

RECOGNIZING THE 2024 BEST OF
BRADDOCK AWARDEES

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the recipients of the annual Best of Braddock Awards. These awards are the result of collaborative work between the Braddock District Council and Braddock District Supervisor and are presented to individuals and organizations whose extraordinary efforts make our community a better place.

I have been proud to represent this community since my days as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. I have often said that civic engagement is a key indicator of a healthy community, and tonight's event proves that Braddock District continues to be one of the healthiest communities in all of Northern Virginia.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD the following recipients of the 2024 Best of Braddock Awards:

Organization or Club Making a Difference: The Young Hearts Club at C.G. Woodson High School, for their work in supporting students and their families facing serious medical challenges, to bring awareness to these issues and to fund research for cures and treatments.

Neighborhood Beautification, Enhancement, or Community-Building Effort: Burke Centre Conservancy (BCC), Open Space Committee, for supporting the BCC Board of Trustees with engagement, training, recommendations, and integration regarding environmental affairs and impacts within the Burke Centre community to aid in keeping Burke Centre in line with its motto, "In Harmony with Nature".

Most "Can-Do" Public Employee: Justen Allen Moreland, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, for his exemplary qualities of leadership, character and integrity as the Heavy Rescue driver at Fire Station 14.

Honorable Mention: Bob Lund, Lake Braddock, for leading the effort to cut down dead or dying trees and prune other trees as needed in the Lake Braddock common areas for many years.

Civic Engagement: Bob Cosgriff, Chair of Braddock District Council, for his tenacious and dedicated work to building a Council that greatly benefits its member neighborhoods.

Young Person of the Year: Callum Chang, Robinson Secondary School, for his passion for community service and his dedication to helping others.

Citizen of the Year: Bonnie Hopler, for her volunteer work all around Fairfax County including with the NOVA Lifetime Learning Institute, FACETS, and the Lamb Center.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2024 Best of Braddock honorees for their tremendous contributions to Northern Virginia. The level of civic engagement celebrated by these awards is a testament to the community spirit of the Braddock District. We are a better place for them.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF
SENATOR DAN BLUE

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor Senator Dan Blue, a dedicated public servant and lifelong North Carolinian, for his remarkable leadership as Senate Minority Leader and his tireless commitment to the people of our state.

From his early days growing up in Robeson County to becoming the first African American Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senator Blue has been a trailblazer and an advocate for working families. His leadership has focused on investing in public education, creating jobs, protecting the environment, and ensuring access to affordable healthcare.

Throughout his distinguished career, Senator Blue has consistently been one of the most effective legislators in North Carolina. He has shaped significant reforms in workplace safety, public schools, and the criminal justice system, leaving a lasting impact on the state. As Senate Minority Leader, his steady and principled leadership has been a guiding force for his caucus during some of the most challenging political times.

As he steps down from his leadership role, I honor Senator Blue's decades of public service and his unwavering dedication to the people of North Carolina. His legacy as a leader, advocate, and mentor will continue to inspire future generations of public servants.

Please join me in recognizing Senator Dan Blue for his extraordinary service to North Carolina.

RECOGNIZING SEAN ANNUZZI—
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate Sean Annuzzi on his exemplary achievement of attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. This distinguished honor represents the culmination of his dedication, having earned nearly 40 merit badges across a wide array of skill sets. From Automotive Maintenance to American Business to Archaeology, Sean has shown a deep commitment to becoming a well-rounded young man, always eager to learn. To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, he completed 14 additional merit badges, including Citizenship in the Nation, Personal Fitness, and Lifesaving. These accomplishments not only signify his dedication to personal growth but also his unwavering commitment to serving his community. Outside of his studies, he is already making a meaningful impact by mentoring children and teenagers with disabilities, exemplifying the spirit of compassion and service that the Scouting program seeks to instill. In his free time, Sean trains youth and teenagers in karate, equipping them with skills that foster both confidence and resilience. His efforts in this regard are highly commendable and are a testa-

ment to his character and leadership. Sean's family takes immense pride in his accomplishments, and I am honored to share in this sentiment. I have no doubt he will continue to do amazing things in the future. May God bless Sean and God bless the United States of America.

