

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING METRA COMMUTER RAILROAD'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Metra on its 40th anniversary. Since it first began operations 40 years ago, Metra has been essential—a bedrock transportation service for the Chicago metropolitan area, connecting commuters to their homes, jobs, and other critical destinations throughout the region.

Without Metra's commuter rail network, our communities would be more isolated, our economy less innovative, and our region a less vibrant place to start a business and raise a family. I am honored to represent the communities of Illinois' 4th Congressional District, a district served by no fewer than three Metra lines: the BNSF line, the Union Pacific West line, and the Heritage Corridor.

Metra's future looks bright. However, sustaining Metra as a vital resource for our communities is an undertaking that is only possible thanks to the hard work and dedication of so many Metra employees. To this end, we must commit to increasing federal investment in our commuter rail networks as a critical component to securing Metra's future and that of public transportation in the Chicago region.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and other landmark legislation enacted under the Biden Administration have supported the beginning of a new chapter for Metra, and I look forward to continuing to partner closely with Metra as its vital work continues in the years to come.

I am proud to champion Metra's efforts to improve and strengthen its infrastructure and its service to its customers by continuing to focus on safety, reliability, efficiency and innovation. As we celebrate its 40th anniversary, I say thank you, Metra.

RECOGNIZING LEILA GORDON ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Leila Gordon on the occasion of her retirement. Leila has served as the Executive Director of the Reston Community Center (RCC) for nearly 17 years, and her leadership, commitment to service, and passion for her community will be dearly missed.

Leila Gordon moved to Northern Virginia in 1969 and has resided in the area intermittently ever since. She first fell in love with Northern Virginia while attending James Madison High School in Vienna. After graduating, she stud-

ied theater in college and soon found herself working for a theater in Georgia, but she hoped to return to Northern Virginia.

She luckily got her chance when a position opened up at the Reston Community Center for supervising arts education classes. Shortly after starting, she was promoted to department head and continued in that position until being selected for the role of Executive Director.

In her role as Executive Director, Leila oversaw an enthusiastic team of more than 300 full-time and seasonal professionals. Each year, RCC offers positive, self-development experiences that enhance the quality of life for all people living and working in Reston. They also create and sustain community traditions through special events, outreach activities, and facility rentals.

During her tenure, RCC experienced tremendous growth and received numerous accolades celebrating RCC's facilities, programming, and sustainability. Notably in October 2020 they earned accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), a mark of an agency's excellence in its leadership, management, operations, programs, and services. CAPRA assures policymakers, department employees, and the public that RCC can provide programs, facilities, and services with integrity. This designation is in no small part due to the dedication and passion of Leila Gordon and the entire team at RCC.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Leila Gordon for her years of service to our community. Her love for Reston and its residents was always apparent. Leila worked tirelessly to ensure that Reston Community Center enriches lives and builds community for all of Reston. I wish her the best for all of her future endeavors.

CELEBRATING THE NORTH TONAWANDA BOTANICAL GARDEN ORGANIZATION AS THE NOT FOR PROFIT OF THE YEAR BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE TONAWANDAS

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the North Tonawanda Botanical Garden Organization as the Not For Profit of the Year recognized by the Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas.

Launched in 2018, the North Tonawanda Botanical Garden Organization is driven by a deep commitment to enriching our community's understanding of native plants, pollinators, water-wise practices, and sustainable gardening. With the dedication of their members and volunteers, the North Tonawanda Botanical Garden Organization's passion shines through and exemplifies their commit-

ment to education and empowerment, inspiring citizens to engage with and protect our natural environment.

The North Tonawanda Botanical Garden Organization has flourished through strong partnerships, notably with the North Tonawanda Youth, Recreation, Parks & Seniors Department. Their collaboration with Girl Scout Troop No. 71226 and the New York State Department of Conservation's regional team is a remarkable example of community-driven environmental education. Together, they have worked to establish vital aquatic habitats, demonstrating the organization's commitment to irreplaceable ecological functions.

Today, as we celebrate the North Tonawanda Botanical Garden Organization, and look forward to many more years of service, collaboration, and community enrichment, let us acknowledge their unwavering dedication to our community and the environment. Their efforts not only beautify our surroundings but also educate and inspire future generations to cherish and protect our natural resources.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOE MARCHINI

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Joe Marchini, a beloved husband, brother, father, grandfather, and farmer.

Born on December 9, 1938, Joe was the second of three sons born to Italian immigrants, Florindo and Elisa Marchini. Raised on a family farm in Le Grand, CA, Joe attended Savannah Elementary School where he first learned to speak English. However, after traveling to Italy with the family for a year, he had to be sent to St. Mary's School in Berkeley to relearn the English language. He would often boast that he "learned English twice." Joe would go on to graduate from Merced High School in 1958, which he commemorated with another year-long trip to Europe with his brother Leonard. When he returned, he began dating Juliette Thompson, whom he married the following summer in 1960.

Although his adult life was just starting to take form, his farming career was already well underway. In fact, it began at the ripe age of 13 for Joe, when he harvested his 11-acre crop of fresh market tomatoes. A true green thumb, Joe was known for tending to his beloved garden and sharing its goodness with family and friends. Not long after his marriage, in the early 1960s, Joe purchased his father's shares in the family's tomato and bell pepper farming operation, Giampaoli and Marchini.

