

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY  
OF PETE ALFARO

**HON. BRIAN BABIN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 2023*

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life of my friend and longtime community leader, Pedro Cuellar "Pete" Alfaro of Baytown, Texas, who passed away on December 11, 2023. Pete devoted his life to public service, honorably serving as mayor of Baytown, as a city council member, on the Lee College Board of Regents, and on numerous other community and non-profit boards. He was a leader, mentor, friend, and role model to countless in the region, and leaves behind a legacy that will continue to inspire new generations of public servants for years to come.

Pete was born August 10, 1940, to Felipe and Victoriana Alfaro. After serving in the United States Army as a basic electronics instructor at Fort Bliss for three years, Pete attended the University of Texas at Austin. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering in 1969 and was a lifetime member of the Texas Exes alum association. That same year, he began his career as an electrical engineer at Humble Oil and Refining, now ExxonMobil, where he would remain employed for the next 31 years.

After being elected to the city council in 1989 where he served two terms, Pete was voted in as the first Hispanic mayor of Baytown, a position he held for 11 years. His pivotal role in infrastructure development, particularly the completion of the Fred Hartman Bridge in partnership with then-Governor George W. Bush, epitomized his dedication to building a stronger Baytown.

However, his reach was not confined to the city hall, it extended to significant roles on boards such as the Lee College Board of Regents, the Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital Board of Trustees, and the Patient and Family Advisory Council. After facing the devastating loss of his daughter, Debi, Pete channeled his grief into a steadfast commitment to elevating healthcare standards. Chairing the Quality and Patient Safety Steering Committee at Houston Methodist Baytown for two decades, he worked tirelessly to ensure the surrounding community received and had access to top-notch healthcare. In recognition of his efforts, the Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital dedicated its new state-of-the-art education and training facility in honor of Pete and his wife, Lupe, in May of this year.

Throughout the years, Pete left a significant impact in the public and private sector. In fact, he was named the 2004 Baytown Sun newspaper's "Citizen of the Year" and the 2010 ExxonMobil's "Refiner of the Year" for his community service.

Pete was preceded in death by his beloved daughter, Debi Alfaro Yarborough. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Guadalupe "Lupe" Alfaro; daughters, Priscilla Alfaro and Sandra Rodriguez; son, Paul Alfaro; and grandchildren, Christopher, Marissa, Austin, Alexis, Mikaela, Emily, Nicholas, and Kelsey.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to honor the memory and legacy of Pete Alfaro. My heartfelt prayers are with his wife and loved ones during this challenging time. May Pete rest in

peace knowing his tenacious efforts for the betterment of Baytown, Lee College, and the surrounding community will forever be remembered.

HONORING THOMAS BRANIN

**HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 2023*

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Mr. Thomas Branin, Supervisor for the Three Chopt Magisterial District on the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, for his years of service to Henrico.

Mr. Branin, known to everyone in the community as Tommy, has represented thousands of community members—including me—over the last eight years with distinction—and with his beloved dog Newman, by his side. He has been a strong advocate for growing Henrico's economy, increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety, and bringing Henrico together.

After his election to the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, Tommy became the first Henrico Supervisor to place crosswalks throughout the entirety of his district. His focus on safety made it possible to install 14 miles of sidewalk in his communities—making it safer for pedestrians, runners, and bikers alike. His focus on community building made it possible to bring pickleball courts, bike tracks, and cricket games to his district. And his focus on the betterment of Henrico County drove his work to help facilitate the construction of two new high schools, replacing aging structures to provide Henrico students with a strong and healthy learning environment.

Tommy has proven to be a strong collaborator and leader. He has worked hard with regional partners to connect Henrico County and has encouraged partnerships at all levels to provide his constituents with better parks and trails to promote healthy, active lifestyles. Tommy has been a strong, passionate advocate for safety and his work to improve walkability throughout Henrico will continue to have a positive impact in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Thomas Branin, whom I am proud to call a friend—except on days when Tucker plays Freeman—for his service on behalf of the Three Chopt District and the entire Henrico County community and for his contributions to making Henrico a safer place for all.

