

HONORING SUPERVISOR DON
BLASER

HON. DOUG LaMALFA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2024

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the dedicated career and public service of Yuba County Supervisor Don Blaser.

Don was born and raised in the Yuba-Sutter region. He proudly attended Sutter Union High School where he would meet his future wife and childhood sweetheart, Lavina. Don and Lavina were married in 1968. Upon graduating, Don would attend college at the University of California, Davis earning a degree in Agricultural Business.

Don would use his degree to help on his family's farming business in Sutter County for many years. Don would then go on to work with the Yuba City Steel Products Company, where he would work for the next 30 years.

Don and his family would visit Hawaii and become inspired by a local coffee shop known as "Badass Coffee from Hawaii". Don's son Adam and wife would later open their own coffee shop in Roseville known as "Bad Ass Coffee". Soon after Don and his wife would purchase The Brick Coffee House Café in Marysville. This venture would initially need a major overhaul and clean-up; while starting as only a local coffee shop, it would expand to become a thriving place to visit with great food and desserts and be known for their great catering service. The café would stay as a family business for the next 20 years.

Don was elected to the Yuba County Board of Supervisors in 2021, where he represented District Two. During Don's tenure on the Board, he would additionally serve on many other governmental organizations, working to represent the rural interests of Yuba County. Don has served on the Area on Aging Area 4, California State Association of Counties (CSAC), North Central Counties Consortium (NCCC), and many others. Don also served as Chairman of the Yuba County Board of Supervisors in the year of 2024.

Don and Lavina have been married for 56 years and have two children, Adam and Kricia, and four grandchildren.

We thank Supervisor Don Blaser for his term of service on the Yuba County Board of Supervisors and commitment to the citizens of Yuba County. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

HONORING 50 YEARS OF WESLEY
HOUSING

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2024

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Wesley Housing as they mark 50 years of service to our community. I am incredibly appreciative of the vision, dedication, and tireless work that the team at Wesley Housing does to address the critical need for affordable housing in Northern Virginia.

Wesley Housing was established by Virginia Peters in 1974 in response to a community-led poverty study that revealed the lack of viable

housing solutions for many families. Since its inception it has cemented itself as an independent nonprofit committed to changing lives through access to safe and affordable rental housing units.

From its groundbreaking in 1979 with the first property in Fairfax County, Wesley Housing has grown into one of the mid-Atlantic region's largest and most respected providers of affordable housing. To date, the organization has developed or acquired 2,915 units across 40 properties, positively impacting the lives of over 25,000 individuals and families. But Wesley Housing's influence extends far beyond the walls of its buildings. Through collaborative partnerships and a holistic approach to resident support, the organization empowers families to build better lives, break the cycle of poverty, and overcome deep-seated racial inequities.

Wesley Housing's commitment to excellence and its transformative work in the region have earned the organization numerous accolades over the years. In 2022, the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND) named Wesley Housing "Nonprofit Developer of the Year" for the third time, recognizing the organization's ongoing contributions to affordable housing. Other prestigious honors include the SatisFacts' Resident Superior Award, which Wesley Housing has won seven consecutive years due to exceptional ratings from residents, and recognition from Affordable Housing Finance, which ranked Wesley Housing among the "Top 50 Affordable Housing Developers" in 2021.

I am honored to celebrate Wesley Housing's important milestone and want to express my deepest gratitude to the entire team, its partners, and the countless individuals who have benefited from its life-changing work. Wesley Housing's continued success is a testament to the power of community-driven solutions and its unwavering commitment to improving the lives of those who need it most.

HONORING THE PHILADELPHIA
TRIBUNE'S 140TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2024

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor The Philadelphia Tribune, the Nation's oldest continuously published newspaper serving the African American community, as it proudly celebrates its 140th anniversary.

Since its founding in 1884 by Christopher James Perry Sr., The Philadelphia Tribune has been a steadfast voice, uplifting and amplifying the stories, struggles, and triumphs of African Americans in Philadelphia and beyond. From its humble beginnings as The Weekly Tribune, a one-page publication, the newspaper has grown into an esteemed institution, documenting pivotal moments in our Nation's history and reflecting the rich tapestry of African American life and culture.

Under the visionary leadership of figures such as Eugene Washington Rhodes, who championed civil rights and community empowerment, and Robert W. Bogle, its current President and CEO, the Tribune has expanded its reach and impact. Through its publications, special editions, and community

events, The Philadelphia Tribune has celebrated Black history, fostered civic engagement, and highlighted the achievements of African Americans in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Over its 140 years, the Tribune has garnered numerous accolades for its excellence in journalism and public service, including the A. Philip Randolph Messenger Award for Outstanding Journalism and the "Russward Award" for Best Newspaper in America. These honors underscore the Tribune's commitment to truth, equity, and advocacy.