Throughout the years, operations became known as J. Marchini Farms and grew numerous crops including their signature fresh market tomatoes and bell peppers, kale, chicory, fennel, onions, almonds, pistachios, wheat, alfalfa, corn, and figs. Then in the early 1990s,

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Joe returned to his Italian roots and brought the radicchio seed from his homeland to the United States. As the world's appetite for radicchio grew, so did J. Marchini Farms which eventually became one of the world's biggest radicchio producers, shipping to Japan, Korea, Canada, and all along the East Coast. A visionary, Joe eventually decided he needed to start producing his own almonds as well and rallied together some farm friends to form the Minturn Nut Company. His passion to be innovative worked in his favor once again as their operations went from producing 10 million pounds of almonds to a staggering 110 million pounds.

Despite his success, Mr. Marchini always kept his boots to the soil and made sure to give back to the community. Throughout his 70 years of farming in Le Grand, Joe was a member of the Le Grand Volunteer Firefighters, a strong supporter of Le Grand Community Day, and a parishioner at our Lady of Lourdes in Le Grand. He built a cemetery in Plainsburg and a state-of-the-art car wash in Chowchilla to address community needs. Furthermore, he was also known to humbly help other farmers in times of need, and took care of his employees, whom he credits his success to.

Joe always lived life to the fullest, doing the things that he loved most such as visiting the cabin he built with his friends, skiing, taking his famous jet boat out to Kelsey Lake, and spending the summers at Sand Dollar Beach with family and friends. However, in 2012, Joe was diagnosed with cancer and given three months to live, but by God's grace and the support of those around him he was granted 10 and a half more years of life until the age of 84.

He will always be remembered fondly throughout his community, by friends and loved ones including his wife, Juliette; his brothers, Leonard and Richard; his children, Lisa, Jeff, and Fania; his 10 grandchildren; and his 11 grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Joe Marchini for his contributions to agriculture and the community. May we never forget his contributions and continue to be inspired by his story.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: CARLA REYNOLDS

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize Carla Reynolds, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades, but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire

hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Carla has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

Carla has made it her life's mission to be an agent of positive change wherever she can and she has excelled remarkably in this endeavor. Carla is an unwavering advocate, activist, event organizer, humanitarian, and beacon of hope for all in our community, especially for those facing adversity. Through the The Boots on the Ground Foundation, which she founded in 2021 alongside Danyelle Eckert, Carla works relentlessly to provide vital resources and support to anyone in need. Whether collecting food, toiletries, and other necessities, distributing holiday meals and gifts, assisting seniors, providing financial and peer-based recovery support, or organizing community and family-driven events, Carla has created an organization that serves as a vital lifeline and incredible resource for individuals and families in our community in need of assistance. Carla is also responsible for spearheading Bristol Borough's annual Unity Day celebration. Each year, she orchestrates this incredible event to honor our local First Responders and bring our community together to foster stronger community-police relationships while celebrating our rich culture. I have had the pleasure of attending Unity Day since its inception and continue to be inspired by her ability to create such a powerful display of a vibrant and united community. Carla truly is a force of positive change within our community, and her work has undoubtedly touched and bettered countless lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the work of people like Carla Reynolds that our communities thrive, and our Nation grows stronger. Her service, given without expectation of recognition, stands as a testament to the belief that one individual's dedication can ripple through the lives of many, sparking change, fostering resilience, and inspiring hope. Today, we honor Carla not just for her remarkable deeds but for who she is—a true hero in every sense of the word.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to Carla Reynolds for her extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional individual, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May her example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

RECOGNIZING DANA RITTER

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dana Ritter, who was named a 2024 She Leads Woman of Distinction.

Dana Ritter has built a meaningful career centered around finding and reporting truth as the Washington D.C. Bureau Chief for CBN News (Christian Broadcasting Network). Dana leads with this motto: "Do right by the newsmaker. Do right by the audience. Do right by each other." As a Christian woman in media, her aim is to bring glory to God by tell-

ing stories of what He's doing in the world, seeking truth—not spin, and recognizing the sovereignty of God—no matter the story or event she's covering.

She leads the DC team in coverage of the White House, Capitol Hill, the Supreme Court and other big stories in Washington. With nearly 25 years of experience in broadcast journalism and digital media, Dana has served in television newsrooms across Washington D.C., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Norfolk, and Roanoke, Virginia, and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Dana previously worked at CBN News as the White House Producer and was the Executive Producer of the Brody File.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating this outstanding woman of distinction.

SOUTH DAKOTA 2024 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON RECOGNITION RECIPIENTS

HON. DUSTY JOHNSON

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, each year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes a select group of schools across the country, celebrating their academic achievements and contributions to educational excellence. As a South Dakotan, I am proud of Christ the King Elementary, Lennox Elementary School, Lincoln Elementary School, and Warner High School for being named as National Blue Ribbon Schools.

Lennox Elementary, Christ the King Elementary, and Warner High School are honored for their high scores in English and mathematics, while Lincoln Elementary is recognized for its progress in closing the achievement gap among subgroups. This will be the second Blue Ribbon recognition for the Warner School District, as Warner Elementary School was awarded in 2016. These schools serve as models of proficient education for schools throughout the Nation.

Outstanding teachers and a supportive community are key to the success of each of these Blue Ribbon Schools. It is paramount that we continue to have exceptional teachers and schools for our kids and the future of our Nation. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating these four exceptional schools in South Dakota. I'm confident they will continue to make great contributions.

HONORING JUDITH DITTMAN FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SECOND STORY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 25, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Judith Dittman, Chief Executive Officer of Second Story. Judith has been serving communities in Northern Virginia through Second Story since 1995. Since 1972, Second