

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE OF OLIVER
LEAVITT

HON. MARY SATTLER PELTOLA

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mrs. PELTOLA. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart I rise today to pay tribute to a great Alaskan and dedicated leader of the Artic Slope Regional Corporation, Dr. Oliver Leavitt. Sadly, Oliver passed away earlier this year on January 9, 2023, at the age of 79 in his lifetime hometown, Utqiagvik. I offer my deepest condolences to his family and loved ones, as well as the entire Artic Slope community.

Dr. Leavitt was a long-time Iñupiat public servant who held innumerable leadership positions on the North Slope and across Alaska. In 1971 he played a key role in the Alaska Native lands claims fight and was a significant contributor to the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). His wisdom and guidance in establishing the Alaska Native corporation system was monumental and will be recognized for generations to come.

Dr. Oliver Leavitt was elected as the first president of the North Slope Borough Assembly in 1972, a position he held for four years, followed by more than 20 years of service in the Assembly. He also served on the boards of the Arctic Slope Native Association and the Alaska Federation of Natives. As Vice President of Lands and Vice President of Government Affairs for the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, he effectively messaged Tribal, economic, and cultural priorities in Washington, D.C. and Juneau. His presence will be forever remembered by policymakers who interacted with him.

While working in Washington, D.C., he was pivotal in passing numerous amendments to ANCSA, improving the law for future generations of Alaska Natives. He also contributed to legislation that authorized development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and allowed for increased economic opportunity for Native corporations across Alaska.

Throughout Dr. Leavitt's lifetime, each success was achieved with the support and love of his family and his community. Oliver's legacy will live on through the community and the continued work they do to advance Alaskan priorities. He will forever be survived in the North Slope Borough and throughout all of Alaska.

Oliver dedicated his life to advancing Alaskan priorities and improving the quality of life for Alaska Native communities. I honor his legacy and mourn his loss alongside his family and community.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE
CHARLESTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S
OFFICE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished South Carolina organization for its unwavering commitment to our reserve service members. The Charleston County Sheriffs Office was recently awarded the highest honor given by the United States government to employers who show exemplary support for their National Guard and Reserve employees. Their contributions to these service members deserve our respect and recognition.

The Department of Defense established the Employer Support Freedom Award in 1996. The award honors private and public sector employers that demonstrate a strong commitment to military service through their continued support of enlisted employees. In August of 2022, the Department of Defense announced that the Charleston County Sheriffs Office was one of fifteen recipients of the 2022 Employer Support Freedom Award. Out of over 2,700 nominations, it was one of just four law enforcement agencies across the country to receive this prestigious national award.

The Charleston County Sheriffs office was selected because of its long-standing commitment to their Guard and Reserve members and families. The agency has implemented a Military Support Liaison program to effectively attend to members' needs; provide generous paid leave and retirements benefits; engender a community of support for the families of members on active duty; and privately and publicly recognize members' patriotic service to our state and Nation. The Charleston County Sheriffs Office is proud to employ more than a dozen members of the South Carolina National Guard and Reserve, and I am pleased they are receiving this well-deserved recognition.

South Carolina's Guardsmen and Reservists are unmatched in their service to our state and Nation. These honorable men and women sacrifice time away from their families and civilian careers to prepare for duty, and it is their courage and leadership during crises that ensures our communities remain prosperous and secure. The support provided by civilian employers to these service members is essential to the strength, readiness, and diversity of our Reserve forces.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in celebrating the outstanding support of our National Guard and Reserve employees by the Charleston County Sheriffs Office. Their actions ought to serve as an example to other organizations dedicated to the wellbeing of service members, their families, and the preparedness of our military. Our great state and Nation are safer as a result of Charleston County Sheriff's Office's commitment to these service members.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
OF STATE SENATOR STEVE
CASSANO

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to one of Connecticut's First District's foremost public servants, State Senator Steve Cassano.

At the beginning of this year, Senator Cassano retired after a prolific four-decade career—serving as Mayor of Manchester for 14 years and in the Connecticut State Senate for more than a decade.

He was a fierce advocate for regional cooperation—helming the influential Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and the Capitol Region Council of Governments at various times.

