

speech, yearbook, and newspaper. She was such a positive force that she was twice recognized as teacher of the year.

Melinda would later leave teaching to spend more time with her family, which now includes her husband Ken and their three children, nine grandchildren, and great-grandchild.

Melinda soon continued her community service as Executive Director of the Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources and Environment (TuCARE), a non-profit promoting good stewardship of public lands. By hosting educational lands tours with regional leaders and annual conferences on forest health, Melinda has had an incalculable impact not only on local forestry, but on informing long-term policies needed to save our forests, communities, and local economies for posterity. Due to her twenty years of service, TuCARE has been recognized as a non-profit of the year, a testament to her influence and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, Melinda Fleming spent her life serving her community. Whether educating and mentoring our youth or advising senior policymakers, Melinda's passion to better those around her embodies her true character as a model citizen. We are better for her service, and we know that even in retirement she will continue to serve through the shining example that is her legacy.

HONORING JACK MAZZEO,
HAMMONTON SONS OF ITALY

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to honor Jack Mazzeo from Hammonton, who owns and operates Mazzeo Studio, the oldest photography studio in New Jersey. Since 1946, this family business has built a legacy of excellence in photography. Jack has continued on his father's tradition, creating beautiful portraits, while also training his daughter, Deanna, to carry on the tradition. He has taught his daughter well, as she specializes in capturing images of babies and children. Jack's work has been recognized worldwide, competing with other professionals from around the globe, and earning him the prestigious title of Master of Photography. Many of his award-winning photographs have been showcased at Professional Photographers Conventions in New York, Chicago, New Orleans, and even as far away as South Korea. Jack is one of the world's finest photographers, and I am proud to say he is from my district. God bless Jack, and God bless our United States of America.

RECOGNIZING NOLAN KEATING

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Nolan Keating of Golden, Colorado for winning Best in Show in the 2024 Congressional App Challenge.

Nolan built an interactive app called The Swelling Dark, which is an immersive 3D sur-

vivor horror game with advanced graphics that serves as a metaphor for dealing with mental health.

Nolan spent countless hours and used many tools to develop his app and advance his STEM education.

I congratulate Nolan Keating for his success in the Congressional App Challenge. I am certain he will exhibit the same dedication and character in his future accomplishments. I am excited to see all he will accomplish.

RECOGNIZING MR. DAVID HODGE

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. David Hodge for his dedicated service to the Tulare County community and to congratulate him on his retirement from Tulare Western High School. Mr. Hodge attended the College of the Sequoias before earning his Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education from Fresno State University. During his time at Fresno State, he was a member of the Water Polo team and served as captain of the Swim team his senior year. Mr. Hodge's career in education and passion for student success began in 1993, when he joined Tulare Western High School. Six years later, he received the Staff Yearbook Dedication, recognizing his dedication as an educator and the meaningful connections he made with students. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Hodge has taken on many important roles at Tulare Western, including physical education teacher and head coach of the Varsity Boys Water Polo and Swim teams. In 2020, he was appointed Department Chair of the Physical Education Department. For over thirty years, Mr. Hodge has had a profound impact on students at Tulare Western High School. As both a teacher and a coach, he has dedicated himself to developing the character and leadership skills of all his students. He is known by colleagues as a strong leader and mentor who always puts his students first. Mr. Hodge has received numerous awards throughout his career, including Visalia Times Delta Swim Coach of the Year in 2015 and California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Central Section Division 3 Swim and Water Polo Coach of the Year in 2019. This year, he is nominated for the CIF State Model Coach Award, which recognizes coaches who demonstrate a longstanding commitment to fostering students' potential. One of his greatest accomplishments is the success of his sons, Austin and Daven, both of whom attended Tulare Western and played key roles in the water polo team's championship victory during their time as students. It is because of the commitment of educators like Mr. Hodge that students in the Central Valley community thrive, and I want to thank Mr. Hodge for creating an environment that helps our youth become the best they can be. His dedication to the students at Tulare Western High School is a true testament to his character, and I am confident that his leadership will have a lasting impact on the Tulare Western community for years to come. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in thanking Mr. David Hodge for his decades of service to the Cen-

tral Valley and wishing him a happy and well-deserved retirement.

