

and by March 1942 applied for training at Pratt and Whitney, enlisting as one of the iconic, "Rosie the Riveters."

Beginning at age 19, Sophie picked up 6 shifts a week as a drill press operator and then turret lathe through to the end of the war. Equipped with the symbolism of the all-too-known uniform—the blue overalls, head turban, and her own toolbox—Sophie was one of the Homefront heroes our nation relied upon during the war. Many of us in this chamber know that Allied Forces won the war due to the United States' ability to outproduce the Axis Powers. That is in thanks to citizens like Sophie.

The importance of Sophie's service at Pratt and Whitney cannot be overstated. That is why a part of her story is already archived in the World War II Home Front National Park Museum. However, we also ought to recognize Sophie's diligence in her profession, which instilled even further within her a value for hard work and an ability to address challenging situations. By 1946, the year following the conclusion of the war, Sophie returned to Pratt's engineering office to fill out those values. She, like many after the war, also began to settle into a new post-war life and met her would-be-husband, Mitchell L. Pabis, who also served overseas in Germany. They married in 1948. It was only when they began expecting their children that Sophie took time off from Pratt & Whitney. Together, they raised their two sons, Mitchell and Richard, and remained happily married until Mitchell Senior's unfortunate passing in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to bring attention to Sophie's immense community presence throughout her life. For example, she has volunteered at Saint Adelbert's School library and served as a Eucharistic Minister at Saint Adelbert's Church, worked with the Little Sisters of the Poor, and has been a member of the American Legion John Maciolek Unit 154 Auxiliary for 75 years.

On March 13, 2023, Sophie will celebrate her 100th birthday. Sophie truly does belong to the Greatest Generation, and we can all take from her example. I am beyond honored to represent constituents of such quality. To that end, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating her incredible, continuing life by recognizing this milestone of hers.

RECOGNIZING TAMPA BAY'S  
LOCAL TRAILBLAZER,  
BRIDGETTE HELLER, IN HONOR  
OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

### HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 7, 2023*

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate a change agent and one of Tampa Bay's most accomplished businesswomen, Ms. Bridgette Heller. Ms. Heller was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Fla. She attended segregated schools through elementary school, but credits success during her formative years to being raised by a village of love that had very high standards for her. She achieved a higher education at Northwestern University, earning a bachelor's degree, then master's from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management. Ms.

Heller continues to contribute to her alma mater serving on the University's Board of Trustees and mentoring the next generation of business leaders.

After graduating from Northwestern University, Ms. Heller spent more than 35 years serving in leadership positions in numerous Fortune 100 companies and private equity-owned enterprises, such as Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Danone and Kraft Foods, where she worked for more than 18 years. While serving as executive vice president of Merck and president of its consumer care division, she led an organization of approximately 2,400 employees and helped the company expand across the globe. In honor of all her many accomplishments in the business world, Ms. Heller was named one of The 50 Most Powerful Black Women in Business by Black Enterprise Magazine, a Women to Watch by Advertising Age, and Healthcare Businesswomen's Association Women of the Year. She also founded her own consulting firm and has served as a corporate director for numerous companies.

Ms. Heller is an advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion, and has traveled the world to reinforce infant and maternal health, inclusive C-suite for women, and sustainable communities. She is a co-founder and CEO of the Shirley Proctor Puller Foundation (SPPF), named in honor of her mother. Under her leadership, the SPPF established the MASTR kids program, initially focused on helping to minimize the summer learning loss students experience in between terms. The program achieved remarkable results—80 percent of the students enrolled avoided the summer slide, and three quarters experienced gains in their math and reading proficiencies.

Ms. Heller also continues to give back to her community by helping the youth of south St. Petersburg bridge the achievement and literacy gaps. Her work has allowed countless students to advance their education in STEM fields and improve both their math and reading aptitude. She has worked tirelessly to achieve her long-term goal of improving the educational experience and outcomes—raising high school and college graduation rates, which will lead to better economic opportunities, and a more prosperous St. Petersburg.

Ms. Heller serves on the board of The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, working to provide equity and prosperity to her community, treating not just the symptoms of inequality, but creating a community built to benefit all. By providing both project funding and training sessions, she gives those in her community the tools to improve their lives and fuel innovation.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am honored to recognize the outstanding accomplishments, leadership and service of Ms. Bridgette Heller, who stands as a shining example of the tremendous impact of hard work, nurturing others and service to the community to encourage others to reach their highest potential.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF  
LAUREN VERDICH

### HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 7, 2023*

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of LGBTQ activist, community advocate, and friend Lauren Verdich.

