

HONORING PASTOR TOM BEERS

**HON. JIM BANKS**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 10, 2024*

Mr. BANKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Tom Beers, the longtime pastor of Columbia City Church of the Nazarene and my own childhood pastor, as he retires at the end of this year.

Born in Elkhart, Indiana, Pastor Tom grew up in the church and accepted Jesus as his Savior at the early age of five. After graduating high school and marrying his sweetheart, Deborah Goble, he began to feel the call to full-time ministry. In 1976, he enrolled at Olivet Nazarene College with only \$250 in his pocket, a new job at Arby's, and faith that God would provide for him and his young family.

Pastor Tom graduated in 1982 and began his pastoral journey as an associate pastor at the Lansing Church of the Nazarene in Illinois. He went on to serve as the senior pastor at the Brookfield church for three years and the Waukesha, Wisconsin, church for another three before moving to Columbia City in 1991.

Since then, Pastor Tom's leadership has guided Columbia City Church of the Nazarene, establishing it as a steadfast beacon of faith in the community. Under his care, the church has flourished as a sanctuary of worship, spiritual growth, and fellowship. Pastor Tom's vision and dedication have shaped a congregation deeply committed to both local outreach and global missions, creating a legacy within the community and beyond.

Jeremiah 3:15 states: "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." Pastor Tom's ministry has been a testament to the heart of a shepherd, providing wisdom, guidance, and love to countless lives—including my own.

As he prepares to depart from his current role, I wish Pastor Tom many joyful years ahead to cherish time with his family, enjoy the community he has called home for so long, and cheer on his Indiana Hoosiers. His remarkable life of service, faith, and leadership will continue to inspire all who have been touched by his ministry.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND  
LEGACY OF ROBERT DUMAS**HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 10, 2024*

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and legacy of Robert Dumas. Mr. Dumas was a beloved father, brother, and friend, who passed away peacefully in his home on November 24, 2024.

Born on April 5, 1939, in Safford, Alabama to his parents, Andy and Queenie Dumas, Robert was known all his life for his warm heart, sense of humor, and deep love for his family.

Robert held many jobs throughout his life but was most proud of becoming an owner of

a trucking company where he operated an 18-wheeler truck. In 1980, he founded the Dumas Trucking. His work brought him great joy, and he poured his heart into the work that he loved.

After a long day at work, Robert enjoyed the simple things in life and would often relax in his recliner while watching Westerns. He was an old-fashioned man who appreciated every moment of life. He was a friend to all. Robert was affectionately referred to as "Joe" by his brothers, sons, grandsons, close friends, and nephews because of his pleasant, easy to approach demeanor.

Throughout his life Robert was a devout Christian who lived a life of faith and service to his church, Messiah Temple Missionary Baptist Church. He served as a Deacon, a member of the Brotherhood, and a cherished member of the men's chorus until his health failed. His service and spiritual counsel as a beloved member of his church community will not be soon forgotten, nor will the sound of his voice with his chorus partners.

Robert was devoted to his family and his final message to us was "In your hearts, always remember me as the gentle giant and love me as I always loved you. To me, and to all who knew me, family is and will always be everything."

He is survived by his children: Robert Dumas, Dorothy Wash, Donna Dumas, Tony Wash (Kim), Christopher Zorich, Cedric Dumas, and Tiffany Beard (Edward). He is also survived by his siblings, James Dumas (Lucy), Alice Allen, Maple Moppins, Quennie McEwen, Daisy Moore (Ezekiel), and Ann Cole. He will be lovingly remembered by all his family, including his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and a host of friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in remembering the life and legacy of Mr. Robert Dumas and in sending our deepest condolences to his family and friends at this time.

## TRIBUTE TO SARA PETERS

**HON. TOM COLE**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 10, 2024*

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sara Peters, an exceptional staff member of the House Committee on Appropriations, whose decade-long service in the federal government exemplifies the hard work and dedication of an esteemed public servant.

Sara's career in government began in 2010 as Legislative Counsel to Senator Thad Cochran. In that role, she advised the Senator on budget, banking, finance, trade, justice, and ethics issues. Her contributions were particularly significant in the vetting of judicial nominees and the development of landmark legislation such as the Dodd-Frank Act and the Budget Control Act of 2011. Additionally, Sara managed all justice-related appropriations issues for the influential Senator.

In 2011, Sara brought her talents to the House Committee on Appropriations as a Professional Staff Member for the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Devel-

opment. Her portfolio included the Federal Highway Administration and transportation safety agencies, such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the United States Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. She also managed vital programs supporting Native American housing, homeless assistance, and community development.

Following her initial tenure with the House Committee on Appropriations, Sara expanded her expertise in the private sector as a Senior Associate at the King & Spalding law firm. Sara specialized in environmental, energy, transportation, and consumer product safety law. She then served as Assistant General Counsel at the Volkswagen Group of America, with a specific focus on emissions, regulatory, and settlement oversight.

