

Colonel Mark Volk, and his wife Lynn, continue to be active and generous members of our community, giving their time and energy to numerous organizations. Their dedication to service has set a shining example for us all. I commend Colonel Volk for his unwavering commitment to our community and our Nation; he truly represents the very best of Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District.

**RECOGNIZING CORPORAL SCOTT GILLEY**

**HON. BETH VAN DUYNE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to thank Corporal Scott Gilley for his service with the Euless Police Department and to congratulate him on his retirement. Corporal Gilley has spent 28 years as an officer with Euless PD protecting his community and countless North Texans. I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation for his selfless service.

Before pursuing his aspirations to become a police officer, Scott served in the United States Coast Guard for 8 years. After attaining an Honorable Discharge, he was hired as a Euless Police Officer in 1995. His primary assignment with the department was working as a senior member in the patrol division. Scott's leadership and work has had a significant impact leading many of his fellow officers on to very successful careers due to his mentorship. Over his many years of service, Scott has received four police certifications, his Corporal rank, and a variety of police in-service training. He's used this knowledge to provide countless hours of police training to other officers and mentor new ones straight from the academy.

During his time with Euless PD, Scott has received 40 police commendations in which he was commended for his service and professionalism to the department and community. It has always been my view that public service is among the most admirable of callings, one that demands the very best among us to tackle monumental challenges in the name of selfless service to others. Corporal Gilley has always been known and appreciated as an "informal leader" of the troops and one that can be counted on in any situation. The courage and dedication he displayed during his many years of service in both the United States Military and Euless Police Department is admirable, and Texas-24 is better for having the benefit of leadership.

It is my honor to congratulate Corporal Scott Gilley on his successful career and retirement.

**HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF THE YEAR: RHONDA ROCHON SMITH**

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

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

Described as passionate, charismatic, compassionate, and driven by her colleagues and fellow community members, Rhonda is a dedicated community servant involved with numerous non-profits, committees and advocacy groups throughout our district. As the Program Manager at the Center for Volunteer & Non-Profit Leadership, Rhonda facilitates the advancement of nonprofits and volunteerism by strengthening leadership, encouraging innovation, and empowering individuals in Solano County. She is also the Volunteer Services Manager for Contra Costa Regional Medical Center where she plays an integral role in placing volunteers in the hospital to enhance the quality of patient care. Outside of these roles, Rhonda serves on the Board of Directors of the Solano County Fair Association, Vallejo Police Oversight and Accountability Commission, and is Vice-Chair of the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation. She is also an active member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the Vallejo NAACP, and Black Women Organized for Political Action. Rhonda works every day to serve her community and inspires others with her commitment to making positive change wherever she goes.

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

**HONORING YARITZA PEREZ FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Yaritza Perel graduated from Gateway High School in Kissimmee in May of 1999. In September of that year, she arrived on the world-famous yellow footprints of the Marine Corps recruit depot in Parris Island, South Carolina, graduating in December. After graduation, she was assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia for MOS training as a bulk fuel specialist. Upon graduation, she was sent to her first duty station at Camp Pendleton, California, and assigned to the First Marine Division, First Marine Expeditionary Force, Seventh Engineer Support Battalion, Bulk Fuel Company.

After the attacks on September 11, 2001, the Marine Corps shifted gears and began preparing for deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As part of the initial invasion, Bulk Fuel Company was attached to the Sixth Engineers Support Battalion. Six days into the war, Bulk Fuel Company completed the 57-mile hose reel tactical fuel system, capable of pumping fuel from the Kuwait-Iraq border to Logistics Support Area Viper. Setting up these fuel lines was crucial to providing all forward-moving units the capabilities to complete their mission and reach their targets. These efforts earned Yaritza's unit a Presidential Unit Citation.

On her second enlistment, Yaritza was assigned to COMUSMARCENT at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, where she served in an administrative role working in the G-1 and G-3 overseeing manpower operations and casualty accountability for all forward operating commands. Upon completing

those orders, she was sent back to the Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, H&HS Squadron serving as Flight Line NCO conducting flight operations and fuel testing for all base operations.

Yaritza separated from the Marine Corps in 2013 and moved back to Orlando to be close to family. Since her return, Yaritza has been an active member of the community, learning to repurpose her service to the great state of Florida. Yaritza served as a platoon leader with The Mission Continues for over three years and completed over 50 community service projects in the Central Florida area. After Hurricane Maria, she went with The Mission Continues to Puerto Rico to help restore the El Morro National Monument. During her time volunteering, she found Moms Clean Air Force, a national nonprofit organization focused on cleaning the contaminated air across the state. As the state organizer for Florida, she has met with congressional leaders, legislators, and community leaders to make and change laws and regulations to ensure a cleaner healthier environment for future generations. As an environmental advocate, she was the voice for the voiceless and spoke on behalf of Floridians.

Currently, she works as an outreach specialist with the Wounded Warrior Project. In this role, she engages with veterans and their families to bring them out of the house and get them engaged with each other, our communities, and other resources that could aid them in their healing journey. Yaritza is responsible for empowering and inspiring post-9/11 veterans in Florida to re-establish themselves as positive contributors to their communities. She is also a proud mom.

**CHRIS CONNORS**

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, today, I honor the unwavering dedication and remarkable milestones of State Senator Chris Connors throughout his career. His commitment to public service began with his election to the Lacey Township Committee in 1984, followed by his role as Mayor from 1986 to 1990. Senator Connors has also served as Director of the New Jersey Commission on Capital Budgeting and Planning, overseeing the state's capital budget and expenditure plans. Elected to the General Assembly in 1989, Senator Connors has been a champion for his constituents. He was subsequently elected to the Senate in 2007, and his contributions have been recognized through various honors and awards.