During the mid-1980s, Lauren became part of a group of volunteers at the AIDS Memorial Quilt Display at Navy Pier who came together to provide hot meals to homebound Chicagoans with HIV/AIDS. She helped to found Open Hand, an organization which served meals to people impacted by HIV/AIDS, and which still lives on today as part of Heartland Health Alliance.

She pursued her passion for cooking by starting Lauren's Catering in 1986, donating tens of thousands of dollars' worth of goods and services to nonprofits over the years. She was a founding member of the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1995. To honor all of her achievements, Verdich was inducted into Chicago's LGBT Hall of Fame in 2015.

I was honored to have her join my LGBT Advisory Committee and help educate me on the needs of the LGBT community in my district. She was a strong force, a fearless advocate and a friend who will be missed.

She is survived by her spouse Gail Morse; son Jordan Wolski and their son Zachery Wolski; daughter Dana Bennett; sisters Roberta Heinrich, Andrea Reich and Linda Mankoff; brother Steven Isaacson; loving nieces and nephews; countless friends and those whose lives she touched.

HONORING DR. NORA GOUGH-  
DAVIS

### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 7, 2023*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and self-motivated leader, Dr. Nora Gough-Davis. Dr. Nora Gough-Davis has had a fascination for the medical field since she was young, watching her dad, the late Dr. Walter C. Gough, tirelessly serve the rural MS Delta.

Dr. Gough-Davis is a native of Mound Bayou, MS. She is also the daughter of Mrs. May Bailey Gough. She received a B.S. in Biology and Chemistry from Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) in 1999, graduating as Valedictorian of her class. During her academic years at MVSU, Dr. Gough-Davis was a Presidential Scholar for all four academic years, a member of the Mississippi Alliance for Minority Participation (MAMP), Beta Kappa Chi Honor Society, the Women's Basketball Team, and the Eta Alpha Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Upon graduating from MVSU, Dr. Gough-Davis began a career as a science and pre-algebra teacher, girls' basketball assistant coach and girls' softball head coach for the North Bolivar School District. In 2003, the girls' basketball team achieved their first Girls' State 2A Basketball Championship.

In 2002, Dr. Gough-Davis earned a MS in Natural Science from Delta State University (DSU) in Cleveland, MS. In 2005, Dr. Gough-Davis received a BSN and in 2009, she received a MS in Nursing from DSU. In 2012, she received a MBA with a focus in Health Care Management from the University of Phoenix. In 2014, she received a Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree from DSU.

In June 2009, Dr. Gough-Davis began her career as a Family Nurse Practitioner at North Delta Medicine Clinic in Clarksdale, MS. In August 2012, Dr. Gough-Davis opened her own family practice clinic, Shaw Family Medical, LLC in Shaw, MS. In August 2016, she re-opened her mother and late father's clinic, Gough's Family Medical Clinic in Drew, MS. She has served as a clinical preceptor for at least 26 nurse practitioner students from various universities. Several of the nurse practitioner students have progressed to opening their own clinics in the MS Delta.

In August 2020, Dr. Gough-Davis began her career as an Assistant Professor of Nursing at the Robert E. Smith School of Nursing at Delta State University. In August 2021, she was assigned an additional role as the Undergraduate Program Coordinator.

Dr. Gough-Davis's favorite quote is "If I can help somebody as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vane."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Nora Gough-Davis for her dedication, leadership and advocacy in healthcare. Her selfless service to her community, the Rural MS Delta Region, and the State of Mississippi are commended.

RECOGNIZING TAMPA BAY'S  
LOCAL TRAILBLAZER, DR. JOHN  
SMITH, JR., IN HONOR OF BLACK  
HISTORY MONTH

**HON. KATHY CASTOR**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 7, 2023*

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month with immense gratitude for the life of service of veteran and retired educator, Dr. John L. Smith, Jr. Because of Dr. Smith's long-standing commitment and dedication to education and leadership, higher learning institutions throughout the United States are advancing diversity and inclusion at the highest levels. He charted a course through music, the arts and education that serves as an inspiration for future generations.

Dr. Smith was born in Bastrop, LA. on Sept. 14, 1938. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and was honorably discharged after four years of service. Dr. Smith earned his bachelor's degree in music education from Lincoln University and then his master's degree in music education from Indiana University. Dr. Smith also went on to earn his doctorate from the University of Missouri-Kansas City with postgraduate study at Harvard University. Dr. Smith is married to Dr. Juel Shannon Smith and they share seven children, nine grandchildren and five great grandchildren together.

Dr. Smith's memoir titled *Mentors Matter: One Black Man's Journey to Success* highlights the role many of his mentors played in nurturing and inspiring his interest in classical

music and the sousaphone. His life's path was so outside the norm, it is inspiring to learn how each of his mentors, Black and white, kept him on track until he reached goals that few other Black men of his time had achieved.

