

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: BETTY REID SOSKIN

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Betty Reid Soskin as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Betty is widely known for being the National Park Service's oldest park ranger who retired at the age of 100. She has lived in the East Bay since 1927, when her family moved from New Orleans.

As a young woman during World War II, Betty worked as a shipyard clerk for an all-Black auxiliary lodge of the segregated Boiler-maker's union. In 1945 she and her husband founded one of the first Black-owned music stores, which remained open until 2019. Over the years she has worked as staff to a Berkeley city council member, a state Assemblywoman, and a California State Senator.

In the early 2000s, Betty became involved in the plans to open the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park. This led to her career as a ranger which began in 2007, at the age of 85.

Betty led talks explaining the importance of the park in memorializing the contributions of women and African Americans working in war industries supporting the U.S. World War II efforts on the home front. She has used her own experiences and observations as a Black woman to bring light to untold stories of African Americans during WWII and underscore the racism and misogyny experienced by her and countless other women of color throughout her lifetime. Through hard work and storytelling, she has touched the lives of the thousands of park visitors and millions of Americans who can not only empathize with her story but celebrate and learn from it.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Betty Reid Soskin for her positive contributions to our community.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF
RICK LEE

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise to recognize Richard "Rick" Lee, owner and Chairman of the Board of Lee's Flower and Card Shop, founded in the District of Columbia in 1945.

Mr. Lee's long-standing business ties and community outreach have made a lasting impact on the District of Columbia and its residents in numerous ways.

As a business owner, Mr. Lee has served District of Columbia residents for more than 45 years. He has been named the Small Business Person of the Year by the DC Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Lee served as Vice President of the U Street Business Association, under Marion

Barry, who served as President, and later served four years as an appointed Statehood Commissioner under the late Harry Thomas Sr. He also held a mayoral appointment to the Board of Accountancy, also under Marion Barry.

Mr. Lee served on the Board of Directors of the D.C. Children's Trust Fund. He also served as Small Business Vice Chairman of a local chapter of the United Way, Chairman of the Banneker Boy Scouts of America, Vice President of the Kiwanis Club of NE Washington D.C., Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Lincoln Theatre, Member of the Board of Directors of MANNA, Vice President of the Shaw Neighborhood Association and Member of the Washington Gas Consumer Advisory Board for six years.

Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I ask the House of Representatives to wish Richard "Rick" Lee a happy 80th birthday this month and recognize his leadership of Lee's Flower and Card Shop and his distinguished service to District of Columbia residents.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: BRENDA PLECHATY

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Brenda Plechaty as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Brenda's life was changed when her partner had a serious accident resulting in a traumatic brain injury. During his recovery, Brenda experienced the lack of support there is for the family members of those who have traumatic brain injuries. This led Brenda to create, run, and fully fund a free support group for family members who are caregivers to TBI survivors.

Brenda is dedicated to this group and helping the caregivers of TBI survivors, making herself available to caregivers every day, not just during the group's monthly meetings. Brenda's work for this group has led her to become fully immersed in the TBI community, willing to share information and provide support whenever possible to those who have been impacted by TBI.

In addition to her work supporting caregivers, Brenda serves on several commissions and committees in the city of Vallejo and is actively working with the city to improve the Vallejo Municipal Marina. A passionate rower, Brenda is involved in her rowing club's volunteering division and helped to create a summer youth rowing project that included instruction on the importance of the marina.

All facets of Brenda's work show her compassion and dedication to serving others.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Brenda Plechaty for her positive contributions to our community.

STONY DWIGHT RUSHING

HON. DAN BISHOP

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today I rise to honor the legacy of the Union County Board of Commissioners Chair, Stony Dwight Rushing.

Stony loved his family and he loved Union County. He was fiercely devoted to his wife, Anne-Marie, and his two children, Reagan and RyLee. Stony also served Union County for four terms on the Board of Commissioners from 2002 to 2006, and then again from 2014 to 2023. Over the course of these four terms, Stony's fellow Board Members chose him to serve as Chairman for two of them. Stony was a congenial presence and a highly effective servant to his community. He stood for our God-given rights and took every opportunity to make people's lives better. His larger-than-life presence that still echoes throughout Union County will truly be missed.

Outside of his involvement with the Union County Board of Commissioners, Stony mentored young North Carolinians on the importance of firearm proficiency and safety. Stony served as a certified firearms instructor and owner of Take Aim Training Range. In fact, he was the NRA South Carolina Youth Hunter Education Challenge State Coordinator, and was honored as the 2013 NC Governor's Conservation Achievement Award winner for "Hunter Education Instructor of the Year." Stony also served as the Union District Chairman for the Boy Scouts of America between 2006 and 2009.

On behalf of the entire 8th Congressional District of North Carolina, I rise to honor and celebrate Chairman Stony Rushing's fruitful life and dedicated service to others. I thank Stony and may he rest in peace.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: ALICE WILSON-FRIED

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Alice Wilson-Fried as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Alice is dedicated to teaching the youth of Solano County about the importance of democracy and civic engagement. Seeing the need to educate young people about voting rights and civic duty, Alice implemented the Democracy Matters program at Golden Hills Community School. This curriculum gives students the opportunity to learn about the importance of democracy and its impact, allowing students to see themselves as leaders with a voice in the policy process.

The importance and impact of this program has been recognized by the California Secretary of State, who is in discussions to use it in their statewide youth outreach efforts. Through the framework of Democracy Matters, Alice has given students hands-on experiences with civic engagement, including coordinating a mock City Council meeting in the

Suisun City council chambers and training students on how to conduct a forum with Solano Youth Council. She also worked with the Solano County Registrar of Voters and League of Women Voters to train students who volunteered as poll workers. These hands-on opportunities have allowed students to learn about the importance of citizenship and the power of their voices in our democracy.