The legacy of The Philadelphia Tribune is not just about chronicling the past; it is about empowering the present and shaping the future. As it continues to serve as a vital platform for African American voices, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating The Philadelphia Tribune on this historic milestone and in celebrating its enduring contributions to our society.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH
BIRTHDAY OF WINIFRED WHITE

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2024

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th birthday of Mrs. Winifred White.

Winifred was born on December 10, 1924, to Thomas and Frances Marsh at Mercy Hospital in Bakersfield, California. Born the middle child between her two sisters, Wilma and Georgia, Winifred attended Emerson Junior High School followed by Kern County Union High School, which is known today as Bakersfield High School. Even back in those early years, Winifred recalls the societal and technological milestones she felt in her life and the community around her, like when her family discarded their ice box to buy their first refrigerator after her father quit the Union Ice Company. With her sisters, Winifred brought life to the emerging Bakersfield community, attending performances, ice skating, and enjoying ice cream sodas at Dewar's Candy Shop.

Following her graduation from high school, Winifred attended summer school at a junior college in the Pasadena area, where she found a lifelong passion for bookkeeping. She soon met her first husband, Jim Bolin, with whom they had a daughter, Marcia. Winifred later met Vince Bittleston, an Air Force officer stationed at Minter Field, and the couple would soon be engaged. They would bring a son into the world in 1946—Lawrence Thomas Bittleston—and a second son in 1947—Allan Lee Bittleston. Vince flew planes in World War II and the couple would share a love of aviation and travel for their entire lives. In 1947, the couple launched a crop-dusting business where Winifred managed the bookkeeping, bills, and inventory, and Vince handled sales and flew the planes. Two years later, with the crop-dusting business growing, the couple built a three-bedroom house together and owned their first washer and dryer. To spend more time as a family, Winifred and Vince later moved to a home in Buttonwillow and bought their three children a horse.

Finding herself in a new town, Winifred became involved nearly in every local community

organization. She served as Secretary of Lady Lions, President of the local Parent Teacher Association, Vice President of the local American Legion Post, and Den Mother of the Cub Scouts. Winifred is the first woman to have been nominated to run for mayor of Buttonwillow. While the race was unsuccessful, Winifred would go on to serve on the staff of several mayors.

Vince sadly passed away in October of 1991, following nearly 46 years of marriage. Winifred later remarried Cliff White, a longtime friend and the builder of her Buttonwillow home. As both were previously widowed, it marked a new beginning of their future journey together as a loving couple.

Winifred White is the proud mother of three, grandmother of seven, great-grandmother of eight, and great-great-grandmother of two. Through marriage and love, Winifred has herself become a beloved matriarch and a beloved member of our community. Kern County is blessed with Winifred and other women like her, who serve as a model for community involvement and the American Dream.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating the 100th birthday of Mrs. Winifred White, an amazing woman who has grown with Kern and helped our community thrive.

HONORING ALICIA AGUIRRE

HON. KEVIN MULLIN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2024

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and recognize Alicia Aguirre, Councilmember for the City of Redwood City, upon the conclusion of her 19 years of service to our community.

Alicia is the daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico, first generation to graduate from college, and proud mother of two young men with three grandchildren. She holds an M.A. from Eastern Michigan University and has done Doctoral studies in Social Anthropology at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. She was a Fulbright Exchange Professor in Argentina.

A 36-year resident of Redwood City, Alicia arrived in 1988 concurrent with her employment as a Professor at C  nada College in the English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish Departments. She currently serves as the ESL Department's Coordinator. She was also a former Visiting Dean at the Sequoia Union High School District as Director of English Learners. Her passion for education is evident in her volunteer and community activities that have empowered others to achieve. She served for six years as a Trustee, with one year as President, of the Redwood City Elementary School Board before her appointment to the City Council. She served as a Trustee for Notre Dame De Namur University in Belmont, on the Mt. Carmel and Garfield Charter School Boards, and as Board Member for the Redwood City Library Foundation.

Alicia was appointed to the City Council of Redwood City in January 2005 and was elected in November 2005, and re-elected in 2007, and 2011, 2015, and 2020 for a total of 19 years, amongst the longest-tenured City Councilmembers in San Mateo County. She

has served as both Vice Mayor and then Mayor from 2011–2013 and is the first Latina Mayor in the history of Redwood City.

