

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF CHRISTOPHER BURNETT

HON. ANDY KIM

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and retirement of Christopher Burnett, Chief of the Mount Laurel Fire Department who selflessly served his community for over thirty years.

A lifelong Burlington County resident, Chief Burnett first started with the Mount Laurel Fire Department in 1992 when he joined as a volunteer firefighter in high school and later became an Emergency Medical Technician. In 1997, Chief Burnett began his tenure as a career firefighter. During this time he climbed through the ranks, always focused on protecting his community and neighbors. After 10 years as Deputy Chief, Chief Burnett was appointed as Chief of Department in 2021 and Chief of Emergency Medical Services in 2022.

During his tenure at the Mount Laurel Fire Department, Chief Burnett received several notable recognitions from various universities and from the State of New Jersey. These include the Certified Public Management designation from Rutgers University and the Class 6 Merit Award Citation for his bravery during an apartment fire in 1992 in which he rescued a trapped elderly female. Chief Burnett's dedication to his community knew no bounds, as throughout his tenure he served in various roles on the Burlington County Fire Chiefs Association, Eastern Division of the international Association of Fire Chiefs, and the New Jersey Fire and EMS Institute.

In addition to his tireless commitment to the Fire Department, Chief Burnett is a friendly face in our community who dedicates his time to the betterment of his neighbors. He is the creator of the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program in Mount Laurel, in addition to the 'Get Fired Up for Literacy' program in the Mount Laurel School District and Library. Through these programs, Chief Burnett connected and uplifted his community, dedicating every aspect of his life to public service.

A father, husband, and neighbor, Chief Christopher Burnett believes in servant leadership and organization above oneself. His work ethic and dedication to the Fire Department will leave a lasting legacy of service and leadership for decades to come. Outside of his family, he believes his service to the Fire Department and community is his greatest achievement.

Chief Burnett embodies the spirit of service that makes me proud to represent people like him in New Jersey's Third Congressional District. We are lucky to have him as a member of our community.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF MR. JOE FRICKS

HON. KAT CAMMACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Florida's Third Congressional District, I honor the life and legacy of Mr. Joseph Eugene Fricks, a resident of Marion County, Florida.

Joseph Eugene Fricks was born in St. Petersburg, Florida on July 7, 1939. Joe's father was a true aviation pioneer having served in both World Wars and working in commercial aviation. Following in his father's footsteps, Joe took his first flight in Marathon, Florida, piloting a DC-3 at the age of 16.

Joe's military service began as a tank driver in the Army National Guard of Florida where he was honorably discharged from the 211th Infantry on April 11, 1957. Unable to recover from the aviation bug, Joe pursued his Commercial Pilot's License and began flying 727 passenger jets for National Airlines—"Florida's own airline"—on September 17, 1969. His aviation career continued with Pan-Am Airways where he graduated to international routes piloting 747s around the world.

During his career, Joe had the true patriotic honor of serving on the flight-deck and transporting the Presidential Press Corps during the presidencies of Nixon, Ford, Reagan, Bush Sr., and Clinton. Joe also volunteered to transport equipment and supplies to the Middle East during the Iraq campaigns. He proudly transported countless American troops home from the Middle East during this period.

In the summer of 1975, he moved his wife and four children to Marion County, Florida and eventually retired in Ocala as a flight instructor for Fed-Ex on January 3, 2005.

Joseph never stopped giving back to his community and country. Whether it was fundraising by piloting airplane rides at local airshows, contributing his aviation skills to safely transport the Presidential Press Corps, or volunteering to clean the bathrooms every Sunday after Mass at Ocala's Blessed Trinity Church, he continued giving until the end.

Considered an expert and authority among his peers, a smiling face with his neighbors, a "Daddy" to his children, and loving "Pa" to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Joe will be missed dearly.

BRIANNY NAVA VAZQUEZ

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brianny Nava Vazquez for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Brianny has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Brianny, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Brianny's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Brianny Nava Vazquez on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF MAJOR AARON REEP

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Major Aaron Reep and his service to Virginia's First District and the Nation.

Aaron earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Northwestern—St. Paul. After graduating from Northwestern, he commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. While in the U.S. Marine Corps, he worked his way up from Student Officer to Infantry Platoon Commander to Company Commander, eventually earning the rank of Major.

A graduate of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School, Aaron has served in the II Marine Expeditionary Force and the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. Aaron was deployed in Afghanistan twice, where he conducted himself valiantly during the 2021 evacuation of American personnel from the Kabul International Airport.

Aaron joined my office as a Department of Defense Legislative Fellow in January 2023. As a Defense Fellow, he served our Nation both as a Marine and a public servant. He contributed enthusiastically to my House Armed Services Committee work, including my role as the Chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee. On my staff, he distinguished himself in his tireless work supporting our veterans.

I would like to thank Aaron for his contributions and dedicated service this year. He has been a key member of my defense team and staff, and I wish him all the best as he continues his journey here on Capitol Hill as a Marine Corps Legislative Liaison.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing Major Aaron Reep for his service to Virginia's First District and the Nation. May God bless Aaron and his family as he continues his career in public service and the U.S. Marine Corps.

RECOGNIZING JERRY L. FOWLES' 42 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jerry L. Fowles as he retires after 42 years of service.

