

disabilities, called LEADers. Prior to founding To Be Like Me, Hollis graduated from UT Southwestern Medical School and spent 20 years as a physical therapist primarily working with children. Her work allowed her to learn more about the barriers facing people with disabilities which ultimately lead her to founding the nonprofit. During To Be Like Me's field trips, LEADers provide disability awareness education to students and teachers. Students rotate through five interactive experiences where LEADers discuss what it's like to have a disability in different environments and the tools they use daily to help them adapt. These experiences also teach students about mental health and medical devices and assistive technologies used by people living with disabilities. About 50 LEADers work for To Be Like Me, providing them with meaningful employment and advocacy opportunities. I thank Hollis for providing a program that fosters more compassion and empathy for North Texans living with disabilities.

PAUL BENAVIDEZ EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Paul Benavidez. Paul 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 1376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Paul has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Paul has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Paul has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Paul benefited his local community and the City of Liberty by painting parking lot lines in a newly paved parking lot. He also painted lines on a basketball court at Place Liberte Park, a neighborhood park that the city maintains.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Paul Benavidez for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING CAROLYN MULLIS
CRAYTON

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding citizen of Macon, Georgia—a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother; a dedicated volunteer; and distinguished servant leader in her community, Mrs. Carolyn Mullis Crayton. Mrs. Crayton was honored with the Distinguished Citizen Award by the Central Georgia Council of the Boy Scouts of America

on August 24, 2023. The Awards Ceremony and Dinner was held at the Anderson Conference Center in Macon, Georgia.

Originally from North Carolina, Mrs. Crayton moved to Macon in the early 1970s where she quickly got involved in the community. An ardent advocate for city beautification, she founded the Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, which in 1974, partnered as an affiliate with Keep America Beautiful. Today, Mrs. Crayton serves on the Board of Directors of Keep America Beautiful, an organization she has been involved with for more than half a century. Similarly, the Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission remains a strong force in the local community.

Upon her first visit to Macon in 1970, Mrs. Crayton and her husband, Lee Crayton, fell in love with the city and saw its potential as a bastion of culture and beauty. Perhaps most notably, Mrs. Crayton was struck by the beauty of the Yoshino cherry trees that lined some of the local streets. Over the next decade, thousands of these beautiful trees were planted all over Macon, thanks to the generosity of Mr. William Fickling, Sr., an influential Macon resident and “Father of Cherry Blossoms.”

In 1982, Mrs. Crayton capitalized on this pink horticultural phenomenon by organizing a weekend celebration to give thanks to Mr. Fickling on his birthday for his contributions to the city's beautification. This event would go on to be celebrated every year as the International Cherry Blossom Festival, a week-long festival with the noble theme of “love, beauty, and international friendship.” Additionally, as the Yoshino cherry tree is native to Japan, Mrs. Crayton formed close ties with Japanese leaders and every year honors their representatives at the festival, demonstrating the strong bond and values shared by both nations. Thanks to Mrs. Crayton, the International Cherry Blossom Festival is now a cherished institution throughout Middle Georgia, and I couldn't be more pleased with its success in bringing the community together.

Mrs. Crayton has had a positive impact on any project she has had the opportunity to work on. Over the years she has served on countless boards and community service activities to include: the International Festivals and Events Association; the Museum of Aviation Board of Directors, serving as the first female board chair; the Macon Rescue Mission; Middle Georgia State University Foundation Board of Trustees; the Vineville Garden Club; the Wesleyan Wood Garden Club; and serving under the past four governors as an at-large Board Member for the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Truly, the state of Georgia is a better place thanks to Mrs. Crayton's hard work and dedication to her community.

It has often been said that “Service is the rent that we pay for the space we occupy here on this earth.” Mrs. Carolyn Crayton has paid her rent, continues to pay that rent, and has received numerous awards and recognitions for which she can be proud. She received the Lady Bird Johnson Award for her hard work and dedication to keeping her community's environment pristine and welcoming; the “Woman of Distinction” Award by the Middle Georgia Girl Scout Council; Georgia Festival Director of the Year and the Emerson Award from National Arbor Day Foundation. She has also received international awards for work and expertise, including the Queen Mother's

Award (United Kingdom); the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold, and Silver Rays from the Japanese Foreign Ministry; and the Japanese American Appreciation Award.

