

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW) WILLIE BARRAZA POST 9173

HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Willie Barraza Post 9173 for their 75th anniversary. The Willie Barraza Post has been an important service organization to assist our veteran community, their families, and the wider El Paso community.

The Post was founded in 1949 and named after Willie Barraza, who was an Army Sergeant from Smeltertown who went Missing in Action during World War II. Smeltertown was located in El Paso, Texas, and housed workers of the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO). Willie Barraza Post 9173 is the second oldest post in El Paso with veteran members from the Korean, Vietnam, and Global War on Terrorism.

The Willie Barraza Post is chartered with 34 World War II service members and currently has 148 members serving our border city and our military base of Fort Bliss. Their members are active participants in supporting our community. They help raise funds for local churches and scholarship opportunities for students. They also serve in recognizing veterans through participation in our district's annual Independence Day and Veterans Day parades.

Today, I want to thank the Willie Barraza Post for their service to the country and our community. I join them in celebrating their 75th Anniversary and commend them for their consistent presence in El Paso. I look forward to the continued work that they do in the coming years and decades.

PINELAND LEARNING CENTER

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the great school of Pineland Learning Center in Vineland, South Jersey, which has been of incredible mentorship for children in South Jersey for over four decades. Since its founding in 1980 by the late Fred Eccleston, the school has been an outstanding outlet for students that have struggled in the traditional learning environment by providing alternative learning techniques to fit their needs. Many times, the students that come to PLC have been dealt hands in life that most adults can't even imagine and because of this they have not been able to find their full potential in a typical school setting. With the dedicated staff that Pineland has to offer, the kids are provided with a safe, structured, and consistent learning environment where they can discover their gifts and see all the possibilities life has to offer. The staff gains the children's trust by committing themselves to learning who the student is by understanding the student's personality as well as quirks and triggers that cause outbursts. This allows the kids to learn

who they are by being allowed to be themselves in a culture that feels just like a family. PLC goes beyond academics by also providing the students with work-based learning for jobs that the local community has to offer, and college fairs where many of the kids can attend universities throughout the country. It is my great honor to commend the Pineland Learning Center on many years of great service to the youth of South Jersey and I look forward to many more years of improving their lives. God bless Pineland Learning Center and God bless the United States of America.

TRIBUTE TO DAVE HOBSON

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues from Ohio and across the country in paying tribute to our friend, former Congressman David L. Hobson, who died on October 6.

Dave was one of the Buckeye State's most respected public servants. He worked on behalf of the people of the Seventh Congressional District for 18 years—and served in the State Senate for eight years prior to that. He took great pride in solving problems great and small on behalf of his constituents.

A longtime member of the Appropriations Committee and a Military Construction cardinal, Dave was a champion of our state's military installations of all types, ensuring that they were in the best position possible to contribute to our national defense.

Dave was himself a proud Ohio Air National Guard veteran, serving during the Berlin Wall crisis. In recognition of his service in and out of uniform, in 2022 he was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame—a high honor accorded to no more than 20 Ohioans each year.

Mr. Speaker, we are grateful that men like Dave Hobson are willing to enter the arena and commit their lives to public service. Our prayers are with his wife, Carolyn, their three children, and their grand- and great-grandchildren at this time of sorrow.

IN MEMORY OF MRS. BRENDA DAVIS MURRELL

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary public servant, trailblazing leader, wife, mother, grandmother, sister, mentor and friend of longstanding, Mrs. Brenda Davis Murrell. Sadly, Brenda transitioned from labor to reward on November 9, 2024. A celebration of her remarkable life will be held at 11:00 a.m. on November 15, 2024, at Victory Baptist Church, 640 Meriwether Road, Milledgeville, Georgia.

Brenda Davis Murrell was born August 11, 1951, in Cleveland, Ohio to the late Lexie Davis, Sr. and Ms. Bobbie Davis Arnold. Her family relocated to Milledgeville, Georgia when

Brenda was 10 years old, where she began the early stages of her life's journey of achievement, service, and empowerment of others. She was a product of the Baldwin County School System where she excelled academically and graduated from Boddie High School in 1969.

