

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING BEAUMONT HIGH
SCHOOL CLASS OF 1973

HON. CORI BUSH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, St. Louis and I rise to celebrate the 50th reunion of the Beaumont High School Class of 1973. May this reunion weekend be filled with loving memories, reflection, and laughter.

The Class of 1973 has lived through many historic events from snowstorms to teacher strikes. Despite all of this, more than 480 students persisted on and are a part of its graduating class.

As the Beaumont Blue Jackets Alma Mater states:

“Beaumont High we pledge our love, let our chorus ring above. Beaumont’s warm and friendly walls, campus broad and ample halls. Pay we now the honor due to Beaumont’s Gold and Blue; The gold of youth, the blue truth and staunch loyalty. Straight toward the North Star’s guiding rays, Beaumont looks with steady gaze; Like a compass needle true, Points the course of all we do. On her guidance we rely. So march we in the van, to hold on high her winged staff of service to man.”

On behalf of Missouri’s First District, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Beaumont High School Class of 1973 on their 50th year of celebration.

HONORING RACHEL JONES,
DIRECTOR OF ANDREW’S HOPE

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rachel Jones of Bloomfield, Iowa, for her work as Director of Andrew’s Hope, a non-profit she started to provide suicide awareness and prevention education.

Tragically, on May 8, 2021, Rachel’s son Andrew died due to suicide at the age of 24. About 6 months later, motivated to help improve awareness and education on the topic of suicide prevention, Rachel created Andrew’s Hope as a tribute to her son. Among other outreaches, Andrew’s Hope speaks to high school students, runs an annual memorial softball tournament, and hosted a suicide awareness glow walk earlier this year. Rachel’s hope is, by telling her son’s story, it will help save others.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Rachel Jones, a woman inspired to be the change she wants to see in the world, for her invaluable work and commitment to suicide prevention. May we find inspiration in her efforts as we seek to curb the rise in suicides.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF KYLE
PRESTON OF TEXARKANA, TEXAS

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Mr. Kyle Preston of Texarkana, Texas, who passed away on November 27, 2023. Mr. Preston was a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

Mr. Preston was born on November 28, 1964, in Monticello, Arkansas to Carl and Sandy Preston. He served as a coach and Assistant Athletic Director at Texarkana ISD, and was highly regarded by his students for his generosity and kindness. Those who knew Mr. Preston would say that he never met a stranger. He had an uncanny ability to make you feel as if you had known each other for ages the second you were introduced. Furthermore, Mr. Preston’s efforts to train and serve as a role model for his students did not go unnoticed. For his work, the East Texas Coaches Association has established the Kyle Preston Award for Assistant Coaches to honor individuals who have made memorable contributions to school athletic programs.

Mr. Preston enjoyed spending time with his six grandchildren and attending sporting events with his family, who describe him as their hero and the best friend that anyone could have. When he had the opportunity, he would volunteer in local community shelters to lend a hand to those in need. Mr. Preston was a devoted man of faith who attended Church on the Rock in Texarkana. Without a doubt, his impact on our community will be felt for many years to come.

I have requested the United States flag to be flown over our Nation’s Capitol in recognition of Mr. Preston’s remarkable and uplifting life. He will be dearly missed by his friends, family, and all who knew him.

WHOLE MILK FOR HEALTHY KIDS
ACT OF 2023

HON. VAL T. HOYLE

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, last week, I voted in favor of H.R. 1147, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, which would allow schools the option of serving whole and 2% unflavored and flavored milk.

Under current federal regulations, schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) can only serve low-fat or fat-free milk. H.R. 1147 would amend current regulations to allow schools to offer a wider range of dairy milk options, helping to ensure that students have freedom of choice. It would also help reduce the likelihood of students throwing out milk and missing out on beneficial nutrients.

While I supported H.R. 1147, it was not perfect. I believe this legislation should have included options for children who cannot or choose not to drink dairy milk due to dietary, religious or personal reasons. Unfortunately, House Republican leadership did not allow for any amendments to be considered that would have extended freedom of choice for non-dairy beverage options.