RECOGNIZING PRINCIPAL DANA  
NALLY

**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 and celebrate Dana Nally, Principal of Bedford Elementary School, for being selected as the 2023 National Distinguished Principal in Iowa.

In her 16 years as Principal at Bedford Elementary, Principal Nally has touched the lives of countless children and faculty. She has advocated for student wellbeing and academic

growth, and worked to create a high-quality, student-first learning environment.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commending Principal Nally for her extraordinary leadership at Bedford Elementary School. Great leaders surround themselves with great staff, which in turn inspires greatness in their students. There is no doubt Principal Nally has been a force for good in the lives of countless young Iowans and the Bedford community.

HONORING VETERAN OF THE  
YEAR, MR. CHARLES H. TALLEY,  
JR.

**HON. JENNIFER L. MCCLELLAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 2023*

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I'm excited to announce the winner of the first annual Virginia's Fourth Congressional District Veteran of the Year.

Mr. Charles H. Talley, Jr. dedicated 34 years of his life to the United States Army and continues to serve the district with integrity.

Mr. Talley was in the Pentagon during the September 11th terrorist attacks that shook our Nation before he deployed to Afghanistan to fight against those same attackers.

He served his country with distinction and rose through the ranks before his retirement in 2018 as a Chief Warrant Officer Four.

Now, he uses his specialized skills and years of experience in the Army and as an American Culinary Federation Certified Executive Chef to serve as the Quality Assurance Manager for the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence at Fort Gregg-Adams.

In this capacity, he works to assess and improve the food for the entire U.S. Army in the battlefield environment.

He also continues to serve and give back to our community as the current president of the Nu Omicron Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, where he organizes service events in Petersburg and the surrounding areas.

He devotes his time to lecture Warrant Officers every year and young aspiring professionals at Virginia State University.

As we celebrate Veterans Day this weekend, I am proud to name Chief Warrant Officer Four Charles H. Talley, Jr. as Virginia's Fourth Congressional District Veteran of the year.

HONORING WILLIE JAMES THOMAS,  
SR. ON HIS 103RD BIRTHDAY

**HON. CORI BUSH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 2023*

Ms. BUSH. Mr. Speaker, St. Louis and I rise to wish a happy 103rd birthday to Willie James Thomas, Sr. On behalf of Missouri's First District, we are thankful for everything he is and everything he has done to provide for his family, neighbors, coworkers, and friends.

103 is a remarkable milestone and worthy of great celebration. Mr. Thomas has seen and lived through segments of history that most of us can only rely on through books and education, and from being in close community

with elders like him. His trials, triumphs, and everything in between are a beautiful testament to a remarkable and full life.

Throughout his life, Mr. Thomas has had many blessings. He is the beloved father of three, a grandfather of 10, a great-grandfather of 21, and great-great-great-grandfather of six. As a World War II Army Veteran serving in England, France, and Germany, we thank him for his dedication to his family and service to our country.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to celebrate his life because it is an inspiration to so many of us in St. Louis. I wish Mr. Thomas peace and continued joy tending to the best yard in University City throughout his 103rd year.

Happy birthday and bountiful blessings to Mr. Willie James Thomas, Sr.

#### RECOGNIZING MS. CHERYL LATZA

##### HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 2023*

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding career and service of retiring Houdini Elementary School crossing guard, Ms. Cheryl Latza.

For 44 years, Cheryl has dedicated her time and efforts to protecting children throughout the Appleton School District at Houdini Elementary School. Given Cheryl's kindness and sincere care, she became more than just a crossing guard for many students; she also became a friend.

Cheryl was the first hello in the morning and the last goodbye to students on their way home, something that families throughout the Appleton area are surely thankful for. Cheryl exhibits the qualities of a true community leader, and I thank her for her continued service. Her actions will be remembered for many years to come throughout the Appleton community.

Cheryl has dedicated decades of unwavering service to the Appleton community, and I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing her. Goodbyes can be difficult, but I wish Cheryl the best in her well-deserved retirement.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF JOYCE GRAYSON

##### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 19, 2023*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life and career of nurse Joyce Grayson of Brooklyn, Connecticut. Joyce was killed while serving in her capacity

as a visiting nurse, creating a chasm in the life of all who knew her that will never be filled. Despite the tragedy of her death, Joyce's life is remembered for her warmth and unbridled vitality—traits that served her well in her nearly 40 years of distinguished health service across Connecticut. The shocking news of her loss has been felt across particularly in Connecticut and by also health professionals across the nation.