Upon graduation, Brenda attended the historic Paine College in Augusta, Georgia where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 1973 and joined the sisterhood of her beloved Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., where she served for more than 50 years holding numerous leadership positions and leveraging her influence and vision for the sorority to make a lasting impact in communities across Georgia and beyond.

In pursuit of further knowledge and mastery, Brenda completed her master's degree in education from the University of Georgia in 1985 and armed with a keen understanding of human behavior, she began employment as a counselor within the Georgia Department of Corrections, rising through the ranks, breaking barriers, and setting unprecedented standards. Her tenacity, intellect and leadership skills earned her appointment as one of the first 3 Black and female wardens in the State of Georgia and her service as Warden at multiple institutions sealed her reputation as one of the most highly competent, effective, compassionate, and admired prison administrators in the profession. She was instrumental in implementing a wide range of transformative policies and programs which remain active today, including life changing prison ministries. Correctional officers and offenders who served under her leadership all say of Brenda that she always treated them with dignity and respect.

Her career culminated as Director of Facilities Operations for the Georgia Department of Corrections, overseeing more than 60 facilities with 10,000 employees and 47,000 offenders, reaching the zenith of her profession and setting a powerful example for future generations of leaders.

Following her retirement, Brenda continued to influence the field as a private consultant sharing her expertise with facilities and organizations nationwide. However, as she stepped away from corrections, she redirected her energy to her "first love"—DST. As a Delta, she embraced the Red Hat society, an organization dedicated to women's empowerment, embodying the message of living life boldly and with purpose.

Brenda was an avid traveler who cherished exploration, traversing continents and embarking on 19 adventures with Carnival and Caribbean Cruise lines.

A woman of unwavering faith, Brenda's life was grounded in her Christian beliefs and no matter where her career moved her, she sought out churches in her community, finding strength and kinship through worship. Her spiritual journey began at Flagg Chapel Baptist Church in Milledgeville where she served for many years as Church announcer, utilizing her distinctive voice and perfect diction there, and within her community as a respected public speaker.

Brenda loved her family. Her sons, Brandon and Bruce Butts were the loves of her life, and she was a doting grandmother, to say the least. Moreover, she loved her siblings and extended family; frequently organizing family reunions, and providing warmth, laughter, and support to all of them.

Brenda was a friend to many who were blessed by the bond of her friendship. She was frank and honest in her friendship—sharing not just what you might want to hear but what she felt you needed to hear. On a personal note, I will forever cherish the wise counsel and sage advice Brenda gave me over the last 32 years. It was at her kitchen table with Brenda and several friends, poring over maps and pages of data, and in fervent prayer, that I resolved to run for Congress in 1992. As she did for me, Brenda touched so many lives in so many ways and because she did, the world is a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the people of Georgia and beyond in celebrating the extraordinary life of Brenda Davis Murrell and in extending our deepest condolences to her family, friends, sorors, and all who mourn her loss. Moreover, I pray that we will all be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

CONGRATULATING JASON ANDERSON ON 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CITY OF ROCHELLE

HON. DARIN LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Jason Anderson for his 20 years of impactful service as Economic Development Director for the City of Rochelle. In this role, Anderson worked with Illinois businesses and others in the Rochelle community to attract increased economic investment and improve public infrastructure in Rochelle.

Anderson graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Business Administration. Before becoming the Economic Development Director, Anderson served in many roles, including Northern Illinois Regional Director for former U.S. Senator Peter Fitzgerald.

Through Anderson's tenure, the City of Rochelle saw robust improvement in their economy and infrastructure. Since 2005, there has been \$1.3 billion in capital investments made by businesses and 2,200 jobs created in Rochelle. Highlights of this economic growth include investment projects from companies like Wheatland Tube and the CHS Ethanol plant as well as the construction of the Rochelle Business Technology Park.

Additionally, the City of Rochelle has received over \$125 million in funding for infrastructure over the past two decades. Anderson's work as Economic Development Director focused specifically on infrastructure modernization of the railroad and airport. In Anderson's 10 years overseeing Rochelle's airport it received almost \$11 million in funding and the Rochelle railroad's yearly revenue quadrupled under Anderson's vision.