Dr. Smith is a nationally recognized and accomplished musician. For more than 60 years, he has dedicated his time to playing the tuba. In 1962, he was named the first African American principal tubist for a professional American symphony orchestra. Dr. Smith was the first African American to receive a full-time appointment with the Oklahoma City Symphony. In 1966, Dr. Smith was appointed as Chairman of the Music Department at Langston University and modified the curriculum to be more African American centered. Also, during his tenure there, he produced a summer Black Arts Festival.

Dr. Smith's talent and commitment to students did not go unrecognized. In 1972, he was appointed as the first Tuba professor at the University of South Florida. His work to create an inclusive environment for Black students was tremendous and includes serving as founder and president of the Committee on Black Affairs, increasing Black faculty and administrators, and creating a Black student support group. Dr. Smith's leadership in these roles led to the establishment of the Institute on Black Life and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. campus plaza.

In 1988, Dr. Smith advanced to the position of Dean of USF's College of Fine Arts, becoming USF's first Black academic dean. From 1988 through 1998, Dr. Smith raised \$120 million for three endowed Chairs, including an African Art Chair; increased student and faculty diversity; held weekly lunch and counseling sessions for minority students; and endowed scholarships and programs for students. Also, while serving as Dean, Dr. Smith was the first African American to be elected president of the international Council of Fine Arts Deans and he served as chairman of the Florida Higher Education Arts Network.

In 1999, he became the 12th president of Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn., a top-tier historically Black liberal arts institution. During his tenure as president, Fisk University advanced from 11th to eighth rank in the U.S. News and World Report and the Princeton Review, garnering the university greater national visibility. While in Nashville, Dr. Smith was appointed by the Mayor to the Task Force on Affordable Housing and Community Access Television Committee while also serving in the NAACP.

Dr. Smith is the recipient of many honorable civic, social, and educational honors such as the Tampa/Hillsborough County Human Rights Award and Outstanding Young Men of America. Dr. Smith's other accomplishments include expansion of international exchange and study abroad programs at USF as well as arts outreach programs to the University Area Community, Boys and Girls Clubs and West Tampa Elementary. Dr. Smith is also a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am proud to recognize Dr. John L. Smith, Jr., for his lifetime commitment to servant leadership, creative spirit, diversity and inclusion in education, and uplifting our entire community.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF  
MR. JOHN DUFFY FROM THE  
ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**HON. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 7, 2023*

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to honor Mr. John Duffy upon his retirement from the Elgin Community College Board of Trustees. Mr. Duffy's distinguished service of over 48 years with the Board makes him the longest serving trustee in the history of Community College District 509.

In 1965, Mr. Duffy began his career as an English and Latin teacher at Larkin High School in Elgin, Illinois. It was only ten years into his role as an educator that his work extended into elected office and his position on the Elgin Community College Board of Trustees began. Throughout his time on the board, he was elected to chair the group seven times—a powerful testament to his colleagues' belief that Mr. Duffy embodies the values that the college seeks to instill in its students. Mr. Duffy has also used his voice to serve community colleges nationally, including by serving on the Boards of Directors for the Association of Community College Trustees and the American Association of Community Colleges.

Mr. Duffy's outstanding leadership earned him honors including the Central Region Trustee Leadership Award and the Illinois Community College Trustee Association's Trustee of the Year Award. Across the academic community and beyond, Mr. Duffy is highly regarded for his dedicated advocacy for all students.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. Duffy's five decades of public service on behalf of students in Elgin and across the Nation, and I congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement.

HONORING FORMER CONGRESS-  
MAN EDWARD FORD WEBER

**HON. MARCY KAPTUR**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 7, 2023*

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following obituary honoring the former Congressman, Edward Ford Weber of Ohio.

**EDWARD WEBER OBITUARY**

Edward F. Weber, a Toledo area attorney for nearly 50 years and a one-term Republican congressman, who in 1980 swept a long-time incumbent out of office, died Monday in Hospice of Northwest of Ohio, Perrysburg Township. He was 91.

He had congestive heart failure, his son, Ford Weber, said.

Home most recently was southwest Toledo. Mr. Weber and his wife, Alice, formerly lived in the Westmoreland neighborhood of central Toledo.

He returned to practice law in 1983 after his term in Congress, rejoining Marshall & Melhorn as a senior partner. He headed its probate and trust section before his election and led the corporate-commercial section on his return.

In 1990, he formed the law firm of Weber & Sterling with Robert V. Sterling, specializing in wills, trusts, planning, and administration. He retired about 18 years ago.