Perhaps even more notable than the long list of accolades and awards Mrs. Crayton has earned over the years, is the fact that she inspired new generations of leadership and had several awards named after herself. These include the Carolyn Crayton Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission Award; the Carolyn Crayton Cherry Blossom Festival Award; Keep Georgia Beautiful's Carolyn Crayton “Woman of the Year” and the Keep America Beautiful's Carolyn Crayton Award. Additionally, in 2020 the city of Macon named the park which serves as the grounds for the International Cherry Blossom Festival after Mrs. Crayton for her decades of service and ambassadorship for the city. Situated across the Ocmulgee River from the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park, Carolyn Crayton Park is one of Macon's most visited attractions thanks to the work Mrs. Crayton has done with the annual Cherry Blossom festival.

Mrs. Crayton has accomplished so much in her life, but none of it would have been possible without the grace of God and her late husband, Lee. Mr. and Mrs. Crayton raised two children—Douglas Crayton and Annette Crayton Mengert. They are the proud grandparents of four and have four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join my wife Vivian, and me, along with the 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District, in honoring and commending Mrs. Carolyn Mullis Crayton for her outstanding decades of service to the city of Macon, the people of Georgia, and humankind. May God continue to bless her and her family in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

HONORING TEXAS-24 HOMETOWN
HERO, THE COPPELL FIRE DE-
PARTMENT

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, the Coppell Fire Department. Due to a power failure at the Village Parkway Pump Station earlier this year, the City of Coppell announced a Boil Water Notice and requested that residents and businesses only use water in emergency situations. The Coppell Fire Department's Emergency Management and Public Works team leapt into action and helped restore power to the water pump, all during a brutal Texas heatwave. The department offered multi-faceted assistance, from staffing the Emergency Operations Center, providing heat rehab support at the distribution point, transporting water from local vendors to the public library, on top of the normal daily operational items. I'd like to thank the Coppell Fire Department for their quick response and service to the residents of Texas-24 by helping make Coppell's water safe to drink again.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF PAMELA ROSS**HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the legacy of a Livingston County, Michigan woman whose life, though cut tragically short, was a testament to kindness, inclusivity, and tolerance. Pamela Ann Ross of Brighton never sought attention, never wanted credit for the light she spread so generously everywhere she went. But as those who love her grapple with her loss, we must lift up her life as an example of what it really means to live in community.

Pam loved her state and the people in it. A proud graduate of Milford High School, she traveled right down the road to attend Michigan State University, leaving the state only briefly to pursue a Master's degree in teaching from Arizona State University. Pam brought those skills and talents back home, seeking to help set students up for success as citizens of the world and inspire in them a drive to do well and succeed in life. To this day, she is remembered as a beloved and inspirational second grade teacher who wanted nothing more than to see her students reach their full potential.

As she built her family, first with husband Stan and later with their 2 sons, Jackson and Nicholas, and 2 canine "children," Luna and Bella, Pam made the decision to devote herself fully to the homefront. But she never stepped back from her mission to be of service to others, nor did she ever stop seeing the very best in people. Pam was a steadfast volunteer in her children's classrooms, with Boy Scouts, and with numerous community organizations, including Habitat for Humanity where she served on the board of directors for many years.

Pam was also a fierce advocate for equality, and a firm believer that every child and every person in the community deserves love, acceptance, and respect just as they are. She was particularly passionate about vulnerable populations, speaking out in her firm but loving way at school board meetings and organizing events in support of LGBTQ+ and minority students, as well as those with disabilities.

But it was Pam's quiet life of service that her friends and family remember most: the way holiday and birthday gifts would appear on the porches of neighborhood children whose parents were going through tough times, or the gift cards those same parents would find under their doormats, the backpacks she stuffed full of school supplies for kids who might otherwise go without, the meal deliveries that just showed up for families in need. Pam never attached her name to those gifts. But everyone knew where they came from—and the love behind them.