Alice's work to educate the next generation about democracy will have an impact for years to come. On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Alice Wilson-Fried for her positive contributions to our community.

RECOGNIZING PENELOPE GROSS
ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise to congratulate Penelope "Penny" Gross on her retirement after 27 years of serving as the Fairfax County Mason District Supervisor and 21 years of chairing the Potomac Watershed Roundtable.

Elected in 1995 to represent the Mason District, Penny has been an advocate for affordable housing, expanded public transportation, and violence prevention. Penny represents Fairfax County on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, the INOVA Health System Board of Trustees, and the Potomac Watershed Roundtable (PWR).

Shortly after becoming the chair of PWR, she encouraged the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to help in developing strategies that will bring the state of Virginia up to the standard that Maryland had already set, regarding efforts that support the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Program. With that, in July 2003, the Potomac River Tributary Strategy was developed by DCR.

In January 2004, Penny led the PWR in discussions for a 2004 vision, whose focal points influenced many water-related issues, such as Stormwater Management, Wastewater Treatment Plants, and Total Maximum Daily Load. In April later that year Penny was appointed by then Governor Mark Warner to the Chesapeake Bay Blue Ribbon Funding Panel. A panel tasked with finding alternative sources for funding the Chesapeake Bay Cleanup. By October 2004, Chairman Gross announced some recommendations on behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Blue Bay Ribbon Finance Panel.

On the state and national level, Penny is a past president of the Virginia Association of Counties, vice-chair of the National Association of Counties' Energy, Environment, and Land Use Committee, and past president of the National Association of Regional Councils. She was first appointed by Governor Mark Warner to the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) to the Chesapeake Executive Council, which she chaired from March 2006 until August 2008, and continues to serve.

I had the great pleasure of serving with Penny during my 14 years on the Board, first representing the Providence District and then as Chairman. The work that she has done for Fairfax County is outstanding and we will continue to honor her legacy as a public servant. Penny Gross's commitment to our community and the mission of local government is unparalleled. She leaves behind a legacy that will enrich our community for generations to come. Her career in public service is truly commendable and deserving of our heartfelt gratitude. All through her tenure as Chair of the PWR, she proved to be an exemplary leader, and continues to attract very influential and dedicated environmentally minded individuals to the roundtable.

Mr. Speaker, Pro Tempore Penny Gross's commitment to public service is through her work in Fairfax County. Though she may be retiring, I suspect that she will continue to remain active in the causes that are important to her. I commend her for her service and ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating her on her retirement.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: AMBER DUNCAN

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Amber Duncan as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Amber is a Community Readiness Specialist for the Military and Family Readiness Center at Travis Air Force Base. Her duties focus on assessing personnel and family needs while providing work and life services related to the demands of the military mission.

In her role, Amber has initiated countless programs and events to assist servicemembers and their families. She pioneered a database to track personnel preparing to leave the military workforce, allowing Travis Air Force Base to achieve 100 percent accountability in notifying personnel about the process and options for their transition out of the military.

Amber is also passionate about strengthening military families and connecting them with the local community. She developed a needs assessment to identify limitations and their corrections, worked with the Base Chaplain Agency in hosting courses promoting the strengthening of family interactions, and has worked to foster resiliency for 46 newly appointed military members.

Amber's work has benefited military personnel and their families, and her dedication to aiding members of the Travis community does not go unnoticed.

On behalf of the people of California's 8th Congressional District, it is my pleasure to honor and recognize Amber Duncan for her positive contributions to our community.

HONORING CELEBRA GRAPEVINE
2023

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the 2nd Annual Celebra Grapevine festival which will take place on October 7th in Grapevine, Texas and is dedicated to celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan established Hispanic Heritage Month to celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions made by Americans of Hispanic descent. Consistent with this fine tradition, Celebra Grapevine provides North Texans with an opportunity to embrace diversity and honor the Hispanic heritage that has influenced traditions, art, and cuisine throughout our community. Celebra means to celebrate in Spanish, which is a fitting name for this festival. Grapevine's Latino population, which makes up more than 30 percent of the city's population, plays an important role in growing the city's economy and making the city a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

I commend the City of Grapevine and Celebra Grapevine for their commitment to fostering unity and building bridges in our community. I hope their festival is a great success.

HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF
THE YEAR: ALISSA STOLZ

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Alissa Stolz as she is honored as one of California's 8th Congressional District's Women of the Year.

Alissa is the Head of School at East Bay Montessori where she has demonstrated outstanding school leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

The pandemic impacted schools in previously unimaginable ways, and school leaders were called upon to hold their communities together. Alissa was instrumental in keeping East Bay Montessori intact throughout the pandemic, avoiding any COVID-19 outbreaks and never having to lay off any staff or faculty.

Alissa was committed to in-person learning, and East Bay Montessori quickly reopened with an outdoor classroom set-up that let students and teachers come together and learn in innovative ways. This decision allowed children to continue to learn through peer collaboration and face-to-face interactions.

Alissa provided a strong vision for East Bay Montessori during times of uncertainty and change. Her work led her to be featured in the American Montessori Society's magazine, and she was selected to present at the International Montessori Congress in Bangkok. The impact of Alissa's work goes beyond East Bay Montessori—she is the model of a capable leader who acts in the interest of her community, inspiring educators across the globe.