

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 Amy Keiper-Shaw, 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. Amy has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

A licensed Clinical Social Worker, Certified Grief Counselor, Clinical Thanatologist, and Certified Dementia Practitioner, Amy has dedicated her life to providing care, comfort, and compassion to others in our community in challenging times of need. Throughout her career, Amy saw first-hand the heartbreaking suffering of children who lost a loved one and recognized a need for a positive, compassionate and effective bereavement resource for children and their families in our community. And so, in 2013, her non-profit, Hands Holding Hearts, was born and has since become a beacon of comfort and hope for Bucks County children and families as they navigate some of the most painful and difficult times of their lives. Studies show that one in 12 kids will lose a parent or sibling by the age of 18, with that rate only increasing since the pandemic. Without the necessary support and resources to process their grief, children are left without the tools and skills needed to successfully and positively move forward. Through workshops, Camp Feeling Better Summer Camp, counseling, support groups, and community presentations, Amy and her team of experienced counselors provide children with vital education and resources for coping and communicating and the invaluable comfort of knowing they are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the work of people like Amy that our communities thrive, and our Nation grows stronger. Her efforts remind us of the power in making a positive difference in the lives of children and families in need.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to Amy 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.

HONORING DAVID JAKUBASZEK WITH THE OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD 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 honor and celebrate Mr. David Jakubaszek. It is with deepest respect and heartfelt remem-

brance that we recognize Mr. Jakubaszek for posthumously receiving the Outstanding Service Award by the Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas.

Mr. Jakubaszek's journey began in the City of North Tonawanda, where he grew up and cultivated a love for his community that would guide him throughout his life. After pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Pennsylvania, he was commissioned into the U.S. Army—a testament to his commitment to service. It was during this time that he met the love of his life, Jean, and together they built a family that included their four cherished children: Jennifer, Michael, Thomas, and Joseph.

Mr. Jakubaszek's legacy also includes 38 years of service as the Accountant of the City of North Tonawanda, a trustee of the public library, an usher at the Riviera Theater and other various leadership roles throughout the community.

David Jakubaszek's legacy is not just in the positions he held or the time he volunteered, but in the countless lives he touched with his kindness, generosity, and unwavering support. He embodied the spirit of community, showing us all what it means to give of oneself for the betterment of others. His love for life and his dedication to service will forever be an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, as we honor David Jakubaszek today, let us remember him not only for his outstanding service, but also for the values he instilled in each of us—values of compassion, dedication, and the importance of lifting one another up. While he may no longer be with us in body, his spirit lives on in the community he cherished so deeply.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARY FITZGERALD

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 25, 2024*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mary "Marie" Fitzgerald of Norwich, Connecticut. Mary passed away peacefully on October 5, 2024, at the age of 99. As a lifelong resident of Union Street, she was a pillar of the Norwich community, touching countless lives in her almost half-century of service as a teacher.

Mary was born on December 14, 1924, in Norwich, Connecticut, to William and Kathryn Fitzgerald. Her father was an amazing person, whose legacy of public service lives on at the local, state, and federal levels. He grew up in a first-generation Irish American family, went to work in a foundry at the age of 15, and because of his work ethic, became a foreman, was elected Mayor of Norwich, and in 1936, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. As a freshman member of Congress, he succeeded in passing the National Apprenticeship Authorization Act—"The Fitzgerald Act" which set national standards for apprenticeship training that still is the law of the land. He returned to Connecticut and served in WWII on the Connecticut War Production Board, which produced military equipment (submarines, aircraft engines) that was instrumental to the success of the allied nations. As his daughter, Mary grew up close to all the action of such a dynamic leader.

After her family returned to Norwich from Washington, Mary too chose a path of public service, albeit in a different form.

After completing her education, Mary dedicated her life to early childhood education and the profession of teaching. For many decades, she worked as a kindergarten teacher, helping to shape the minds of generations of children. Mary led with compassion and went above and beyond to create a caring and supportive environment for each student who entered her classroom. She helped instill a love of learning for an incredible number of students who will not soon forget her impact.

Mary loved her neighborhood and the people around her. Outside of her work as a teacher, she thoughtfully devoted her time to charities throughout the community as well as her church. Mary also served as a devoted Parishioner of the Cathedral of St. Patrick, attending mass every day and attending virtually when she could no longer attend in person. She was also a member of the Rosary Altar Society and the Connecticut Alpha Delta Kappa Chapter, a fraternal organization for teachers.

In her free time, Mary was adventurous and loved to have new experiences. Starting in 1969, she traveled with her best friend Phyllis. Together, they saw several countries and six different continents, finding favorites in Ireland, Japan, Bermuda, and New Zealand.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent constituents like Mary. Her friends and family remarked that Mary had an infectious love for life and emulated devotion to her community. She was a beloved teacher and community leader, and we can take solace in the knowledge that she has left a legacy through each and every one of her students and the countless individuals who knew her. She is survived by generations of cousins including Mary "Betsy" Clarke, Heather Anderson, and Adam Clarke and their respective families. Mary is also survived by her neighbor, David Bonnevillle. I request that my colleagues honor Mary's life of service.

HONORING VIDOR POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR HEROIC ACTIONS

**HON. RANDY K. WEBER, SR.**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 25, 2024*

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor two exceptional officers from the Vidor Police Department, Officer Michael Stephenson and Officer Ashton Moss, for their courageous, life-saving actions in the face of a family's worst nightmare. Their swift and selfless response is a shining example of the best that law enforcement has to offer—timely heroics in the service of others. In the early hours of Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 1:49 AM, the Vidor Police Dispatch Center received a call about a residential fire with reports of children trapped inside. When Officers Stephenson and Moss arrived on the scene, they wasted no time. Spotting an air conditioning unit in the window of the children's room, they immediately began working to dislodge it, knowing every second counted.

