

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
CHIEF OF THE RESERVOIR FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT SCOTT
BERRY

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Chief of the Reservoir Fire Protection District, Scott Berry. Chief Berry is a second-generation fire fighter who began his career as a volunteer at the Reservoir Fire Protection District. Over a 34-year career, Chief Berry has remained loyal to the same fire district and has led firefighters in the Reservoir District since 1996.

For his exceptional leadership, Chief Berry was elected as the President of the Mississippi Fire Chiefs Association in 2012 and was selected as Mississippi Fire Chief of the Year in 2022. Chief Berry has also contributed to the wellbeing of his community—serving as Chairman of the Mississippi Burn Camp for Kids and a CPR/First Aid Instructor. Outside of his community service activities, Chief Berry spends his time as a dedicated husband to his wife, Christy Lane, and loving father to his 2 daughters, Sarah and Rachel.

On behalf of Mississippi's Third Congressional District and the United States House of Representatives, I thank Chief Berry for his service to his community and state.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DENNIS ALFONSO

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of my constituent and friend, Dennis Alfonso. My friendship with Dennis dates back to our time together at Stetson University College of Law. I remember him as a bright, funny and humble guy who was always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need and who had a strong desire to make a positive impact on the world. By all accounts he fully realized that ambition. For more than two decades, he served as a tireless advocate for those in need throughout our community, representing the District School Board of Pasco County and the Pasco County Clerk of Court. Anyone in need of advice, legal or personal, knew they could turn to Dennis. Everybody who had the pleasure of interacting with him would always walk away feeling better. Even more importantly, Dennis was a devoted husband and father. In recent years, his eyes would light up when he would tell me about how well Alex and India were doing. Sadly, Dennis passed away on May 13, 2023, after a courageous battle with cancer. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife and family. May his memory be eternal.

CONGRESSIONAL LAW
ENFORCEMENT AWARDS

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to law enforcement men and women who have provided distinguished service to the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District.

Law enforcement is a demanding profession that requires sacrifice, courage, and dedication to serve others. Every day, brave men and women put themselves in harm's way to enforce the laws of our society and protect public safety. They deserve our gratitude and respect.

Thirteen years ago, I established the 16th District Congressional Law Enforcement Awards to give special recognition to law enforcement officers, departments, or units for exceptional achievement.

This year, I will present congressional law enforcement awards to the following winners chosen by an independent panel comprised of current and retired law enforcement personnel representing a cross-section of the district's law enforcement community:

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award: Lieutenant John Hurd, Lieutenant Nicholas Pruitt, Sergeant Robert Hendrickson, Detective Tyler Ackerman, Detective Imran Din, Detective Christopher Foy, Deputy Michael Davis, Deputy Nicholas DiFilippo, Deputy Amy Dunkum, Deputy Camilo Garcia-Fajardo, Deputy Kevin Gonzalez, Deputy Joshua Groover, Deputy Connor Hartley, Deputy Stephen Hill, Deputy Tristan Knutson, Deputy Alexis Lyon, Deputy Joseph Maggio, Deputy Kelli McLaughlin, Deputy Andrew Rodman, Deputy Hurly Smith, Deputy Adam Spatafora, Deputy Serissa Thompson, Deputy Randall Walker, and Deputy Aaron Winslow of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office.

Dedication and Professionalism Award: Special Agent K. Dino Balos of the ATF, Officer Joshua Small of the Bradenton Police Department, Trooper Taylor Ledford of the Florida Highway Patrol, and Master Detective Juan Lazu, Jr. and Detective Michael Fernandes of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

Gary Tibbetts Career Service Award: Major William "B.G." Dixon of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office.

Preservation of Life Award: Detective William Mulligan of the Bradenton Police Department, Trooper Kevin Tomberlin of the Florida Highway Patrol, Deputy Alexander Maldonado and Deputy Kevin Reich of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Sergeant Thomas Fraser and Officer Alex Hurt of the Holmes Beach Police Department, Detective Grace King, Deputy Ryan Emkey, Deputy Jared Leggett, Deputy Michael Mahoney, Deputy Micah Osornio, Deputy Christian Ruiz, Deputy Monica Ruiz, Deputy Matthew Schwartz, Deputy Reaghn Simandl, and Deputy Ty Simandl of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office.