Steve understood that our communities are stronger when we work together, and that our region needs a forward-looking plan for the future that serves all residents.

I had the pleasure of working closely with Senator Cassano in each of his roles over the years.

As Mayor, Steve led the Town of Manchester as it transitioned from a mill town to a local hub for business and a retail destination of the Capital Region.

In the State Senate, he led efforts for Connecticut to recover from Hurricane Sandy, the costliest hurricane to ever hit New England.

He capped off a storied career in government with what Steve called his proudest accomplishment—passing historic legislation to ensure adopted children could access their birth records.

I extend my congratulations to Steve Cassano on a career that served our state and region for the better and I commend and thank him for his service.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY
MONTH AND HARRY HOOSIER

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Black History Month with a tribute to an amazing Black man named Harry Hoosier.

If you're from Indiana, you've likely faced the age-old question:

"So, what exactly is a Hoosier?"

Of course, we've heard theories. Richmond resident John Finley's poem "The Hoosier's Nest"—originally spelled "Hoosher"—is often attributed as the first mention of this distinctly Indiana term. The word also appears in the "Carrier's Address" of the Indiana Democrat on January 3, 1832. Yet another theory is that pioneer settlers would respond, "Who's yere?" to a knock on the door.

• 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.

But one of the most interesting theories is one you may not have heard: the story of Harry Hoosier.

Harry Hoosier, sometimes spelled Harry Hosier, was described by Booker T. Washington as “the first Black American Methodist preacher in the United States.” Born enslaved around 1750, Harry Hoosier was sold to a plantation near Baltimore, where he became a talented religious orator who traveled throughout the Appalachian frontier, according to Fisk University Professor William D. Pierson.

Harry Hoosier’s story is one of resilience and success. Despite being illiterate, Mr. Hoosier’s message was heard far and wide, and he became one of the best-known and greatest preachers of his time. According to a recent bill in the Indiana Statehouse, “many of Harry Hoosier’s followers brought their Methodist beliefs and Hoosier nickname to Indiana in the decades before and after Indiana was granted statehood in 1816.”

With his great influence, it is believed that Mr. Hoosier’s followers became known as Hoosiers, followers who were also part of a growing number of Methodists beginning to question the practice of slavery. With a Black leader as an example, these 18th Century “Hoosiers” may have honed the principles we understand as “Hoosier Hospitality” today—the belief in kindness, equality, and respect.

Until recently, I had never heard the story of Harry Hoosier, despite attending school in Indiana and surrounded by strong, Black leaders and family members throughout my lifetime. But Harry Hoosier confirms what we already knew: Black history has always been American history, and Black history has always been Hoosier history. From oral traditions passed down from generation to generation, to the legacy of legends like Madam C.J. Walker, Mari Evans, Major Taylor, Wes Montgomery, the Jackson 5 and Babyface, Black Hoosiers have always been part of our state’s story.

Bringing this story into the light gives us a better understanding of the vast, diverse history of our great state. And during Black History Month, there is no better time to learn our history and to celebrate it.

While there are many partisan arguments surrounding education—including recent political stunts falsely claiming that Black studies has no educational value—Harry Hoosier’s story is slowly making its way into our modern consciousness in a bipartisan way. In 2016, the Indiana Bicentennial Commission endorsed the “Harry Hoosier Project,” an effort to share the story of the man who lives on in our conversations every day. This year, Indiana State Representative J.D. Prescott, a Republican, introduced House Bill 1143 recognizing Harry Hoosier as our state’s namesake. Unfortunately, this bill did not make it to the floor for a vote—but I hope Harry Hoosier’s story inspires others to begin to unwrap more forgotten or neglected stories.

History—the way we tell it, the way we analyze it, and the ways we pass it on to future generations—is always evolving. Our stories have always existed. But these stories need to be shared with everyone, and they need to be recognized as a vital part of American history too.

Harry Hoosier lived centuries ago. We can’t speak to him or even know as many details about his life as we may want to. But his existence, the stories we have of him, are what define our past and shape our future.

Black history is about joy. It’s about survival, resilience, and it’s about success. Above all, it needs to be shared.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BOB VOSE

HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Robert “Bob” W. Vose, of Springfield, Illinois, who passed away on Monday, January 20, 2023. He was 94 years old.

