

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF KELLY MCCLEARY

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and extraordinary contributions of Kelly McCleary, a beloved educator, community advocate, and mentor from Aurora, Illinois, who recently passed away. Kelly's unwavering dedication to her family, students, and community has left a lasting impact that will be felt for generations.

Born on December 30, 1961, in Augusta, Georgia, Kelly graduated from East Aurora High School in 1980. She earned a bachelor's degree in physical education from North Central College in 1985 and a master's degree in educational leadership from Aurora University. Kelly married Scott McCleary on September 5, 1987, and they had two children, Ian and Kara. She built a life centered on service, education, and community betterment.

Kelly's career in education was marked by a deep commitment to nurturing the growth and development of young people. She taught elementary physical education, coached track, and served as an assistant principal and principal in the East Aurora School District. In recognition of her exceptional leadership and dedication, she was named the Kane County School Administrator of the Year in 2006. Later, Kelly continued her work in education as a teacher and director of Wesley Preschool in Aurora, where she continued to inspire and shape the lives of young learners.

Outside of the classroom, Kelly's influence extended into the wider community through her service in both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, serving as a den, pack, and troop leader, and leading numerous district and council activities. Her contributions were recognized with awards, including the Girl Scout Gold Award, the Thank Badge II, and the Hall of Fame Award. From the Boy Scouts, she was awarded the District Award of Merit and the Silver Beaver Award—both testaments to her dedication and leadership.

Kelly's commitment to her community was further exemplified through her involvement in organizations, including the Aurora Public Library District Foundation's annual gala. She was a champion for causes that enriched the lives of those around her, particularly children.

In her personal time, Kelly enjoyed traveling with her friends and family, especially to Disney World, and creating beautiful quilts. Her love for these activities was only surpassed by her passion for enriching the lives of others.

Kelly McCleary touched the lives of countless individuals throughout her life, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, leadership, and service. She was a tireless advocate for children, a devoted educator, a loving mother, and a cherished member of the Aurora community. She will be remembered fondly for her remarkable ability to inspire, her selfless con-

tributions, and the profound impact she had on the lives of so many.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Aurora and grateful for Kelly McCleary's service to her community. Her legacy of kindness, service, and dedication will live on in the hearts of those who knew her. I extend my heartfelt condolences to her family and invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating her extraordinary life.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVE GENE PELOWSKI

HON. BRAD FINSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Minnesota House Representative Gene Pelowski. First elected in 1986 to represent then-District 34B, Representative Pelowski has served the people of southeastern Minnesota honorably for the past thirty-eight years, making him the longest-serving member of the Minnesota State House.

Most recently serving District 26A, Representative Pelowski has worked tirelessly on behalf of his constituents in Houston and Winona counties for nearly four decades.

During his time in office, higher education was a top priority for Representative Pelowski, championing a number of pieces of legislation for the expansion of Winona State University.

Representative Pelowski has done an exemplary job representing the people of 26A, and it was a true honor to have previously served alongside him in the Minnesota State Legislature.

I am grateful for Representative Pelowski's years of dedicated public service, and I wish him the warmest congratulations on his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, on December 4, 2024, I was not recorded on Roll Call Nos. 480, 481, 482, and 483. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on Roll Call No. 480 and Roll Call No. 481 and voted "NAY" on Roll Call No. 482 and Roll Call No. 483.

CONGRATULATING RONALD PEEBLES

HON. JERRY L. CARL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. CARL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Ronald Peebles for receiving the 2024 Fire Chief of the Year Award. Ronald has served as Fire Chief since 2013 and continues to serve in this role. While Ronald has worked with the Atmore Fire Department, he has led efforts to acquire a new radio system to enhance public communications, collaborated with city leaders to purchase 4 new cab pumps, and promoted fire safety education for elementary students. His commitment to the Atmore community is admirable. I am honored to have such a courageous and selfless individual residing in our district. I am proud to congratulate Ronald on achieving this outstanding award.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WOMEN VETERANS OF SOUTHWEST MISSOURI, AMERICAN LEGION POST 1214

HON. ERIC BURLISON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate American Legion Post 1214 located in Springfield, Missouri, on the 10-year anniversary of the organization's charter for Women Veterans of Southwest Missouri.