HONORING SISTER MARTA CICHON

HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sister Marta Cichon, a woman who has profoundly transformed the lives of Polish immigrant families and uplifted single mothers in Illinois.

Born in Zabkowice, Poland, Sister Marta's duty to humanity led her across the globe, serving in Australia before arriving in the United States in 2000.

Here, she recognized a pressing need to support mothers and their children who were vulnerable to homelessness, hunger, and lack of assistance.

Ultimately, she established the Single Mothers Home in 2008. The Single Mothers Home offers essential services, from legal assistance to mental health support, empowering women to rebuild their lives.

For nearly 15 years, Sister Marta has provided refuge, hope, and a path to independence for over 140 mothers and 180 children, including those who have experienced domestic violence.

To this day, these families maintain a close bond with Sister Marta, who considers them family.

I commend Sister Marta for her compassion, her resilience, and her unwavering service to our community.

Thank you (Dziękuję), Sister Marta.

Panie MARSZALKU. Zabieram dzis glos, aby oddac czesc siostrze Marcie Cichon, kobiecie, ktora gleboko zmieniła życie rodzin polskich imigrantów i podniosła na duchu samotne matki w Illinois.

Siostra Marta, urodzona w Zabkowicach, w Polsce, dzięki swojej powinności wobec ludzkości podróżowała po całym świecie, służąc w Australii, zanim w 2000 roku przybyła do Stanów Zjednoczonych.

Dostrzegła tam pilną potrzebę wsparcia matek i ich dzieci, które były zagrożone bezdomnością, głodem i brakiem pomocy.

Ostatecznie w 2008 roku założyła Dom Samotnej Matki. Dom Samotnej Matki oferuje podstawowe usługi, od pomocy prawnej po wsparcie w zakresie zdrowia psychicznego, umożliwiając kobietom odbudowanie swojego życia.

Siostra Marta przez blisko 15 lat dawała schronienie, nadzieję i drogę do samodzielności ponad 140 matkom i 180 dzieciom, w tym tym, które doświadczyły przemocy domowej.

Do dziś te rodziny utrzymują bliską więź z Siostrą Martą, która uważa je za rodzinę.

Chwale Siostrę Martę za jej miłosierdzie, odporność i niezachwiana służbę dla naszej społeczności.

Dziękuję Siostrze Marto.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE METRA COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly rise to recognize the 40th Anniversary of the Metra rail system serving the people throughout Chicago and across the region.

The Metra commuter rail system—specifically the Milwaukee District North, the Union Pacific North, and the North Central Service lines—connects Illinois's 10th district to the city of Chicago and neighboring communities. From Winthrop Harbor through Zion, Waukegan, North Chicago, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Highwood, Highland Park, Glencoe, Winnetka, and Kenilworth; from Antioch through Lake Villa, Round Lake Beach, Grayslake, Libertyville, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Vernon Township, Buffalo Grove, and Wheeling; and from Fox Lake through Long Lake, Round Lake, Deerfield, and Northbrook, Metra is literally a lifeline for the citizens of the 10th District.

Metra began as an amalgamation of private rail services, some of which had existed for more than a century. Today, Metra is the fourth-busiest commuter rail system in the country and serves millions of riders throughout the region with eleven lines moving between 243 stations. Metra serves as a critical backbone for workers and families who depend on reliable, safe transportation through the frigid winter and sweltering summers. Metra is more than just a commuter rail system—it is an indelible feature of life in Chicagoland, serving workers, sports fans, students, the elderly, and many more.

I have been honored to consistently advocate for Metra's priorities during my service in Congress, and proud to have secured funding for projects for station modernization, accessibility improvements, and platform rehabilitation. These historic investments in our transportation infrastructure—made possible under the Biden Administration's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—will help Metra flourish well into the future.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the accomplishments and service Metra, and the people who ensure the trains run, have provided for the past 40 years. To the engineers, conductors, planners, maintenance workers, advocates, and organizational leaders who dedicated countless hours over the decades to elevate Metra to where it is today—I thank and commend them for their vision and hard work. I look forward to continuing my work with Metra to promote its continued success—not just for the good of the Tenth District, but for all the people in the Chicago region.

RECOGNIZING METRA COMMUTER RAILROAD'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Metra, the commuter

railroad serving my constituents in Chicago, on its 40th anniversary.