During my time as a state legislator, I had collaborated with Senator Chris Connors on several practical initiatives, such as establishing the Coastal New Jersey Evacuation Task Force to enhance the preparedness of coastal communities for natural disasters. Additionally, we fought diligently to secure South Jersey representation on the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the governing body responsible for overseeing the Garden State Parkway.

In addition to his political career, Senator Connors is an accomplished attorney, and he

remains a dedicated family man, married to his wife Deborah since 1979, and together they have two children. Senator Christopher J. Connors' unwavering dedication, notable achievements, and commitment to serving his community make him a true role model. Let us express our utmost respect and appreciation for his remarkable public service. God Bless Senator Chris Connors, and God Bless our United States of America.

#### RECOGNIZING MARIE HANDY

#### HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, I rise today to recognize Marie Handy of Lakewood, Colorado for receiving the United States Department of State Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. As part of this prestigious honor, Marie traveled to Japan to study abroad.

U.S. Study Abroad programs are an important component of the federal government's efforts to ensure Americans of all backgrounds have the opportunity to gain global experiences and work across our borders to help address our world's greatest challenges. The Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship provides exceptional undergraduate students with the opportunity to expand their cultural proficiencies, study critical need languages, and conduct STEM research. The scholarship has empowered over 41,000 individuals with financial need to engage in people-to-people diplomacy and prepare for distinguished careers in public service.

I commend Marie for pursuing an exemplary international education and representing America abroad as a citizen ambassador. This scholarship rightly recognizes a commitment to academic excellence. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, it is a privilege to recognize Marie's many accomplishments.

#### HONORING THE 2023 WOMEN OF THE YEAR: RUTHIE DINEEN

#### HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

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

Ruthie is a compassionate and dedicated leader who works to improve her community through her work, talent, and volunteerism.

She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker as well as an accomplished pianist and composer. Ruthie is the current executive director of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts where she has led the organization with strategic vision since 2021. Colleagues describe her as a dedicated and passionate leader who has touched the lives of countless students and staff. Since taking the position, Ruthie has helped increase the funding for the East Bay Center from \$3.2M to \$4.2M and in doing so has helped raise wages for the Center's staff. Ruthie is also leading the Center's Strategic Plan, requiring organizational and cultural changes to the operation, doing so while maintaining high faculty and staff morale. Her work makes the school a more vibrant place for every student and helps many discover new talents and interests which may otherwise go unnoticed. Ruthie embodies the mission of the East Bay Center of the Performing Arts to engage with students in the community through the world of performance traditions.

She is also an active member of her community who has been involved in a number of initiatives including Healthy Richmond, the Invest in Youth Coalition, and the planning group for the Blueprint to Prevent Interpersonal Violence in Contra Costa County. In everything she does, Ruthie finds ways to bring positive change to her community.

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

#### IAN MCKINNEY

#### HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, last month, I had the honor of attending Ian McKinney's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Ian began his scouting experience as a Tiger Cub and after many years and transformative experiences, has now earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Throughout the years, Ian has gained valuable knowledge and useful skills, made possible by his participation in the merit badge program and his steady involvement with the troop. To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, Ian developed and built a community educational garden to enrich his school's STEM program, leaving a lasting impact on fellow and future classmates.

Ian's dedication to the Scouts has been admirable and he should be proud of all that he has achieved with them. God Bless Ian McKinney and God Bless the United States of America.

HONORING IRIS BATHSHEBA RUEDA MARTINEZ FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

#### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 13, 2023*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker Pro Tempore, Iris Bathsheba Rueda Martinez, a Mexican attorney, graduated from Universidad del Tepeyac, Mexico City, stands as a prominent figure within the Central Florida Hispanic community. Her illustrious career spans a remarkable 17-year tenure of service at the Consulates of Mexico in Orlando, Florida, and Fresno, California. Iris has dedicated her life to providing unwavering support and making a profound impact on the lives of her fellow Mexican compatriots living abroad while working closely with community organizations, legal experts, and government officials to address the unique needs of Mexican nationals living in the United States.

Born in the vibrant heart of Mexico City, Iris has ardently maintained a deep connection to her Hispanic cultural heritage throughout her life journey. Her commitment to the promotion and celebration of Hispanic heritage resonates in every facet of her existence, with deep gratitude for the guiding influence of her faith in God. Throughout her distinguished consular career, Iris played a determinate and indispensable role in delivering humanitarian, community, and legal assistance to Mexican citizens residing in Florida and California. She participated in projects that led to the protection of human rights of hundreds of Mexican countrymen believing always in the success of mutual international relations based on the power of diplomacy.

Beyond her consular duties and advocacy work, Iris takes immense pride in her roles as a devoted wife and mother to a cherished daughter. The bedrock of family values holds central importance in her life, with her family in Mexico serving as an unwavering pillar of support. One of Iris's deepest aspirations is to instill in her daughter an enduring love for her Mexican heritage and a profound sense of pride in her American birthright.

Currently, Iris lends her expertise and dedication to a distinguished international consultancy firm Lord and Lord Consulting, led by accomplished women. She plays a key role in the management of the relations between LATAM, the USA, and the communication with the U.S. federal government.

The selection of Iris as an honoree during Hispanic Heritage Month is a well-deserved recognition of her dedication and contribution to the promotion of the Hispanic community in the United States.