivate a love and appreciation for reading and learning. On this momentous occasion, let us reflect on the irreplaceable assets the Kansas City Public Library, and all libraries, have given us.

In 1873, the Public School Library of Kansas City was established as an invaluable resource for fostering a love of reading, allowing all who visit the library to immerse themselves in new worlds. In times of extreme economic hardship, KCPL has stood as a beacon of hope and prosperity. The library offered a sense of culture and sophistication, thereby helping establish the foundation upon which Kansas City was built. This institution started with just a few books and has flourished into what we now know as the Kansas City Public Library, with ten branches, thousands of books, and an immeasurable amount of online assistance.

By offering a variety of children's books, novels, textbooks, and databases, libraries represent different things to different people. Synonymous with education, a library can fuel a student's love for learning, allowing them to better understand themselves, friends, family, and the world. Lending books allows prolonged access to knowledge that may not be available anywhere else. Catalogs and records help us learn from the past and recognize how it shaped our present and future. Libraries inspire creativity and imagination, creating an open space for people to share stories and engage with each other. A place unlike any other where all ages can come together, the Kansas City Public Library is not only a quiet place for students to study but also a place to make a friend, pick up a new hobby, access the internet, and attend educational events.

The Kansas City Public Library does more than just provide access to knowledge. The library system is keenly aware of the needs and hardships of many who enter their doors. Specialists throughout the branches help individuals with common issues that everyday people face, from taxes and budgeting to health and fitness. A safe haven is provided for those who enter any of the Kansas City branches. In 2016, the Outreach Team, alongside the AmeriCorps VISTAs, began "Coffee & Conversations." These meetings invite people experiencing hardships and housing insecurity

to have open discussions about their lives; ensuring they have food, emergency supplies, and the support needed to stay on their feet. Additionally, there is also an initiative to help those who just came to the United States. Refugee & Immigrant Services & Empowerment connects the immigrant community with opportunities, services, and resources to help immigrants gain citizenship and integrate into their new home.

Numerous awards and acknowledgements have been given to the Kansas City Public Library to recognize the extraordinary work being accomplished. Multiple five-star ratings have been given by the Library Journal because of program attendance, library visits, internet computer usage, and circulation. The library system received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service in 2008 in recognition of children's programs and free events. There is no denying the outstanding performance of this library. The awards, ratings, and reviews for all the services this library system offers, proves KCPL is a premier library in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring the Kansas City Public Library on one hundred and any years of resilience and engagement within Missouri's Fifth Congressional District. I have no doubt they will continue to foster a love of reading and prove to be an invaluable resource for all visitors. It is fitting to celebrate this milestone and reflect on the significance of libraries in our community. Here's to another hundred and fifty years of the Kansas City Public Library being a shining light for knowledge, inspiration, and opportunity.

CELEBRATING MID-KANSAS COOP- ERATIVE AS THE AGRICUL- TURAL RETAILERS ASSOCIATION RETAILER OF THE YEAR

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Mid-Kansas Cooperative being honored as the Agricultural Retailers Association Retailer of the Year. I am incredibly proud that MKC's commitment to their customers and dedication to their community is being recognized.

MKC is a full-service farm cooperative offering a complete line of products, programs, and services for farm and urban customers throughout Kansas. The cooperative has more than 11,000 members and 8,000 customers, and their connection to my district and constituents is deep and stretches back decades. MKC has several large-scale facilities serving the farmers and customers of the 4th district, including their recently opened executive leadership office in Wichita. MKC's continued investment in the district provides good jobs and new markets for the world-class agricultural products grown in Kansas.

The Agricultural Retailers Association's Retailer of the Year award is given to the agricultural retailer who goes above and beyond in environmental stewardship, community leadership, customer engagement and employee relations. MKC works tirelessly to ensure that it gives the highest level of service in all of

these categories. I want to congratulate the MKC team for all their hard work and wish them continued success.

CONGRATULATING THE NEWEST
CITIZENS OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. Fallon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate our newest United States citizens in North Texas. Today is a remarkable milestone in each one of their lives.

Since the founding of our Nation, people from all over the world have flocked to the shores of the United States. They have escaped conflicts, persecution, and violence, while others simply dreamed of a better life for themselves and their families, just like many of the men and women here today.

My fellow citizens are now part of our Nation's rich history after devoting much of their time and labor into learning what it means to be an American. In our great Nation, we are afforded the most important liberties and freedoms that are seldom found anywhere else. These unalienable rights protect all Americans from injustice.

The naturalization process was never meant to be simple or swift, and for good reason. By diligently completing each required task, they have now proven that they are determined to overcome the most difficult challenges and are ready to welcome new opportunities. It is my hope that they reflect upon the work and effort that led them to this very moment, and take pride in their new responsibilities as an American citizen.

