

not receive, aid with long overdue support. Despite months of steady job growth and families dining out again, restaurants and bars are still under a mountain of debt from years of anemic business in wave after wave of the pandemic. I appreciate the support of my colleague DEAN PHILLIPS (MN) on this legislation and I look forward to working with him to provide the support our independent restaurants so desperately need.

RECOGNIZING WVIA FM FOR 50  
YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 13, 2023*

Mr. CARTWRIGHT Mr. Speaker, today I recognize a remarkable milestone in the history of our region. For fifty years, WVIA FM has been serving Northeast Pennsylvania with excellence and distinction as the region's National Public Radio affiliate.

Throughout its half-century of service, WVIA FM has been a beacon of cultural enrichment and community engagement. Today, WVIA FM is also dedicated to providing unbiased news, in-depth reporting, and thoughtful commentary to help shape our region's understanding of the world around us.

As the leading provider of cultural programming, WVIA FM offers a rich variety of music, theater, and arts programs that have enriched the lives of countless listeners. From classical music to jazz, from Broadway shows to local theater productions, WVIA FM has been a trusted source for high-quality cultural programming that reflects the diversity of our community.

Perhaps most importantly, WVIA FM has been a vital force for community engagement and outreach. Through partnerships with local schools, community organizations, and other institutions, WVIA FM has been able to connect with audiences of all ages and backgrounds, helping to foster a sense of unity and civic pride that is so important to the success of our region.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of WVIA FM, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and thanks to the entire staff of this remarkable organization. Your commitment to excellence, your dedication to public service, and your tireless efforts to enrich the lives of your listeners are truly an inspiration to us all.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Public Radio network for their ongoing support of WVIA FM and public broadcasting in general. Your commitment to quality journalism and cultural programming is a vital asset to our nation, and we are all richer for it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the fiftieth anniversary of WVIA FM, and in expressing our gratitude for the remarkable service this organization has provided to our region. We look forward to many more years of excellence and innovation from this valuable public resource.

LAO NEW YEAR

**HON. JUDY CHU**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 13, 2023*

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Lao New Year, which will be celebrated between April 14, 2023, and April 16, 2023. Lao New Year is considered the national holiday of the country of Laos. Nationwide, Lao Americans organize festivals to bring their communities together in celebration of Lao New Year through the month of April and even early May.

Lao New Year has been celebrated for thousands of years and is historically rooted in, and unique to, Lao legends and traditions. During each of the three days that Lao New Year is observed, Lao people participate in various practices and ceremonies. The first two days of Lao New Year are dedicated to home and family. Day one tasks involve cleaning and organizing one's home. On day two, families will gather for a traditional "baci" ceremony, during which people wish one another peace, prosperity, and happiness while tying white threads around each other's wrists. Food and other goods are prepared on day three to take to the local temple as offerings to the monks.

The final day of Lao New Year is typically celebrated at the temple, where activities include classical dance performances, beauty pageants reflecting the legend of an ancient king and his seven daughters, food vending, as well as Lao goods and merchandise. The atmosphere at the temple celebrations is that of an overall uplifting of Lao Americans connecting to their culture and heritage.

Lao New Year unites Lao people through a rich history of traditions and celebrations that evoke shared feelings of release, renewal, and resolutions for the coming year. I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating this global celebration.

HONORING ZACH MERRILL

**HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 13, 2023*

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Zach Benjamin Merrill of Aberteen, Ohio, who recently passed away after a long battle with cancer at the age of 37.

Zach was a proud Marine who served his country bravely in Iraq with his brothers in Lima Company. On May 11, 2005, 15 members of Lima Company were killed by an IED. Zach lost friends and brothers during his service and again survived an IED attack in August 2005.

In September of 2016, Zach was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia. Throughout rounds of chemotherapy and treatment, Zach never wavered. He continued to fight for his life until the very end.

Zach is an example of the patriotism, sacrifice, and commitment we associate with the finest examples of our nation's military. We are all safer because of his dedication to this country and we will miss him.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BURKE VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 13, 2023*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department on the occasion of its 75th Annual Installation of Officers Banquet, and to thank its volunteers for filling an essential role in keeping our community safe.

The Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department was founded in January 1948, and for more than seven decades it has provided lifesaving fire suppression, fire prevention, and emergency medical and rescue services to the residents of Burke and the surrounding communities. It also provides, houses, and maintains firefighting and emergency medical equipment, provides opportunities for professional growth and development for the membership, and maintains and fosters a strong viable organization.

As one of the county's most active volunteer fire and rescue departments, the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department works in cooperation with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department to serve the community. I am honored to recognize the dedicated men and women of the Burke Volunteer Fire Department who have volunteered for extra duty as Officers or as members of the Board of Directors and to include their names in the RECORD:

Board of Directors:

President—Ian Dickinson

Vice President—John Powers

Secretary—Maria Suarez Ortiz

Treasurer—Larry Bocknek

Director—Kathleen Beer

Director—James Stahlman

Director—Kenneth Senn

Officers:

Chief—Keith O'Connor

Deputy Chief—Tina Godfrey

Deputy Chief—John Hudak

Captain—Melissa Ashby

Captain—Kevin Grottle

Lieutenant—Caitlin Edwards

Sergeant—Gavin Kuzemchak

Sergeant—Noah Bilger

In addition to the men and women who have generously assumed the responsibilities of serving as an Officer or a member of the Board of Directors, the Burke Volunteer Fire Department is also presenting awards to the following individuals in recognition of their exemplary service during the last year:

Rookie of the Year—James Stahlman

Officer of the Year—Gavin Kuzemchak

EMS Officer of the Year—Noah Bilger

Career Member of the Year—Charles Arntson

Founders Award—Charlene Murphy

Administrative Member of the Year—Matt Bryant

Administrative Member of the Year—Tonya McCreary

Chief's Award—Thomas Warnock

President's Award—Larry Bocknek

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the department for 75 years of service and in thanking all of the

brave volunteers who do not hesitate to drop everything when the community calls in need of help. To all of these men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect our residents I say: "Stay safe."