Jerry Fowles has served the United States of America for the past 42 years. His story began as a student at Saks High School. Upon graduation, he made the decision to enlist in the United States Army.

Jerry is the youngest son born to John Fowles, Sr. and Lona Bell Fowles. Two days after his graduation, he boarded a bus to Texas and began his career as an Army soldier. After completing a four-year enlistment, he returned home to Anniston only to realize that his passion was the military, so he reenlisted. His love for the military encouraged him to continue re-enlisting until he had served a total of 21 years.

While in the military, Jerry furthered his education and attended City Colleges of Chicago

where he obtained an associate degree. After retirement, he returned to Anniston once again and began seeking other employment. He was employed at Federal Mogul Corporation in Jacksonville, Alabama, prior to applying for a position at General Dynamics. After working at General Dynamics for roughly a year, Jerry decided to apply for a position at the Anniston Army Depot. During his employment at the Depot, Jerry has worked in several different positions and after 21 years of service he has decided to turn in his "I.D. Badge" and retire. Throughout Jerry's career he has met many wonderful people and is thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the ANAD family.

In June 2002, Jerry married Melinda Mad-den, a psychology major who works in the social service field. They have one son, Travis J. Fowles, and two beautiful grandchildren Gabriel (6) and Summerlyn (4) Fowles.

Jerry and Melinda are both members of World Changers Church International. Jerry is also a member of a community group called Kingdom Men's Fellowship Ministry. This ministry consists of men from the community who spread the gospel of Jesus Christ while helping those in need. Some of Jerry's hobbies/interest are reading his Bible, spending time with his wife and watching Alabama Football. Roll Tide!

The past 42 years have truly taught some valuable lifelong lessons, yet Jerry leaves Bynum knowing his years of government service have ended. Retirement will be an opportunity for him to begin a new chapter in his life. In the book of Philippians 1:6, one of his favorite scriptures, speaks to being confident in knowing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day in which Jesus Christ returns. Jerry has now completed his time of government service and now will be able to enjoy retirement.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Jerry for his service to our country. Wishing him the best in retirement.

ANDRE GURULE

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Andre Gurule for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Andre has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Andre, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Andre's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Andre Gurule on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

HONORING BETSY JANE FLENNER

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Mrs. Betsy Jane Flenner for 16 years of dedicated service to our country.

As a Lead Congressional Correspondent and Security Manager in the U.S. Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, Betsy has helped answer thousands of questions from the American people. In the office, she is known for her willingness to take on any question and find an answer, no matter how easy or how complex.

Betsy is admired and respected by her colleagues—her work ethic and heart for service have made her an asset to her team and to the many Virginians who have benefitted from her help. She has built long-lasting relationships with staff in the halls of Congress, an example of her exceptional service and her willingness to go above and beyond her job description.

Throughout the last eight Congresses, Betsy has been a standout team member. Her commitment to providing excellent service has earned her the Superior Civilian Service Award—one of the highest honorary awards under the Department of the Navy Civilian Awards program. Her enthusiasm for providing our Veterans and servicemembers with the answers they need will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating and thanking Mrs. Betsy Jane Flenner and in wishing her the best in her retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, December 11, 2023, I was unable to be present for the recorded votes on Roll Call Nos. 707, 708, and 709. Had I been present, I would have voted: YES on Roll Call No. 707—H.R. 3224, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Extension Act, as amended; NO on Roll Call No. 708—H.R. 5378, Lower Costs, More Transparency Act, as amended; and YES on Roll Call No. 709—H.R. 6503, Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2023, Part II.

AMELIA GORDON

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Amelia Gordon for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Amelia has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Amelia, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them

for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Amelia's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Three Creeks K-8 School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Amelia Gordon on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

HONORING THE FIRST BLACK JUDGE IN VIRGINIA'S 24TH DISTRICT

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Eugene Butler.

Eugene Butler was recently appointed to be a judge in Virginia, for the 24th judicial district. He will be focusing on Juvenile and domestic relations.

As impressive as that is, he now is the first black judge to hold that position in that district.

Originally from Washington, D.C., where he attended Patrick Henry High School, he later graduated from Washington & Lee Law School. Judge Butler has been practicing law for 20 years and is the former president of the Lynchburg Bar Association. Judge Butler is the son of a Methodist minister, and the brother of D.C. resident Brian Butler.

I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Judge Butler and his family and I wish him continued success in his legal career.

HONORING MR. STEPHEN VIRAY OF FLORIDA, NEW YORK FOR HIS SUCCESS

HON. PATRICK RYAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Stephen Viray for winning this year's Congressional App Challenge.

The Congressional App Challenge encourages creativity for high school students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) related education fields. This nationwide contest allows these students to compete against their peers by creating and exhibiting their software applications.

While in school, Mr. Viray created an app called District Insights, dedicated to being a resource for anyone who wants to know more about their own congressional district.

The opportunity to explore, understand, and engage in local government allows users to get involved and stay up to date on legislation that directly impacts their community.

District Insights simplifies the process of identifying your congressional district. Its intuitive map and user interface makes it effortless for users to pinpoint their district, ensuring they stay informed about their representatives, and issues that directly impact their lives. District Insights provides a wealth of statistical information, giving users a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape their community.

This year's Congressional App Challenge was exceptionally competitive this year. Within