Forty years ago, commuter rail operations largely relied on private railroads. However, due to inflation and the emergence of alternative transportation options, funding decreased significantly, and riders threatened to discontinue their use of commuter services. To address this issue, voters approved the creation of the Regional Transportation Authority, which established the Northeast Illinois Railroad Corporation to directly operate the trains. When the Rock Island and Milwaukee Road railroads went bankrupt, a new rail division was created to provide subsidies that kept the trains running and passengers on board.

As Metra faced a fragmented system of commuter rail operations, it acquired the Metra Electric and Illinois Central Gulf in 1987, ultimately taking over the operations of the Heritage Corridor, SouthWest Service, and North Central Service—marking the first new commuter line in Chicago in 70 years.

Today, Metra continues to subsidize operations on four lines owned and operated by freight railroads. After 40 years, Metra has become the fourth-busiest commuter rail system in our country, consistently providing reliable and essential transportation services to my constituents.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to assist Metra in securing federal funding for the Morgan Street Bridge Replacement project. This funding will replace the current timber rail bridge, built in 1974 as a temporary solution, with a new steel bridge. This upgrade will reduce maintenance needs and enhance safety and reliability for nearly 7.34 million annual riders.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Metra on its 40th anniversary. I look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure Metra's success for many years to come.

CELEBRATING JOHN M. BARR'S CAREER AND SERVICE, YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of John M. Barr and his dedication to the legal profession. As City Attorney of Ypsilanti, Michigan for decades and founder of Barr, Anhut and Associates, P.C., John's commitment to serving his community is worthy of commendation.

John attended Michigan State University where he earned a Bachelor of Art in Social Science. He then earned his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. Throughout his successful legal career, John has been admitted into the State Bar of Michigan, the U.S. Federal District Court, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Outside of the law, John heroically served his country as member of the United States Army.

John has served as City Attorney for Ypsilanti since 1981. For over 43 years, he has served as the chief legal advisor to the City Council, Manager, and various city departments. As a testament to his dedication to the community, John founded Barr, Anhut and As-

sociates, P.C., which focuses on municipal law, estate planning/probate, real estate, and corporate law. His firm often provides bar recommended pro-bono services and John has always expected his staff to be active members of their community through volunteering and other service.

Outside of his career, John has personally served in numerous community organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and Washtenaw 100. He currently serves as board member of HighScope Educational Research Foundation, which aims to provide high-quality, equitable early childhood education to every child. He also serves as a board member of the Michigan Municipal League Foundation, which aims to create financial security among local communities to address individual social and economic needs across a wide set of industries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the magnificent career of John M. Barr and congratulating him on his retirement. His dedication to the city of Ypsilanti and the broader Michigan community has created a more just and equitable community for all. I thank John for his decades of service to our community, and we wish him all the best as he moves on to the next chapter of his life.

CELEBRATING DR. VENU GOVINDARAJU AS PERSON OF THE YEAR BY THE COUNCIL OF HERITAGE AND ARTS OF INDIA

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2024

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Dr. Venu Govindaraju as Person of the Year by the Council of Heritage and Arts of India. Dr. Govindaraju, a renowned professor and Vice President for Research and Economic Development at the University at Buffalo, is a trailblazer whose pioneering research has transformed artificial intelligence and document analysis, leaving an indelible mark on technological innovation and societal progress.

At a time when the practice of artificial intelligence seemed far-fetched, Dr. Govindaraju led a team that developed the world's first autonomous system for deciphering handwritten addresses. Initially funded by the U.S. Postal Service, this comprehensive technology processes mail at a staggering speed of 13 pieces per second, interpreting natural handwriting mail in the United States, with no additional guidelines, structured forms, or meticulously printed text. Subsequently adopted by the Australia Post and the UK Royal Mail, the system now reads nearly all the handwritten mail in the United States. Its efficiency stands as a cornerstone achievement in artificial intelligence.

The impact of Dr. Govindaraju's work extends far beyond postal automation. His contributions have overarched in diverse fields such as digital libraries, healthcare, and education. For the New York State Department of Health, his techniques have enabled early detection of illness outbreaks through automated healthcare analysis. Currently, as Director and Principal Investigator of the National Institute for Exceptional Education, he is leading a National Science Foundation-funded initiative to