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR.  
CURTIS MONROE

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 13, 2023*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Curtis Ryan Monroe, who died Sunday, March 26, 2023, at ninety-two years old. He was a retired baseball coach and former chair of the history department at Itawamba Community College. He was born in Decatur, Mississippi, on December 5, 1930, to James Clark and Annie Neva Roberts Monroe, and was the youngest of seven children. He attended Decatur High School where he was a multi-sport athlete, then attended East Central Community College, followed by Mississippi State University, where he obtained both a bachelor and master's degree as well as being a Presidential Scholar for two years.

It was in Starkville that he met Sally Ashford, who would later become his wife on June 12, 1959, at the Starkville Presbyterian Church. While wooing Miss Ashford, he gave his future father-in-law free baseball tickets to see him suit up for the Diamond Dogs.

After obtaining his master's degree from State in 1954, he was about to be drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, but the Army beat them to it. He completed basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and played on the base's baseball team. Curt was transferred to Fort Gordon near Augusta, Georgia. He was next stationed in Germany near the Czech border as a member of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

He returned to the States in 1956. His first job was teaching history and coaching baseball and girls' basketball at Union High School. In 1961, Curt drove to Fulton and interviewed with then-IJC President John Crubaugh. Curt was offered the job of head baseball coach and history teacher. He accepted and, for the next sixty-two years, he and Sally made Fulton their home, raising their two daughters, Amy and Emilie Nan, on campus. Curt served as a teacher, a lifeguard and dorm parent. He

also served as an assistant football coach at Itawamba Agricultural High School for many years.

Curt participated in Boy Scouts attaining the rank of Life Scout. Before Curt could earn his Eagle badge, his scoutmaster left to serve in the war and the troop disbanded. Curt served as the head baseball coach at ICC until 1989 and continued to teach his legendary Western Civilization course until 1994. He wanted to be remembered for his teaching more than playing baseball. Upon retirement, he and Sally spent their time between Fulton and Starkville and their house in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. He and Sally enjoyed being with their five grandchildren, often entertaining them for weeks at a time during the summers in Gatlinburg.

Curt was inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame in 2003 and the MSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2007. He was a member of the M Club for many years. He was also a Master Mason, 32nd degree Scottish Rite, a Shriner, and a member of the American Legion Post 51 in Fulton. He was a longtime member of Fulton United Methodist Church serving on various committees and was a member of the Charlie Mae Sunday School class.

He is survived by Sally, his beloved wife of nearly sixty-four years; his daughter Amy Agee (Mike) of Germantown and her children, Ryan (Margaret), Marianne, and Sam; and his daughter Emilie Nan English (Brock) of Tupelo and her children, Curt and Charlie; his sisters-in-law Pat Johnson, Em Ashford, and Hanna White (Bill), and brother-in-law Pepper Ashford (Carol); and dozens of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; his brothers William Monroe, Leon Monroe, Sr., James Clark Monroe, Ellis Monroe, and Johnny Ray Monroe; his sister Annie Neva Doler; his brother-in-law Charlie Ashford and brother and sister-in-law Jim and Jacque Ashford.

RECOGNIZING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARTS OF GREAT FALLS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 13, 2023*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Arts of Great Falls on its 15th anniversary.

The Arts of Great Falls (AGF) Foundation is a non-profit organization, founded in 2008 to encourage, support, and promote the fine arts in Great Falls and the surrounding communities. Located in the heart of Great Falls in the Village Centre, their popular art school attracts students from across the greater Washington metropolitan area.

From June through August, AGF holds a summer camp for young, aspiring artists between the ages eight and eighteen. This camp allows students to explore a variety of mediums such as oil paints, papier-mâché, and charcoal. During the school year, they offer adult fine art classes from beginners to professional artists. These classes give people the chance to adventure into jewelry making, try their hand at plein air painting, or express themselves through collage abstracts.

The Arts of Great Falls also provides gallery space for local artists to exhibit their work and offers affordable studio space to 12 artists at The Artists' Atelier and The Artists' Loft. The shared studio rentals allow local artists to create and exhibit their artwork for the community.

Throughout the year, AFG hosts multiple events, including the 1st Friday ArtWalk and the annual Paint Great Falls Plein Air Competition. These events offer unique ways to enjoy and appreciate art.

Another cornerstone event, the Studio Art Tour, offers attendees the opportunity to meet local artists in their home-based studios and share creative processes. The tour features many of the region's top creative talents and showcases a variety of workspaces. People can see demonstrations, exhibits, and hands-on activities in some studios located in historic, rustic, or other extraordinary properties and outbuildings. Demonstrations include wood carving, a lithographic press, pottery, mixed media, and photography.

Mr. Speaker, organizations like the Arts of Great Falls serve a fundamental role in our community. The arts have played, and must continue to play, a fundamental role in our daily lives. The value of support for the arts in communities across America cannot be understated, and I commend the Arts of Great Falls for what they do to preserve and promote artistic expression in Northern Virginia. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Arts of Great Falls for fifteen years of extraordinary work.