Unit Citation Award: Florida Highway Patrol Troop C Criminal Interdiction Unit: Sergeant Joshua Malloy, Trooper Jeremy Fields, Trooper Wesley Kelly, Trooper Deryck Lewis, Trooper Chris Nottingham, Trooper Sergio Pearce, Trooper Eric Schaub, K-9 Flip, K-9 Titan, and K-9 Lobo; Manatee County Search and Res-

cue: Deputy Jared Leggett of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office.

HONORING ANAHEIM PUBLIC
LIBRARY

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Anaheim Public Library from my district, who is being honored as a finalist for the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Services.

This honor recognizes museums and libraries' services to their communities. Through innovative programs and partnerships with nonprofits, the Anaheim Public Library helps close economic gaps, expand digital inclusion, and ensure that our students access to the education they deserve. The Anaheim Public Library is an important resource to our community and provides critical resources, including WiFi and laptops, food and diapers, and even mobile educational programs that travel to schools, parks, and senior centers. Last year, the library's mobile services reached more than 235,000 members of our community in Anaheim.

The work that the Anaheim Public Library has done to support and transform the lives of people like me, makes me proud that they are honored as a finalist for the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Services.

RECOGNIZING TESS MATTINGLY
FLOREK FOR HER YEARS OF
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND
COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Tess Florek of St. Veronica Catholic School, who for nearly a decade has dedicated her career and scholarship to educating children in their early years. Throughout her years of service as a schoolteacher, Mrs. Florek has made remarkable contributions to the lives of students, parents, and her school community.

Born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, Tess attended San Jose Catholic Grade School and spent her summers with family in New Orleans. After graduating high school with an International Baccalaureate degree, Tess attended Florida State University to become a Bachelor of Music. Upon the completion of her degree, she elected to earn her master's degree in the same field from the University of North Texas. In 2017, she earned her second master's degree in education from Marymount University.

Despite her remarkable academic accomplishments thus far, Mrs. Florek is continuing her scholarship at Marymount University, where she is in the final year of her second master's degree in education through the Marymount University graduate program in Catholic School Leadership.

As of the 2022–2023 academic year, Tess Florek has completed her 7th year teaching

fourth grade students at St. Veronica Catholic School. Beyond her responsibility as a teacher, Tess actively serves as a school band leader while simultaneously playing an integral community role in the diocesan accreditation process.

As the teacher for Josiah and Elijah Hawatmeh—nephews of my Chief of Staff, Nicola Hawatmeh—Mrs. Florek has left a lasting impression on the many young lives she has impacted. Her devotion and faithful service exemplify every characteristic that makes for a great educator, and we are all thankful for her passion, drive, and commitment to the field of education.

I join the wider St. Veronica community in thanking Mrs. Florek for going above and beyond for her students at St. Veronica Catholic School. With National Teacher Appreciation still fresh in our minds, it is a profound honor to recognize the great work of Tess Florek and all the passionate men and women who dedicate their lives to educating our youngest generation.

TRIBUTE TO LAUREN VERDICH

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lauren Verdich, a lifelong Chicagoan, business owner, activist and dear friend. Through Lauren's Catering, a business she started in the mid-1980's, she donated her services to many non-profits in the Chicago LGBTQ community such as the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and the Lesbian Community Cancer Project. Lauren was a co-founder of Open Hand Chicago and what is now known as the LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce Illinois. For Lauren's long-standing advocacy in the LGBTQ community, she was inducted into Chicago's LGBT Hall of Fame in 2015.

Along with Lauren's community activism, Lauren was politically active. As progressives, Lauren and her loving partner of 25 years, Gail Morse, were involved in state and federal campaigns, including mine. In 2006, Gail and Lauren were co-chairs of my 5th Annual Ultimate Women's Power Lunch alongside Michelle Obama. Lauren especially enjoyed an event featuring Congressman John Lewis, a hero to Lauren, and ascribed to John's motto of seeking out "good trouble."

On a very personal note, Lauren cooked delicious meals for my grandchildren, son and daughter-in-law, Fiona, when Fiona was sick with cancer. Lauren's warmth and love came through her cooking. I was touched by her generosity and compassion for me and my family at that difficult time.