HONORING JOHN BROWNE ON HIS
50TH ANNIVERSARY AS A VOL-
UNTEER FIREFIGHTER

HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Browne, an extraordinary individual from Mountainside, New Jersey, as he celebrates his 50th anniversary as a volunteer firefighter with the Mountainside Fire Department. Since joining the department in February 1974, John has responded to no less than 60 percent of fire calls each year during his 50-year tenure—more than any other volunteer firefighter in the history of the department. He has been described as the type of first responder you can always count on to be there, serving in every capacity, including line officer, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief, assistant chief, and even as fire chief on three separate occasions. In his free time, John continues to educate and serve his community by volunteering to help lead free public tours of the John J. Harvey Fireboat Museum and Education Center in New York Harbor. John's dedication and commitment to the community of Mountainside have been immeasurable, and I thank him for his incredible contributions to New Jersey's 7th Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF GOOD SHEPHERD HOUS-
ING & FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Good Shepherd Housing (GSH) on their 50th anniversary of dedicated service to Fairfax County, Virginia, and to the thousands of individuals and families whose lives have been transformed by their efforts.

For half a century, Good Shepherd has been a cornerstone in our community, providing safe, stable housing and vital support services to those at risk of homelessness or struggling to remain in their homes due to rising housing costs. Their work has unlocked doors to brighter futures for countless individuals and families, and they remain a beacon of hope for those facing housing insecurity.

Good Shepherd is more than just a provider of affordable housing—it is a catalyst for self-sufficiency and community resilience. Through a unique approach that focuses on the purchase and transformation of properties into affordable housing, GSH has not only provided shelter but has built a foundation for personal growth and long-term success. By offering a comprehensive suite of support services—including case management, financial education, and referrals to specialized assistance—GSH helps families and individuals chart a path to stability, independence, and empowerment.

Each year, GSH manages the needs of over 1,000 families and individuals, helping them overcome obstacles and build a better future. With a small but dedicated team—just 9 full-time staff, 3 part-time staff, and over 40 volunteers—Good Shepherd Housing has managed to accomplish extraordinary things. The work they do, however, is made possible not only by their staff but by the unwavering commitment of their board members, volunteers, and the community that supports them.

As we celebrate Good Shepherd Housing's remarkable 50-year legacy, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has played a part in this incredible work—past and present board members, staff, volunteers, and all the partners who have worked hand-in-hand with GSH to strengthen our community. I would also like to recognize the outstanding leadership of Executive Director Genee Hayes and Deputy Executive Director Candice Bennett. Their dedication and vision have been integral to the organization's growth and success, earning well deserved recognition from the Washington Post, Leadership Fairfax, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Their collective impact serves as a reminder that when we invest in affordable housing and support services, we unlock the potential for families to thrive, not just survive.

Good Shepherd Housing is a true example of how innovative approaches and community partnerships can make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most. The organization's case management team works individually with residents to set personal goals, pursue education, and improve financial literacy, helping to break the cycle of poverty and create lasting change.

As we look to the future, I have no doubt that Good Shepherd Housing will continue to be a leader in providing affordable housing solutions and support services in our community. Their work is a testament to the power of compassion, collaboration, and commitment to social justice.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Good Shepherd Housing on their 50th anniversary and in expressing our thanks for their tireless dedication to Fairfax County, Virginia.

HONORING MAYOR KATHI HEMKEN

HON. ILHAN OMAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Ms. OMAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mayor Kathi Hemken as she concludes 16 years of service leading the City of New Hope. Throughout her time as Mayor, residents have come to know her as a devoted advocate for their well-being, a thoughtful steward of the public good, and a relentless driver of housing and economic development.

Mayor Hemken began her career with the city on the New Hope Planning Commission in 1997. After two years as Chair, she won her first term as Mayor in 2008. She wasted no time in getting to work on behalf of her constituents and fostering a culture of appreciation, respect, and excellence among the staff at City Hall.