I have requested a United States flag to be flown over our Nation's Capital in recognition of each of our Nation's newest citizens for their hard-earned achievements. I wish every one of them continued success and prosperity as they unlock the next chapter of their life as a citizen of the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING YURI
HRESHCHYSHYN'S LIFETIME OF
ADVOCACY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to recognize the hard work, commitment, and leadership of my good friend, Yuri Hreshchysyn. Born in 1959, Yuri has been an inspiring advocate and dedicated servant in the maintenance and growth of Buffalo. The Ukrainian-American community, City of Buffalo, and all of Western New York owe Yuri a debt of gratitude for his enduring vision of what our community should look like.

A committeeman with the Erie County Democratic Committee, he has worked closely with elected leaders on several community projects. Yuri worked as an advisor and volunteer with Buffalo Green Code and None Like You/We Care to right the wrongs of environmental injustices, plan educational outreach,

and design city green space. Whether it was cutting grass, trimming trees, or planting gardens, each project was a chance to make a tangible difference in the lives of his neighbors. As Executive Director Emeritus of the Central Terminal Restoration Corporation, Yuri was instrumental in the redevelopment of the terminal and surrounding area. He also offered indispensable leadership in the fight to clean up Buffalo's waterways. It is safe to say that the Buffalo River and Old First Ward would not look the same in the absence of his stewardship.

Yuri has also been steadfast in preserving Ukrainian customs and traditions in Western New York. He has formerly served as the President of the Ukrainian American Civic Center and as a board member of the Ukrainian American Welcome Foundation of WNY. Yuri has been the President of the Ukrainian Congress Committee (Buffalo Chapter) since 2019. In light of Russia's baseless invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, he has been helping displaced Ukrainians, collecting humanitarian aid for the front lines, and serving as my personal counsel for accurate information on the war's developments.

In the "City of Good Neighbors," we are blessed to have no shortage of caring residents; nevertheless, those looking for a model citizen should look no further than Yuri Hreshchysyn. Yuri embodies everything good about our community, and it is my honor to thank him for all that he has done for our community and our country.

COMMENDING MOBILE RETIRED
EDUCATORS FOR THEIR SERVICE
TO ALABAMA DISTRICT ONE

HON. JERRY L. CARL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. CARL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mobile Retired Educators and their service to Alabama's First Congressional District. Educating the young minds in our District is arguably one of the most important jobs there is.

Though their job may not be the easiest, it is vital in laying the groundwork for successful citizens. Being an educator is not just a career; it is being a mover, shaper, and inspiration to young people.

We are grateful for their sacrifices and time in their dedication to their careers for shaping the young minds of our future and the betterment of our community. We wish them the best in their hard-earned, well-deserved retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to cast my vote during Roll Call No. 691 on December 1, 2023, due to circumstances that necessitated my remaining in the District. As a consequence, I was unavoidably delayed and was not present in the House Chamber to

cast votes on this date. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On Roll Call No. 691, on Agreeing to the Resolution (H. Res. 878), "Providing for the expulsion of Representative George Santos from the United States House of Representatives", I would have voted YEA.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COM-
MENDATION FOR SENIOR AIR-
MAN ELISHIA BAXTER

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Senior Airman Elishia Lorraine Baxter of Little Elm, Texas, and award her a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Senior Airman Baxter honorably served in the United States Air Force during the Iraq War.

Born in a military household, Senior Airman Baxter had a longtime desire to defend her nation and joined the Air Force in 2003. She trained as an Air Transportation Apprentice, and was stationed at Tinker Air Force Base and Warner Robbins Air Force Base. In this role, she upheld safe and efficient flight protocols for passengers and cargo onboard Air Force aircraft. Senior Airman also served as a career advisor and fitness monitor for fellow servicemembers so that they were prepared for success.

Following her discharge from the Air Force in 2011, Senior Airman Baxter has committed to improving the lives and wellbeing of fellow veterans in our community. For her master's degree, she specialized in social work and assisting veteran grant programs through United Way. Through Senior Airman Baxter's work, over a million dollars was distributed to veterans in Denton County facing difficult financial circumstances. She even finds time to manage a mental health pilot program for veterans. I am confident that her continued veteran outreach efforts reassure the men and women that fought for our country that their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

I am honored to represent Senior Airman Baxter in Texas' 4th Congressional District. It is a pleasure to award her the Congressional Veteran Commendation for her service to our Nation and to the people of North Texas.

HONORING THE CAREER OF MS.
JOYCE ALLEG RUCCI

HON. SHARICE DAVIDS

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career of Ms. Joyce Allegrucci, a dedicated public servant for the state of Kansas. Over a long and lasting career, Ms. Allegrucci served as Assistant Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services for Children and Family Policy, where she fiercely advocated for policies to make Kansas a safer place where children and families can thrive.

She's also supported other public officials on the state level to ensure fair and equitable