After five years in the private sector, Sara's commitment to public service led her back to government as the Deputy Director of Government Affairs, Policy, and Strategic Planning for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Focusing on transportation safety initiatives and technologies, Sara bridged the gap between the agency and Congress, managing key policy initiatives and preparing agency leadership for congressional hearings, budget rollouts, and briefings.

In November 2020, Sara returned to Congress where her extensive expertise and knowledge earned her the position of Counsel and Senior Advisor on the House Committee on Appropriations under then Ranking Member KAY GRANGER. It was in this role that Sara successfully advanced House Republican funding priorities in the Minority. When Republicans took control of the House in 2023, she was rightly promoted to Deputy Staff Director of the full committee. Her understanding of the complexities of the federal budget has fostered crucially important reforms in the appropriations process. She has demonstrated remarkable skill in managing complex budget data, coordinating between the twelve Appropriations subcommittees, and facilitating communication with leadership offices, authorizing committees, external stakeholders, and support agencies such as the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office. Sara played an invaluable role in crafting and negotiating full-year, supplemental, and continuing appropriations legislation.

Throughout her career, Sara has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary ability to navigate complex political landscapes and achieve meaningful results on challenging policy issues. Her deep understanding of government processes and her strategic approach have been instrumental in securing important policy victories, even in times of a divided government.

After countless early mornings and late nights of devoted work to our country, I know Sara is looking forward to a change of pace that allows her to spend more time with her family. Sara will be greatly missed, and I extend my deepest gratitude for her exemplary service to the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING MY SENIOR ADVISOR, BRYAN DOYLE, FOR HIS EXCELLENT WORK ON BEHALF OF MINNESOTA'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

### HON. DEAN PHILLIPS

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 10, 2024*

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my Senior Advisor, Bryan Doyle, for his work on behalf of every constituent in Minnesota's Third Congressional District. I could not be more proud or grateful for his service.

Bryan is an experienced leader, executive coach and strategic analyst with a proven track record of effective counsel across multiple industry sectors. His service, first as my Communications Director and then as my Senior Advisor, has been invaluable. Bryan taught our entire team how communications builds influence, influence builds power, and power moves policy.

Bryan has coached business executives, college professors, Congressional staff, students, and fast-food workers in strategic policy communications. A lifelong campaign professional, Doyle's skills as a community organizer complement his ability to communicate and problem-solve with diverse audiences with overlapping interests.

Bryan secured press bookings on Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher, The Today Show, NPR's Morning Edition, Good Morning America, and several hits for multiple shows on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. He led the charge for my successful Let's Grow! Caucus-wide campaign for Democratic Policy and Communications Committee co-chair in 2022, to which his skills in communications were critical. He has since taken on tech policy for the office, with a special emphasis on artificial intelligence, labor, international competition and small business.

Bryan brings a fresh and outside the box perspective when looking at the long-term trajectory of the office. His love of music and lyrics especially lightens the mood on tough days. He is willing to put himself out there, even dressing up as Teddy Roosevelt to bid farewell to a dear colleague on his last day in the office. Bryan brought his authenticity to work every day. My office wouldn't be the same without his zeal, sharp mind and propensity to break out in song.

Bryan often says, "peace and love are action words," and I'm grateful he lent his considerable talents to our mission to inspire more of both in Congress during his 3 years on my team. His colleagues and I will miss his booming voice and big heart.

The people of Minnesota's Third Congressional District were lucky to have his dedication and leadership. I wish Bryan all the best in his future endeavors and thank him for three years of faithful service to this Nation.

### COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF VINCENT OMAR LEGGETT

### HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 10, 2024*

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Vincent Omar

Leggett, a tireless advocate for the Chesapeake Bay and the founder of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation.

Vince Leggett was a devoted historian and conservationist whose passion for the Chesapeake Bay was unmatched. Through his leadership of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation, Vince shed light on the untold stories of Black life along the Bay and brought new depth to our understanding of the Bay's heritage.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to Vince's family, friends and all who knew him. His commitment to the Chesapeake community inspired countless individuals—including myself—we will honor his memory by continuing his vital work to protect and celebrate the Bay and its diverse communities.

I include in the RECORD an article by Christine Condon.

**'HE WAS THE FIRST': VINCENT LEGGETT REMEMBERED AS A SINGULAR VOICE FOR BLACK HISTORY OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY**

(By Christine Condon)

Carnelious Jones was volunteering aboard the Amistad, a replica of the historic cargo schooner, when Vince Leggett walked into his life.