Growing up on a Sterling, Connecticut dairy farm with her 13 siblings and parents Robert and Edna Jordan, Joyce is a true daughter of eastern Connecticut. From an early age, Joyce recognized her life's calling lay in the care of her fellows. Immediately after graduating from Killingly High School, Joyce enrolled in Windham Tech's nursing school where she became a Licensed Practical Nurse, beginning the journey which would define the rest of her life.

Joyce started her professional career in service to the State of Connecticut, working for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS). Joyce's time was well spent at DHMAS given her specialty was in behavioral health. During her tenure with DHMAS, she worked at a variety of institutions—from the old Norwich State Hospital to the Southeastern Mental Health Authority. After working for the State for over a quarter century, Joyce continued her service-oriented work by becoming a visiting nurse for the Elara Caring company.

Ever committed to providing for others, Joyce also served Connecticut's next generations by acting as a foster parent. Joyce's parenthood, whether for her six biological children or those she fostered, was defined by her infectious love for each child. In 2017, Joyce was recognized for her consummate care and named Foster Parent of the year alongside her husband, Ronald, by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

Mr. Speaker, the profound loss experienced by the Grayson family in the wake of Joyce's death is unimaginable. Despite the overwhelming tragedy of this situation however, our state and Nation can take solace in the knowledge that the legacy Joyce has left behind will continue to imbue the world with her kindness and care. And hopefully the circumstances of her passing will spur meaningful change in our nations workplace rules to protect "the caring professions" that she so nobly personified. Joyce touched thousands of people throughout her life, whether as a nurse working for Connecticut or Elara Caring, or in her capacity as a foster mother. Her works have inspired two of her children to follow in her footsteps and serve in healthcare. We mourn with Joyce's family, including her husband Ronald; children Elliot, Kyle, Kaitlyn, Evan, Audrey, Shawn, and their spouses; her four grandchildren; and her eleven siblings. To these ends, I ask my colleagues to join me in etching the life and legacy of Joyce Grayson further into stone, and enact legislation to bet-

ter protect health care providers like Joyce from the violence they all too often face.

#### RECOGNIZING DR. WILLIAM (BILL) A. SNOW ON 40 YEARS AT EDGEWOOD CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH

##### 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 Dr. William (Bill) A. Snow on his 40th anniversary at Edgewood Congregational Methodist Church in Anniston, Alabama.

Dr. Snow and his wife, Myra, came to Edgewood Congregational Methodist Church in January of 1984.

Under his leadership, the church grew larger and outgrew the building on Railroad Street in Blue Mountain. In 1995, the church moved to its current location on Brighton Avenue in Anniston. Since moving to its current location, the church has had a major sanctuary and fellowship hall renovation. Through the years, two building projects have been completed. The church has grown over the past 40 years from 50 to 500 members. Under Pastor Snow's ministry, several members have been called into the ministry.

Through Pastor Snow's leadership, in June of 2002, Edgewood Church built the first permanent structure on Buvuma Island located in Lake Victoria in Uganda, Africa. The structure was named The Edgewood African Church. It serves as a church, a school, and a medical clinic.

During COVID-19, the church found new avenues to spread the Word through the streaming of services and social media. Financial support increased so much during this difficult time that even to this day giving remains strong and no formal offering is taken on Sunday mornings.

Edgewood Church is the loving and caring church it is today because of the vision and leadership of Pastor Snow and his wife. Inspired by its leadership to share the love of Jesus with those in need, Edgewood is involved in outreach ministries that make a difference in lives of those in the community.

Pastor Snow will never know on this side of eternity the number of people and the families whose lives have been enriched through his ministry. Those who have been the recipient of Pastor Snow's personal ministry through the loss of a loved one can especially testify to the spiritual hope and steadfast support he has given.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Pastor Snow on this incredible milestone and for spreading God's Word across our area.