That’s why I’m a cosponsor of H.R. 1619, the Addressing Digestive Distress in Stomachs of Our Youth (ADD SOY) Act, which would require schools to provide non-dairy beverage substitutes upon request of a student or parent/guardian and allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to reimburse schools for providing non-dairy options. This issue is especially important for students who experience lactose intolerance, which disproportionately affects communities of color.

Should the Senate take up H.R. 1147, I urge them to include the ADD SOY Act or similar provisions to allow for non-dairy options and broader freedom of choice for students. H.R. 1147 takes an important first step, but we must ensure that freedom of choice applies to all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PIERCE
“PETE” CONNAIR, JR.

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of former Connecticut State Senator Pierce F. Connair, Jr. He passed away on November 29, 2023, having lived a long, meaningful, and happy life of 97 years.

Born to Hazel and Pierce Connair, Sr. in 1926, Pierce Jr. attended parochial school at Vincentian Institute in Albany New York, and was admitted to the College of the Holy Cross. With America at war, Pierce entered military service in 1943, training with the naval aviation cadets. His service to the United States extended through both World War II and the Korean War, as a Navy officer.

While a pupil at the Vincentian Institute, Pierce would meet the love of his life, Irene, at 16 years old. Their courtship persisted, and he and Irene married after World War II in 1948, settling in Glen Falls, New York. During the Korean War, the Connairs transited among several naval bases, eventually returning stateside to settle in New England. By 1971, Pierce and Irene found their permanent home in East Lyme, Connecticut. Pierce managed Sears-Roebuck stores across New York and New England, bringing him to New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.

From an early age, Pierce was involved in numerous local organizations in Albany, New York such as the Knights of Columbus. He joined numerous committees, helping ensure successful fundraisers for his chapter. Community service is a throughline in Pierce’s life,

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

whether in New York or Connecticut, Pierce made certain to stay active in organizations that shape neighborhoods and towns.

Upon his permanent move to Connecticut, Pierce very quickly established himself as a lynchpin in the southeast Connecticut business community. By 1974, Pierce was appointed president of the Southeast Connecticut Chamber of Commerce—truly a meteoric rise given his just coming to the region in 1971. By 1981, his position in the chamber changed from President to Executive Director—an office he held until 1984. Pierce was not content serving his community in merely a business capacity. Some of his additional involvement includes acting as president of the New London Rotary, serving as a trustee of the Savings Bank of New England, and as vice president of the Connecticut Retail Merchants' Association. He was also heavily involved in the United Way of southeast Connecticut, sitting on its Board of Directors and being named Residential Chairman. He is remembered for the vigor he attacked his work with at the United Way, urging fellow community members to generously give to its drives.

By 1980, Pierce retired from managing Sears stores and focused his new-found time on realty and government. In 1984, Pierce was elected State Senator and served in the prestigious and powerful position of co-chair of the Appropriations Committee. After his tenure came to an end, Pierce remained active in his community. In 1993, he helped lead the response to the decline of the defense industry in Eastern Connecticut, championing retraining programs for those workers laid off by a shifting economy in the wake of the Cold War.

Mr. Speaker, I consider myself incredibly lucky to represent constituents as community oriented as Pierce. Pierce showed up in every aspect of his life—whether for his family or for his neighbors. Pierce served not for his own glory or fame, but because it was right to do so. Although his passing leaves a hole in Eastern Connecticut's community, we can take solace in the knowledge that his legacy of selfless volunteerism and care for his fellow citizens lives on in the thousands he touched. We mourn his passing with his surviving family—children Michael, Thomas, Stephen, and Patricia as well as their respective spouses and children. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our deepest admiration and appreciation for a life well lived.

RECOGNIZING GARY
BRYNJULFSON

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life and legacy of a remarkable man, Mr. Gary Brynjulfson.