The son of John and Hedwig Vose, Bob was born on January 29, 1929. He was raised in Springfield alongside his five brothers and six sisters, where he attended Sacred Heart Grade School and Lanphier High School until he chose to serve our country in the United States Army.

Bob was a proud and active citizen, humbly serving his country and community. Bob would marry Virginia in 1953 and raise his six children in the city he loved. He would work for the Illinois Ice Company before becoming a City Water Light and Power meter reader and, eventually, a stationary engineer for the State of Illinois. He was a proud member of IBEW union, organizing with Local 193 for 65 years.

Bob would become the first city alderman elected to represent Ward 5 and continued to be an advocate for his ward and its residents long after his term of service expired. He was a very generous man, donating his time and talents to a great many local causes throughout his entire life. He loved playing the role of Santa Claus at the city recreation department and was a referee and umpire of high school sports for several years. He sponsored the annual Goodwill client Halloween and Christmas parties for 34 years. He was a member of the Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation and was very active in fundraising for the cemetery and responsible for Monument Avenue Beautification improvements.

Bob’s statewide claim to fame were his corndogs. Based on his grandmother’s recipe that he safeguarded, “The Korndog King” would start selling his famous Vose Corn Dogs at the Illinois State Fair in 1967 with his brothers. Eventually, Bob and Virginia would continue Vose Fine Food on the fairgrounds for 50 years and become a fourth-generation family business. The Vose Family Corn Dog stand is a staple of the fair and continues to be an annual tradition.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents; wife Virginia; four brothers; and six sisters. He is survived by his 6 children, Robert Vose, Jr., Virginia (Mike) Geiger, Ronald (Marybeth) Vose, Kenneth (Roxann) Vose, Debra Vose and Sandra (Robert) Orr; 14 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren; last brother, Harold (Jean) Vose; and several nieces and nephews.

Robert was an icon of Springfield; one not built from a desire for fame, but one established from his years of service and dedication to the betterment of his community. His absence will leave a large hole within Springfield, and he will be missed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast my vote on February 27, 2023 for Roll Call Vote 120 and Roll Call Vote 121. Had I been present, my vote would have been the following: Yea on Roll Call Vote 120, and Yea on Roll Call Vote 121.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF PAUL WOODS

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible life and service of Paul Woods as he celebrated his 100th birthday on February 20, 2023. Along with defying the average lifespan and despite segregation, Paul Woods fought for our democracy in the Pacific Theater of World War II. As we celebrate Black History Month, I think there’s no better example of American courage than Buffalo’s own Paul Woods.

Paul Woods was born in Alabama on February 20, 1923 in an era of racial oppression and segregation. When his father died, he and siblings were split at the gravesite among relatives. Paul Woods promised that he would raise his brother Sherman, and for the rest of his life “Daddy” has been taking care of people.

Paul Woods joined the segregated U.S. Army in 1941 when he was just 17 years old. He often says that “A bullet knows no race, rank, or status. We were all brothers on the battlefield.” The bravery of Black units overseas belied their second-class status at home and helped lead to the abolition of racial segregation in the military in 1948 as well as the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 2012, Paul and 30 other World War II vets were flown to the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. Five years later, Wish of a Lifetime sponsored a trip to Australia where he visited the exact location of his service during World War II and was thanked by the U.S. Consul General. Today he is the World War II Coordinator for the Jesse Clipper American Legion Post 430.

After helping to protect the Philippines, Paul Woods moved to the Buffalo region where he worked 16-hour days at Bethlehem Steel to feed his growing family. From Alabama to Australia, teenage recruit to war hero, and segregated soldier to seeing the first Black president, Paul Woods’ life has spanned continents, a world war, and the fight for racial equality. The father of 15 will turn 100 on February 20, 2023, having seen multiple children and grandchildren serve in the same military his bravery helped to desegregate.

Mr. Speaker, I’m thankful for the chance to honor Paul Woods, a longtime Western New York resident who helped free the Philippines despite enduring injustice at home. A proud member of Prince of Peace Church of God in Christ in Buffalo and husband to the late Mary