Over the past 14 years, New Hope has undergone a remarkable resurgence of new

housing and business. The city's property tax base has grown by over a billion dollars, a surge of 73 percent—an impressive amount of growth that would not have been possible without Mayor Hemken's leadership. They've added nearly 500 new apartment units, 127 single family homes, and through the Scattered Site Housing Program, 30 new or rehabilitated single-family homes. These developments include workforce housing, assisted living, deeply affordable housing, and luxury housing—a diversity that serves all residents of New Hope. The City Center underwent a transformative multi-phase redevelopment, introducing an aquatic park, a performance center, a new City Hall, an upgraded police station, and essential businesses like a Hy-Vee grocery store, resulting in over \$15 million in local improvements and the creation of 400 jobs.

Always accessible, Mayor Hemken builds strong relationships with constituents and city staff, promotes open dialogue on complex issues, and fosters an environment of growth and appreciation within the community. A strong supporter of small businesses, she was even featured on "The Colbert Show." When a small business highlighted on the show required assistance, she connected with the owner and provided essential resources to help them navigate the challenges that arose from their sudden fame and increased demand.

Beyond economic development, Mayor Hemken demonstrates her passion for promoting literacy by collecting and distributing books for local children and engaging with students through reading programs. She has served on countless boards and committees, including the Regional Council of Mayors, the Northwest YMCA, League of Women Voters, and more. Each winter, she personally bakes hundreds of cookies and packages them up with a personal note of appreciation to each and every city employee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our profound gratitude to New Hope Mayor Kathi Hemken for her hard work and dedication. She has led the City Council, City staff, board and commission members, and most importantly, the New Hope community through unprecedented challenges and reshaped the city. There is no question that New Hope will benefit from her thoughtful stewardship for generations to come.

CONGRATULATING MANNSDALE UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR THE NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL DISTINCTION

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mannsdale Upper Elementary School for its National Blue Ribbon School distinction. Since 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized schools for academic achievements and efforts to close the educational gap within communities. The program aims to showcase schools that demonstrate the importance of ensuring all students can achieve high academic standards. This award is among the highest national honors given to

schools across the United States. This year, only 256 schools received recognition, and Mannsdale Upper Elementary is among the top schools, not only in Mississippi but also nationwide. I am proud to see Mannsdale Upper Elementary honored with this prestigious award.

I want to thank Dr. Nicole Cockrell, Principal of Mannsdale Upper Elementary, Assistant Principal Mrs. Holly Jones, and Madison County School District Superintendent Ted Poore for their dedicated work in fostering such a high-achieving learning environment.

I extend my gratitude to the teachers and leaders in Madison County and across Mississippi for their unwavering and selfless dedication to helping students learn, grow, and strive for continuous improvement.

RECOGNIZING THE LEONARD & SARAH BELL FARM IN UNIONVILLE

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Leonard and Sarah Bell Farm in Unionville, Michigan, which has been named the Farm of the Year by the Michigan Centennial Farm Association for 2024. This prestigious recognition honors farms that exemplify exceptional qualities in five key areas: longevity, stewardship, historic preservation, community involvement, and organizational membership and promotional activity.

The Bell family's 76-acre farm, now owned and operated by David and Phyllis Bell, is an enduring testament to Michigan's agricultural heritage. The farm's origins trace back to 1919, when Leonard and Sarah Bell established the farm as part of their contribution to the agricultural development of Tuscola County. Leonard, a descendant of some of the county's earliest families, cultivated a variety of crops, including wheat, corn, navy beans, oats, and hay, supporting both his livestock and the local economy.

In the decades since its founding, the farm has remained in the Bell family for six generations, with David and Phyllis continuing the proud legacy of sustainable farming. Under their stewardship, the farm grows a diverse range of crops—sugar beets, corn, navy beans, soybeans, and wheat—carefully rotated each year to maintain soil health and productivity.

The Bell farm has also earned several prestigious environmental and historical designations, including a federal Certificate of Farm War Service during World War II, a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat, a Monarch Waystation, and a Certified Butterfly Garden. These efforts not only preserve Michigan's natural beauty but also demonstrate the Bell family's deep commitment to environmental stewardship and biodiversity.

Beyond their agricultural achievements, the Bell family has been active in their local community, participating in farm organizations and sharing their story to promote the importance of preserving Michigan's farming history. Their farm is a living example of the values that the Michigan Centennial Farm Association seeks to honor each year.