Gary was born on February 25, 1947, in Black River Falls, WI to parents Leonard and Mae Brynjulfson. At just 20 years old in 1967, Gary courageously signed the dotted line to join the United States Army where he served for two years before he was honorably discharged in 1969. During his time in the Army, Gary earned several commendations such as the Purple Heart, Expert (81mm Mortar) Sharpshooter (Rifle) Vietnam Service Medal

with two Bronze Service Stars, and the National Defense Service Medal Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Following his time in the service, Gary met the love of his life, Ethelyn "Lynn" Jensen, and the two were married on May 27, 1978. As the years went by, Gary and Lynn welcomed two children, a daughter, Camille, and son, Scott. As Gary's family continued to expand, he and his wife enjoyed traveling to see his grandchildren: Tabitha, Evan, Harper, and Mabel, participate in various activities.

Gary was a family and community-focused man in all aspects of his life. After his time in the military, Gary became heavily involved in the community and was one of the top advocates for local veterans. A member of VFW Post 2778, Gary was a member of the honor guard, and became the President of Vets & Friends, an organization that serves free breakfast every Friday and free lunch on Saturdays for veterans throughout the community. I was honored to meet Gary at their breakfasts numerous times, and I am grateful for his leadership and commend him for his lifelong dedication to his country and community.

Gary's kindness and thoughtfulness will surely be missed by his friends, family, and the entire community. A husband, father, veteran, business leader, advocate, and friend—Gary touched many lives throughout Northeast Wisconsin. I commend Gary for his commitment and unwavering service to the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Northeast Wisconsin extend their sincere thanks to Mr. Gary Brynjulfson for his extraordinary service to this country and community. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and to all the lives he touched. I offer my sincere condolences to Gary's wife, Lynn, and their entire family during this time. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and to all the lives he touched.

RECOGNIZING JACKSONVILLE
STATE UNIVERSITY'S NEW ORLEANS
BOWL VICTORY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Jacksonville State University football team for winning their first bowl game in program history in their first season as an FBS team.

On December 16, 2023, The Jacksonville State University Gamecocks battled it out at the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl, beating the University of Louisiana 34 to 31 with a walk-off field goal in overtime to secure their win. The game was played at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Jacksonville State University Gamecocks finished their regular season 8–4. This was head coach Rich Rodriguez's second year with the program, the first bowl game victory in program history, and the team's first year playing at the FBS level.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Coach Rodriguez, the Jacksonville State University football team, students, faculty and all the fans. Go Gamecocks.

HONORING SONJA L. JOHNSON

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank and celebrate Mrs. Sonja L. Johnson for over 25 years of dedicated service to our country and its Veterans.

Sonja served as a part of the U.S. Army for five years. During that time, she served our country selflessly and with honor. Following her time in the Army, she joined the Marine Corps System Command as a Contract Specialist where she excelled and achieved Contracting Level 3 Career Field Certification with the Department of the Navy.

In February 2012, she joined the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a Contract Specialist at the Strategic Acquisition Center. In 2017, Sonja was promoted to Procurement Analyst because of her exemplary credentials, experience, and professionalism. During her tenure at the VA, Sonja has followed through on delivering Veterans, their widows, and their children with extraordinary service and support.

Sonja has been a compassionate public servant and supportive colleague. She has provided her teammates with training and developmental opportunities—proving to be an asset to all around her. Her work ethic and love for service extend past her job. In her free time, Sonja volunteers with her church and her sorority.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating and thanking Mrs. Sonja L. Johnson for her service on behalf of our country and our Veterans and in wishing her the best as she retires to spend time with her family and loved ones.

HONORING ASHLEY SKINNER

HON. ZACHARY NUNN

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Grand View Christian School teacher Ashley Skinner of Des Moines, Iowa, for her achievement in receiving an award for Excellence in Christian Education from the Herzog Foundation.

Born to a military family, Ashley grew up a resident of the world. She attended Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary where she graduated with a B.A. in Elementary Education and Bible in 2008. She has spent her career in Christian education and currently teaches at Grand View Christian School—the same school her mom taught at in the 1980s. As a 2023 recipient of the Herzog Christian Teacher of the Year Award, she was selected for demonstrating the highest levels of excellence and innovation in her classroom.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Ashley Skinner for her incredible work in being a phenomenal educator and mentor. Her achievement demonstrates the highest dedication to education and a selfless commitment to her students. I join Ms. Skinner's family, friends, and colleagues in congratulating her for receiving this award.