Officer Stephenson managed to remove the window unit, and with the help of Officer

Moss, they reached inside and pulled out two young children—a 7-year-old and a 9-year-old. Just moments after they rescued those precious kids, flames erupted from the window.

I thank Officers Michael Stephenson and Ashton Moss, for their bravery, speed, and dedication. Their actions embody the true spirit of Southeast Texas—courage, selflessness, and a deep commitment to protecting others. It is an honor to represent them in Congress, and their heroism sets an example for us all.

COMMEMORATING THE SMITH COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY ALLIANCE'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. NATHANIEL MORAN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 25, 2024*

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate and celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Smith County Medical Society Alliance, an organization that has strengthened, supported, and served medical families in and around Tyler, Texas, since 1934. Their dedication to nurturing and encouraging a healthy community has not been overlooked.

Over the years, the SCMS Alliance has provided countless educational and supportive opportunities, events, and projects for the citizens of Smith County.

The SCMS Alliance has distributed over \$1 million in medical student scholarships to students at Tyler Junior College, the University of Texas at Tyler, and UT Tyler School of Medicine. Their Junior Health Ambassadors project focuses on providing physician children with ways they can serve Smith County. The Youth Leadership Council aims to develop leadership skills among local high school students. The SCMS Alliance has also collaborated with TMAA to sponsor book vending machines at elementary schools.

Members of the SCMS Alliance are primarily spouses of active and retired physicians, as well as physicians themselves. Physicians and their spouses make significant sacrifices to serve and care for others, and it is a privilege to honor their selflessness. These members use their time impactfully to serve Smith County, offering their support to doctors and doctors' families. And for that, I am once again proud to be an East Texan, where people put others before themselves.

I would like to thank President Renee Wright, the SCMS Alliance Board, and all the members of the Smith County Medical Society Alliance for their outstanding work over the years. I am delighted to congratulate the Alliance on 90 years of service to Smith County.

RECOGNIZING MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT CHIEF J. SCOTT BENDIG'S RETIREMENT AFTER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 25, 2024*

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary public servant, Chief J. Scott Bendig, on the occasion of his retirement from the Montgomery Township Police Department after 35 years of dedicated service to the Montgomery Township community and the field of law enforcement.

Chief Bendig was born and raised in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. He began his journey into public service by graduating from Bishop McDevitt High School in 1985. He then pursued higher education, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Temple University followed by his completion of the Pennsylvania State Police Academy. Chief Bendig's passion for law enforcement was matched by his commitment to continuous learning, as evidenced by his earning a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from West Chester University and his graduation from the prestigious FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. These experiences further solidified his credentials as a leader in public safety.

Chief Bendig dedicated his entire 35-year career in law enforcement to the residents of Montgomery Township. During his tenure, he rose through the ranks, starting as a Recruit Patrol Officer in 1989 before serving as a Canine Officer and Unit Supervisor, Corporal in 2000, Sergeant in 2001, and eventually Deputy Chief in 2010. In 2012, he became Chief of Police, where he embodied professionalism, integrity, and a tireless commitment to the safety of the community.

His auxiliary duties included serving as a DARE Officer, DARE Officer in Charge, and Field Training Officer, as well as creating and instructing the Citizens Police Academy and teaching at various police academies. Chief Bendig's commitment to education extended to the classroom. He worked as an Adjunct Faculty member at Gwynedd Mercy University, and as a General Instructor for the Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Commission for over a decade. These teaching roles highlight his dedication to nurturing the next generation of law enforcement professionals.

Under Chief Bendig's leadership, the Montgomery Township Police Department experienced significant advancements in both its operational capabilities and technology infrastructure. One of his most impactful initiatives was the implementation of the Body Worn

Camera system, a crucial tool for promoting transparency and accountability. He also led the deployment of Fixed License Plate Readers, which enhanced the department's ability to monitor and respond to criminal activity more effectively.

Chief Bendig's leadership extended far beyond the borders of Montgomery Township. He served as Commander of the Montgomery County Major Incident Response Team, playing a key role in handling critical incidents across the region. He also contributed significantly as the Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for the township, ensuring preparedness for major emergencies. His leadership roles within law enforcement associations are equally impressive, having served as Executive Chair and President of the Police Chiefs Association of Montgomery County and as a member of the National Security Executive Board for the FBI Philadelphia Field Division.

In addition to his leadership in public safety, Chief Bendig was a trusted instructor and advisor. He served as a Training Committee Chair for the Eastern Pennsylvania FBI National Academy Associates and as a peer reviewer for the United States Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. His involvement in the Montgomery County Racial/Ethnic Disparities Task Force further underscores his commitment to fostering fairness and inclusivity in law enforcement.

Throughout his career, Chief Bendig was recognized with numerous awards and commendations. His accolades include two Unit Citations, two Commendations for Merit, and a Certificate of Commendation, along with countless letters recognizing his commendable service and leadership. His influence extended beyond Montgomery Township, as he served as an instructor and advisor to various law enforcement organizations ensuring his knowledge and experience were shared widely.

What truly distinguishes Chief Bendig, however, is his sincere dedication to the welfare of his officers and the community. He fostered a culture of excellence within the department, constantly challenging younger officers to strive for their full potential. His legacy of leadership is marked by both his technical acumen and his unwavering commitment to nurturing the next generation of law enforcement professionals.

I am confident that his impact on Montgomery Township will be felt for many years to come. His selfless service, exemplary leadership, and lasting contributions will forever be a part of the community's history.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Chief Bendig for his years of devoted service and wish him the very best in all his future endeavors.