For decades, Lauren served her community. Lauren was a "sister in arms" with so many fighting for good causes and those getting into John's "good trouble." Lauren Verdich touched so many of us through her food, activism and hugs; and will be deeply missed. Bob and I send our deepest condolences to her wife, Gail, her children, Jordan (Katy) and Dana, and grandson, Zachery.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR RECOGNIZING "NATIONAL POLICE WEEK"

SPEECH OF

HON. LAUREL M. LEE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 15, 2023

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of National Police Week to recognize and honor the brave men and women in blue across the country. This week is a time to reflect on the sacrifices they make to keep us all safe.

My years serving as a prosecutor and judge allowed me to see and appreciate firsthand the sacrifices our law enforcement officers make to ensure our community's safety, and I cannot thank them enough. They work around the clock to keep our friends and families safe, regardless of the circumstances.

Now as the Representative for Florida's 15th District, I am proud to represent thousands of brave law enforcement officers who display great courage, bravery, patience, and diligence when called to run into danger, all to protect those who are often strangers.

To the law enforcement officers that never returned home, we will never forget their sacrifice.

And to the law enforcement officers of Florida's 15th District—thank you. I thank them for all that they do and their dedication to serving and protecting our community day in and day out. I will always stand with them.

HONORING WILLIAM P. CHEWNING

HON. JUAN CISCOMANI

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, with deep admiration, to recognize an extraordinary member of my southern Arizona community. His legacy continues to inspire all who have had the privilege of knowing him. Today, I pay tribute to William P. Chewning, a man whose commitment to upholding the law and ensuring the safety of our citizens has left an indelible mark on our region.

For countless decades, William P. Chewning selflessly served the people of southern Arizona with dedication and courage. As a respected lawman, he donned the badges of both the Tucson Police Department and the Arizona Department of Highway Patrol, fearlessly patrolling the streets, safeguarding our communities, and upholding the principles of justice. His tireless efforts, often in the face of great adversity, exemplify the very essence of public service, and we owe him an immeasurable debt of gratitude.

I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to his family, for it is through their continued support and understanding that William P. Chewning was able to devote himself to the service of others. Their family's sacrifices and encouragement have undoubtedly played an integral role in his ability to fulfill his duty with dedication and distinction.

I am deeply touched to have received their father's Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Belt Buckle. I am acutely aware of the deep

significance this cherished memento holds for the Chewning family, and I want to express my sincere gratitude for their trust in me as their elected representative. This meaningful gift serves as a testament to the faith they have placed in my ability to serve and represent the interests of our esteemed constituents from Arizona's 6th district.

HONORING MR. RICK BUCHER

HON. FRANK J. MRVAN

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I rise to honor Mr. Rick Bucher and to wish him well upon his retirement from his position as Assistant to the Director for United Steelworkers (USW), District 7. Rick has devoted his life to the hardworking members of USW, and for his tireless dedication, he is to be commended. Mr. Bucher will be retiring on May 31, 2023, after 45 years with USW. Mr. Bucher's lifetime of service will be recognized at a dinner taking place on May 23, 2023, at Blue Chip Hotel and Casino in Michigan City, Indiana.

On May 22, 1978, Rick Bucher began his career with USW Local 6103 in Portage, Indiana, when he was hired into National Steel's Midwest Division. Rick started out as a pipefitter with the title of Mechanical Repair Technician 1 in the Cold Roll and Sheet Finishing Maintenance division. Over time, Mr. Bucher's commitment to his union brothers and sisters and to ensuring their rights in the workplace became apparent as he ventured into union leadership roles. With local 6103, he served two terms as Assistant Griever then two terms as Griever for Zone 1 before serving an additional two terms as Grievance Chairman.

Throughout the years, Rick's leadership qualities and commitment to those with whom he worked and served were undeniable. This led to his appointments to various positions within USW, including International Staff Representative, District 7 Sub 5 Director, and ultimately, Assistant to the Director for USW District 7.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending Rick Bucher for his many contributions to USW District 7 and to his fellow union brothers and sisters. Rick is the embodiment of the unwavering dedication and loyalty exemplified by the hardworking members of United Steelworkers. For his lifetime of exceptional service and outstanding leadership, Rick is worthy of the highest praise, and I wish him well upon his retirement.

ELIJAH BOSLEY EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Elijah Bosley. Elijah is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 412, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.