The post has grown from 12 initial Legionnaires to 97 Legionnaires thanks to the outreach and recruitment skills of a number of women including Adjutant Shellie Jones, Treasurer Nancy Fazzino, past Commander Louise Hansen, current Commander Jennifer Tyes and a host of other dedicated women. Ninety percent of the post's membership are women who have active duty service in one of the Nation's four military branches, while ten percent are men who also have served our country and been honorably discharged.

The post works to foster community building, and to provide outreach and support for fellow veterans by supporting programs such as Quilts of Valor, Harmony House Domestic Violence Shelter, Honor Flight of the Ozarks, and the United Way of the Ozarks' Veteran's Emergency Aid Program. The post also supports Junior ROTC programs at four area high schools: Willard, Hillcrest, Greenwood Laboratory and New Covenant Academy. The post also has sponsored some 56 candidates for Boys State and Girls State over the last 10 years. It also engages with the public and several local veterans organizations for Wreaths Across America, where they place holiday wreaths at each of the headstones in the national and state cemeteries in Springfield.

• 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.

These are just a few of their many service projects.

American Legion Post 1214 is an asset to Southwest Missouri, and I am grateful for their selfless service and tireless dedication to improving the lives of veterans of every era, as well as inspiring the next generation of military service members. Please join me in congratulating them for their 10 years of service.

HONORING FREDDIE JOHNSON

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a special man, Freddie Johnson, from Frankfort, Kentucky. Mr. Johnson is well-known in the bourbon industry for his service as Distillery VIP Visitor Lead for Buffalo Trace Distillery.

Mr. Johnson was born in Bourbon County and his family moved to Frankfort when he was 5 years old. His grandfather, Jimmy Johnson, Sr., began working at Buffalo Trace in 1912. He was there for 52 years and became the first African American warehouse foreman. His father, Jimmy Johnson, Jr., joined him at Buffalo Trace in 1936 and served as warehouse supervisor. Young Freddie played at Buffalo Trace as a child. In 2002, Johnson retired early from a job in Atlanta to return home, work with his father, and become the third generation of his family to work at Buffalo Trace.

Mr. Johnson has become famous for providing entertaining and informative tours of Buffalo Trace to thousands of guests each year. For his contributions to the bourbon industry, he was inducted into the Bourbon Hall of Fame in 2018. He is a recipient of the 2015 ROSE (Recognition of Service Excellence) award and the 2017 Lexington Hospitality Award. In 2024, he was chosen to be part of the Whisky Magazine Hall of Fame, becoming their first Black member. The Kentucky Black Bourbon Guild has a scholarship named in his honor.

Mr. Johnson has contributed greatly to the success of the bourbon industry, one of Kentucky's signature industries. It is my honor to lift up the life of this true Kentucky treasure, Mr. Freddie Johnson, and celebrate his iconic career at Buffalo Trace.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE HONORABLE GERALD E. LOEHR

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the Honorable Gerald E. Loehr, a public servant who served with distinction and dedicated his life to the pursuit of justice.

Hon. Gerald E. Loehr was born into a Yonkers family with a longstanding tradition of politics and public service on May 19, 1943. His great-grandfather, John J. Loehr, served as a Yonkers Alderman (Councilman); his grandfather, Joseph F. Loehr, was the Mayor of Yonkers from 1932 to 1939; his mother, Ger-

trude Sweetman, was a civil servant; and his father, John F. Loehr, was an attorney and an Administrative Law Judge. With passion and principle, he proudly followed the family tradition.

He graduated from Manhattan College in 1965 and Fordham Law School in 1969. He began his distinguished career as a New York City Assistant District Attorney under the legendary Frank Hogan from 1969 to 1973. He then moved into private practice at the firm of Nobile and Magarian from 1973 to 1975.