As an engaged community leader, Alicia has served on various local boards and committees in several capacities including Service League of San Mateo County, Redwood City International, Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, Redwood City-San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce and its Leadership Program Committee, Latino Leadership Council of San Mateo County, and Latino Community Council of Redwood City. And in her capacity as a Redwood City Councilmember, Alicia represented the City and community on the State-wide Latino Caucus Executive Board, the Latino Political Action Committee, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the San Mateo County City/County Association of Governments, and the Peninsula Division of the League of California Cities.

Because of her numerous contributions, Alicia has been recognized for her accomplishments with many awards including being named California's Assembly District 21, Woman of the Year in 2012 by Assemblyman Rich Gordon, being inducted into the Chamber San Mateo County's Hall of Fame, receiving the Ohtli Award and medal by the Mexican Government for her support of the Mexican community abroad, and being honored for her contributions towards affordable housing with the Housing Hall of Fame award.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Alicia focused on keeping residents and business owners informed about County and State health orders, safely providing city services and funding for emergency rental assistance, and ensuring local hospitals were prepared for an evolving disease. Alicia also worked tirelessly during the pandemic to sustain Redwood City's local economy by supporting small business emergency grant programs, allowing safe business operations outdoors, advocating for childcare providers and promoting safe return to work for local companies to encourage workers to shop and dine again in Redwood City.

With improving housing access as one her primary policy goals, Alicia supported housing for all income levels, especially affordable housing for vulnerable groups like seniors, veterans and the homeless, and missing middle housing for young families and new residents. Alicia played an integral role in assisting the unhoused population through her work with LifeMoves, which strives to end homelessness by providing interim housing, supportive services, and building collaborative partnerships. She encouraged new housing in Downtown Redwood City near transit, jobs and walkable businesses. She was mindful about carefully balancing neighborhood preservation with private property rights regarding upgrades like ADU's and home additions. She supported Safe Routes to Schools and prioritized traffic safety on major thoroughfares by creating more opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely use closed streets through Slow Street Programs.

Alicia is a respected and admired regional leader focused on issues of social equity and immigrant rights, affordable housing, transportation, and economic empowerment for all socio-economic residents of Redwood City and in our community. Alicia Aguirre's hallmark is her diligent work, her deep compassion, and her profound connection with every

segment of our community. Her thoughtful approach, building bridges, and mentoring the next generation of leaders has been transformative and serves as model for others to emulate. The effectiveness of a leader can be judged by their lasting impact. By that measure, Alicia has excelled as she leaves Redwood City in a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues please join me in congratulating Alicia Aguirre for an exemplary record of service to Redwood City, commending her for her tireless dedication of time and talent, and wishing her all the best in the years ahead.

HONORING POSTMASTER JULIANA BURNS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Juliana Burns, an esteemed member of our Napa community, as she retires from 37 years of service with the United States Postal Service.

Postmaster Burns began her career as a letter carrier in Vallejo and Napa before advancing to serve as a postal customer service supervisor in multiple cities. She also worked as a postal instructor in Oakland, Maryland, and Oklahoma.

Postmaster Burns later managed Consumer and Industry Affairs at the Postal Headquarters in Washington, D.C. During this period of her career, she participated in a national roundtable on the development of new postal vehicles. Postmaster Burns was also instrumental in establishing postal customer call centers in New Jersey, Michigan, and Los Angeles. Additionally, she demonstrated her commitment to accountability by conducting financial audits under the direction of the Office of the Inspector General.

As Postmaster in St. Helena, Napa, and now Oakville, Postmaster Burns exhibited strong leadership. Following the Napa earthquake and devastating wildfires, she ensured uninterrupted mail service and introduced free P.O. Box delivery for residents who lost their homes, a lifeline to many rebuilding their lives.

The role of a postmaster requires meticulous organization, clear communication, and the ability to adapt under pressure. Postmaster Burns has consistently embodied these traits, guiding her teams with grace, and fostering trust and reliability among postal employees and the community she served. Her ability to lead through challenges while prioritizing the needs of others is a hallmark of her career.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Postmaster Burns has been a beacon of inspiration within our community. In 1983, she proudly held the title of Miss Napa County, a testament to her grace and charisma. She is affectionately known by many as their "Favorite Postmaster," a reflection of the respect and admiration she has earned in our community.

Postmaster Burns resides in Oakville with her husband, Steve. She is the proud mother of three adult children, Jordan, Samuel, and Addison, and is the loving grandmother of five grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Postmaster Burns for her dedicated service to our community and