Mr. Speaker, in this world there are those who dream of a better world and those who actively work to make it so, and Pam was the rare blend of both. In Pam's world, neighbors looked after each other no matter what, and strangers were merely friends she had yet to meet. Her unexpected passing leaves a deep void in the hearts and lives of so many, and I send my deepest condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew and loved her. May

her memory live on in every step we actively take toward a kinder, more inclusive community. Everyone was welcome in Pam's heart and in her home, so it is fitting that her legacy will forever be remembered.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUDGE
VERNON SMITH**HON. JARED HUFFMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Judge Vernon Smith, who passed away at the age of 79 on July 29, 2023. Vernon served as a respected jurist and community leader throughout his professional career.

Vernon was born on December 7, 1943 in San Francisco, and moved to Sleepy Hollow in Marin County as a teenager. He attended Sir Francis Drake High School in San Anselmo, and then completed both undergraduate studies and law school at the University of San Francisco, finishing his studies in 1968. With a focus on public service, Vernon began his law career at the Marin County District Attorney's Office in 1969.

Vernon served as a prosecutor in the District Attorney's Office for five years before joining the Novato law firm Trumbull, Rush & Smith, where he would gain experience with both criminal and civil cases. During his tenure with private practice, he continued to build his reputation as a caring and competent member of the legal profession. Vernon returned to public service in 1982, when he was selected as a Marin County court commissioner.

After 5 years as commissioner, Vernon was elected to the Municipal Court as a judge. He was instrumental in the court consolidation process, and Vernon went on to serve as the first presiding judge of the newly consolidated Marin County Superior Court. As he rose in seniority, Vernon would serve as supervising judge for the civil, probate, juvenile, family law, and criminal divisions. His impeccable standing with the community led him to continued electoral success. He retired in 2007 after serving 25 years on the bench.

Vernon enjoyed more time with his family after retiring, but he also stayed engaged in his professional community. He served as a mediator with Resolution Remedies, a Sausalito-based legal dispute mediation service, and taught legal courses at the College of Marin and Dominican University of California in San Rafael.

Vernon is survived by his wife of 52 years, Linda, his sons Brent and Ryan, daughter Claire, and 4 grandchildren. While he will be greatly missed, Vernon's legacy will live on through the positive impact he had on his community and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you join me in extending condolences to Vernon's family and friends, and in expressing my appreciation for his decades of work for the public good and for sharing his life experiences with us.

RECOGNIZING THE WEST SUBURBAN
LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL
TEAM**HON. JOHN JOYCE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the incredible victory of the West Suburban Little League Softball Team on winning their second straight state championship this season.

Under the leadership of team manager Dave Lynch this incredible team comprised of members from schools such as Westmont, Bishop McCort, and Richland have worked together to achieve an incredible level of success.

As our students continue to participate in organized sports they learn valuable skills including teamwork, dedication, and good sportsmanship.

Even in the face of adversity, the Red Rage players came together and found a way to win time after time.

Congratulations to the entire West Suburban Softball Team including Addy Dunbar, Kylie Durst, Bella Kist, Sienna Kubie, Alea Ladika, Elleigh Ladika, Cali Lynch, Kelsie Muto, Audra Rudolph, LaMya Stephens, Kristin Stiles and Elizabeth Veranese on their hard work and dedication.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I congratulate the West Suburban Little League Softball Team on their victory, and wish them every continued success.

HONORING SERGEANT PAUL R.
DAW**HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 25, 2023

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Sergeant Paul R. Daw, a Vietnam War veteran and upstanding constituent of New York's 21st District.

Paul was raised in Long Island, New York. After graduating high school, he joined the United States Army, serving for 2 years in the Vietnam War from July 1969 to May 1971. Sergeant Daw was stationed in Vietnam as an Eleven-Bravo infantryman alongside his fellow men with the 1st Cavalry Division, Ranger Company A.

For his service, Sergeant Daw was highly decorated. Upon his honorable discharge in 1971, Sergeant Daw earned a Bronze Star with 2 oak leaf clusters, a Purple Heart with an oak leaf cluster, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Army Accommodation Medal for Valor, and the Good Conduct Medal.

After returning home to Long Island from Vietnam, Sergeant Daw joined the New York Police Department, where he served for 21 and a half years as an officer of the law. Off the force, Sergeant Daw also supported his community as a volunteer firefighter until his retirement from the NYPD in 2003, at which time he moved upstate to the North Country.

In his retirement, Sergeant Daw has taken time to focus on his family life. He and his wife