Returning to the public sector in Yonkers, Loehr served two terms as the Third Ward Councilman from 1975 to 1979 and one term as Mayor from 1979 to 1981. Upon leaving the Mayor's office, he returned to private practice as a founding partner of the law firm Ecker, Loehr, & Ecker, LLP, where he worked until 2004.

In 2005, he was elected as Judge in the Westchester County Court. In 2006, he was appointed as an Acting State Supreme Court Justice, and in 2012, he was elected to serve as a State Supreme Court Justice in the 9th Judicial District.

Loehr was a devoted husband and father, survived by his beloved wife, Susan Newman Loehr, also a public servant and retired Westchester County Commissioner of Jurors. He is also survived by his older brother, John Loehr, and six children from two marriages: Peter, Janine (Barbanell), Melissa, Jonathan (Newman), Cariana (Bulman), and Gerald E., II. He also leaves behind 15 grandchildren, who will miss him dearly.

Today, Yonkers, the State of New York and our Nation, have lost a dedicated protector of justice. It is my hope that his wife, children, and grandchildren can draw strength and comfort from his many contributions. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying homage to a lifetime of service and in remembering the Honorable Gerald E. Loehr.

RECOGNIZING THE 70TH BIRTHDAY OF GERALD MORRIS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize the 70th birthday of Gerald Morris. Gerald was born to Emma Lois and Toby Lee Morris on December 4, 1954, in Anniston, Alabama. He is one of six children. He graduated from Saks High School in 1972.

On February 22, 1985, Gerald married Waltina Morris. They were blessed with five children and seven grandchildren.

Gerald was inspired by his uncle, Edgar Morris, who was a tailor. He had his shop in downtown Anniston. Gerald worked at a men's clothing store named Phil's Men's Store and began doing alterations for customers there. He attended trade school and opened his own shop in downtown Anniston named Morris Alterations in 1981. As life would have it, his son was able to open a men's clothing store right across the street from his own storefront. Two of Gerald's daughters work alongside him daily.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Morris switched gears at the shop and began making

a variety of popular masks that sold from Alabama to Connecticut. After the pandemic, work was busier than ever as people went back to their social engagements, proms and weddings, they needed his artful craft to make their clothing perfect for them.

Gerald has been in business for almost 44 years and attributes his success to all of his hard work and loyal customers. He has no plans of retiring. Gerald and his store are a fixture of downtown Anniston and Gerald gives back to his community by helping local schools.

The Morris family attends New Jerusalem AFM Church of God.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Gerald on this milestone and wishing him a very happy birthday.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVE PAT GAROFALO

HON. BRAD FINSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Minnesota House Representative Pat Garofalo. First elected in 2004, Representative Garofalo has honorably served in the Minnesota Legislature for the past twenty years.

During his time in office, Representative Garofalo exhibited a profound willingness to serve his fellow southern Minnesotans, not only as their voice in the House Chamber, but also by his leadership on numerous House committees throughout the years. In 2008, Representative Garofalo was elected to the position of assistant majority whip for the legislative session, and later became chairman of the Education Finance Committee, as well as the Job Growth & Energy Affordability Committee.

Representative Garofalo has done an exemplary job representing his constituents in Dakota, Goodhue, and Rice counties for the past two decades, and I consider it a true honor to have previously served alongside him in the Minnesota State Legislature.

I am grateful for Representative Garofalo's years of dedicated public service to southern Minnesota, and I wish him the warmest congratulations on his retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF GENE R. MOFFITT

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to announce the passing of Gene R. Moffitt. Gene was an individual full of ambition, compassion and dedication towards his community. I urge us all to celebrate and remember the life of this incredible community leader, husband, friend, father, and grandfather.

Born in Independence, Missouri on August 6, 1941, Gene attended William Chrisman High School before heading to Central Missouri State University to continue his academic journey. Eventually, he began what