Jones, whose company had donated fuel to the Amistad, had been told that an "admiral" would board the vessel before it sailed into Baltimore's Inner Harbor. So Jones, a Navy veteran, expected a stern military man in uniform—not the sedan that pulled up nearby (several minutes late), and the jovial man who climbed aboard in a white captain's hat.

That was Vince Leggett, who had been named an Admiral of the Chesapeake Bay in 2003 by then-Gov. Parris N. Glendening. He was the third Black person to receive the honor, recognizing a lifetime of service to the Nation's largest estuary.

"I saw that he had done some astonishing things," Jones said. "So, I approached him and I shook his hand, I told him I was happy to meet him, and thanked him for his accomplishments."

When the ship reached the shore, Leggett brought Jones to his tent, featuring artifacts he'd collected for his book about the Black history of the Chesapeake Bay. Jones was enthralled.

"I'm from the south—in Tennessee," Jones said. "I was amazed at just how outspoken everything was, and how much development as it relates to the African American story was so publicized and so published."

Vincent Omar Leggett died Nov. 23 at 71-years-old. A pillar of the Anne Arundel County community, who served on the school board, directed the Annapolis housing authority and even became the first Black chaplain of the Annapolis fire department, Leggett was perhaps best known for his work on the Chesapeake Bay.

Beginning in the 1980s, through his foundation, Blacks of the Chesapeake, Leggett gathered and preserved the legacy of Black bayside communities, watermen, captains, seafood industry workers, and sail makers. For Leggett, it began with the recognition that the history books often omitted these stories. So, he told them himself, penning "The Chesapeake Bay Through Ebony Eyes," and serving for decades as an encyclopedia of the Bay's Black legacy.

"He wanted everybody else to know that it was more. We were just not shucking them oysters," said Jones, the vice president for new business development at Blacks of the Chesapeake. "We had contributors, to this day, into this maritime industry."

Leggett also had stints at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, as chair-

man of the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center, as a board member for the Seafarers Yacht Club of Annapolis, and on the list goes. Friends remember him as a talented historian and orator, who also served as a lobbyist, an advocate, and perhaps above all—a leader.

Leggett was also the driving force behind a successful decades-long effort to preserve the historic Elktonia-Carr's Beach Heritage Park, the last remnant of the Black-owned beach land that welcomed Black families during segregation, and hosted music legends such as Ella Fitzgerald and Aretha Franklin.

Along the way, Leggett inspired a new generation of historians and environmental advocates, forging a path for Black voices where none existed before, said R. Kenyatta Rowel Jr., CEO of Breaking Boundaries Environmental, a Maryland-based environmental restoration firm he started in 2022.

"Vince paved the way as a trailblazer for all of these activities, all of these places and spaces for people like me," Rowel said. "He was the first."

Rowel remembers a recent event he attended with Leggett at the Whitehall Plantation near Annapolis. For Rowel, who grew up nearby in a historically African American community called Mulberry Hill on the Broadneck Peninsula, the event was already special. But Leggett made it even more so.

"He was talking on the mic, and he introduced me and my company to have a few words. And to me, that was a moment I'm never going to forget," Rowel said.

For Leggett, it began with his upbringing in Baltimore, and family trips fishing and boating on the Chesapeake Bay, Jones said. The experiences tied him to the outdoors, and were the first spark for his eventual effort as a historian.

"It wasn't a research project. It was part of his livelihood," Jones said. "That's the difference." Though he grew up in Baltimore, where he also earned his bachelor's degree from Morgan State University, Leggett ultimately built his life in Anne Arundel County. He and his wife Aldena lived in Arundel-on-the-Bay enclave in Annapolis, according to an online biography, where they enjoyed "beautiful bay views, fishing with their grandchildren and planning their next trip to the golf green." For Jones, that day aboard the Amistad—a reproduction of the ship famous for its 1839 slave revolt—began a yearslong partnership and friendship with Leggett, focused on achieving shared goals for the Bay's Black community and its legacy.

He looks back fondly on their frequent early morning phone calls, beginning as soon as 4 a.m. and continuing for 90 minutes—or until Leggett left to make his wife coffee or breakfast as she headed off to work, Jones said.

To this day, Jones and others marvel at Leggett's ability to balance it all. The early morning and late evening meetings, the positions on countless boards and committees, the appointments with legislators, community members and advocates.

"There are people every now and then that come through, that—it's unexplainable," Jones said.

Much of Leggett's legacy lives on in the vast array of artifacts he amassed amid decades of research on the Bay's Black history. Today, much of the collection is stored in warehouses, but it is being digitized and shared publicly online, thanks to a partnership with the Maryland Archives.

To Leggett, the history of the Bay should include not only Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, but everyday Black Marylanders, who let him into their homes—and into their worlds. In a way, he became their representative—their messenger, Jones said.

"The ones that passed, he would put a book inside of their coffin. The family would give