Jason Anderson's tireless work has left a lifelong impact on the Rochelle community and the state of Illinois. His commitment to our community is truly inspiring and I congratulate Jason on 20 years of service to Rochelle and wish him the best in all future endeavors.

RAYLEN WEAVER

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of attending a masterful Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Raylen Weaver from Mullica Hill, South Jersey. Raylen has been involved in boy scouts for seven years since he was a rising fifth grader as a Webelos Scout and now in the tenth grade he has already achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. He has held multiple leadership positions which includes the Den Chief, Scribe, Patrol Leader and earning his way up to the position of Senior Patrol Leader. On his climb up to Senior Patrol Leader, he spent 59 nights camping, hiked 84 miles, and logged 76 hours of service to better his community before he is accredited with completing 130 more hours to complete his Eagle Scout project. For his project, he decided to create the Little Way Children's Garden to benefit the Mary Mother of Mercy Church in Glassboro, South Jersey. This garden is a beautiful prayer area defined by edge stones with concrete and wood benches complete with statues of St. Therese, Mary, and St. Joseph in a perfect display to benefit children of the church and parishioners. Raylen is also an avid runner and biker participating in a Duathlon and the 100-mile MS ride City to Shore. He plans to attend the Naval Academy or West Point to serve his country and continue to improve himself. I have all faith that Raylen will make his country proud and continue to make his local community proud. God bless Raylen Weaver and God bless the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING KAY GRANGER FOR HER REMARKABLE SERVICE IN CONGRESS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to imagine a Congress without my good friend and longtime colleague Kay Granger—an effective and accomplished lawmaker who has diligently represented the people of Texas since 1997, when she was elected as the first Republican congresswoman from the Lone Star State.

An incredibly strong, well-informed and tenacious leader, Kay has worked tirelessly over the years to make our government more transparent and accountable while helping those in need.

Having worked closely with her over the years, I know her deep personal commitment and unwavering resolve to protect unborn children and their mothers from the violence of abortion.

During her remarkable 25 years of service on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, she has fought relentlessly to preserve critical protections for the weakest and most vulnerable, including the Hyde Amendment—which has saved more than 2.5 million lives.

She has also strongly supported the Smith Amendment, which I first authored in 1984, to

prevent U.S. taxpayer dollars from funding abortions for federal employees and their dependents, and her work on foreign aid has helped protect so many unborn babies and women in need around the globe.

As the first Republican Chairwoman on the House Appropriations Committee, Kay also led our efforts in the House on many other important matters. She worked hard to cut wasteful spending, promote fiscal responsibility, and ensure hard-earned American taxpayer dollars are spent more efficiently and effectively.

At every turn, Kay has been steadfast in her support of our courageous service members, veterans, and their families and absolutely dedicated to boosting our national security, especially while she served as Chairwoman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

She has worked tirelessly to hold public officials to account, including those at the U.S. State Department in the aftermath of the horrific attack on our diplomatic compound in Benghazi that tragically left four Americans dead.

Kay's unyielding commitment to improve the lives of her constituents and Americans across the country has truly made a difference. We will always cherish our time with her in Congress and the incredible lasting impact she has had on all of us who have known and worked with her.

CONGRATULATING THE FATHER TOLTON TRAILBLAZERS, THE MISSOURI CLASS 4 SOFTBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize the Father Tolton softball team for their remarkable achievement of clinching the Class 4 championship. Their 24–10 season record and 5–0 shutout victory over Belton in the title game, is the culmination of all the work they put in and the great amount of talent on this team.

It is worth noting that this state championship is the second in Father Tolton's program history. Their last softball state championship came in 2020. This championship serves as an example of the upward trajectory of where the program is headed.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to the Father Tolton softball team, coaches, and its supporters. Winning a championship is a collective effort that takes an all-hands-on-deck approach. The community recognizes and highly values their dedication and passion for softball.

TONY BOCELLE

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to wish Tony Bocelle a happy 100th birthday after so many great years of serving our country, being a great family man, and