

Rev. Saunders' decades of tireless efforts to uplift others exemplified his compassion, integrity, and dedication to service. Though he passed away in 1987, his values live on through his three children, Theresa, William, and Anne (Percy Brown), as well as his two grandchildren, Jason and Haile.

It is with deep respect and gratitude that I celebrate the life of the Rev. Dr. William R. Saunders and recognize his legacy. May his example continue to inspire those who seek to serve others and foster positive change in our communities.

HONORING DEPUTY JIM LAU

HON. CHUCK EDWARDS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it is with sorrow and gratitude that I rise today to honor the life of Deputy Charles James "Jim" Lau for his service to our country and community as a security officer at the Macon County Courthouse in Western North Carolina. Jim drowned in the floodwaters of Hurricane Helene and was found dead on September 28.

Jim lived a life dedicated to public service in every role he undertook. Jim served in the U.S. Air Force, rising to the rank of Master Sergeant and fighting in the Vietnam War, before beginning his successful career in law enforcement.

As a member of the Volusia County Sheriff's Office in Florida, Jim spent over 20 years working as a deputy, working primarily in the Major Case and Crime Scene units and pioneered a crime scene program which trained hundreds of deputies.

Jim was described by the Sheriff's Office as a hard worker, dependable and was well-liked. After full retirement from the police force in 2005, Jim moved with his then wife Millie to Franklin, North Carolina to be closer to family; Millie died in 2007 after a battle with breast cancer.

Even in his retirement, Jim felt called to serve others and chose to serve his community as a volunteer with REACH of Macon County, a domestic violence, rape crisis, and human trafficking center, and as a security officer at the Macon County Courthouse.

On Friday, September 27, Jim showed up to work to serve the people of Macon County amidst the devastation of Hurricane Helene, with the worst storm conditions Western North Carolina has seen in recorded history. Jim was reported missing after he failed to return from lunch and his body was found in his truck, still trapped in the floodwater, the following day.

Jim was known as a family man and loved nothing more than being a grandfather. Jim leaves behind his wife, Judie; children, Kimberly, Destiny, Cameron, Brittany and Tyler; and many grandchildren and extended relatives.

After decades of working to protect others, Jim made the world a better and safer place, and I thank him for his lifetime of public service. I offer my deepest condolences to the Lau family and will continue to keep them in my thoughts and prayers.

CELEBRATING DIWALI IN CARY,
NORTH CAROLINA

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the celebration of the Diwali Festival in Cary, North Carolina, my home and part of North Carolina's 13th Congressional District.

This year's Diwali Festival was made to happen thanks to the great work of the Cary Town Council. The event is being hosted in commemoration of Cary's Diwali Proclamation, which will be presented to Manoj Pandya, the President of the Hindu Society of North Carolina.

It is also important that I recognize Councilwoman Sarika Bansal of the Town of Cary, for her efforts in organizing this event. Councilwoman Bansal is the first ever Indian-American woman to serve on the Cary Town Council. Councilwoman Bansal ran on the platform that including more voices and citizen engagement would help us to make investments in the town of Cary that will benefit many generations to come. She understands the importance of diversity and uplifting those voices.

North Carolina is a place of abundance, where diverse communities and their traditions contribute to the prosperity of our great state. Specifically, the Indian-American and Hindu communities make great and important contributions to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of North Carolina.

From business and technology to education and healthcare, our Hindu neighbors continue to make a lasting impact on our state. The tradition of Diwali is a testament to the strength that comes from our community's diversity.

Diwali is a time that holds immense significance and marks the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. It is a time to come together with friends and family to enjoy dancing and delicious food. It is also a holiday of hope; an important opportunity to reflect on the importance of light, particularly in times of great darkness and social discord. Diwali stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of resilience and optimism that unites us as a community and a Nation.

I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in reminding our communities and ourselves to shine our light in darkness, to fight for peace, for justice, and for understanding, even as powerful forces work to sow hate and division. In North Carolina y'all means all.

May we all dedicate ourselves to the beauty of diversity, and pursuit of a brighter future for everyone.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SISTER
BERNADETTE KENNY

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Sister Bernadette Kenny, who passed away on December 7, 2024.

"Sister Bernie" came into the world on December 8, 1938. She was born in Boston,

Massachusetts, and raised in Massachusetts. Her Catholic faith and interest in caring for others resulted in her joining the Medical Missionaries of Mary at age 19. She went to study nursing at Ireland's Lady of Lourdes Hospital.

After completing her training as a nurse and midwife, she served several missions in Africa, which included stints in Tanzania, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic.

In 1978, Sister Kenny moved to Southwest Virginia. Soon thereafter, she founded the Health Wagon in Norton, Virginia.

Southwest Virginia is a sprawling rural area, and access to health care services has always been a challenge for the local communities. For many people, it takes hours of driving to simply reach a hospital.

Sister Kenny founded the Health Wagon to address this challenge head on. The Health Wagon consisted of a Volkswagen Beetle filled with medical tools and supplies. Sister Kenny traveled in her Beetle throughout the coalfields region to meet the health care needs of the local communities.

She administered services to struggling residents free of charge in her quest to heal their bodies as well as heal their souls. She underscored the emotional aspects to health care, saying "in most health care the emotional part is ignored." She added: "health care is social; it's a way of identifying what's inside a person."

Thanks to Sister Kenny's support, the Remote Area Medical (RAM) project, a popular and overwhelmingly successful venture that delivers free health care to various underserved communities in America, has hosted clinics in Southwest Virginia.

Because of Sister Kenny's strong leadership and fierce advocacy, the Health Wagon has sustained operations to this very day. The group takes pride in providing compassionate, quality health care to the medically underserved people in the mountains of Appalachia.

The indispensable endeavor to deliver vital health care to Appalachian communities, including the region's coal miners, would not have been so emphasized today if it were not for Sister Kenny. I join the people of Southwest Virginia and all of Appalachia in mourning her loss, but the lasting impact she had on the region will forever be cherished.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JEFFERSON
TOWNSHIP COUNCILMAN
RON SMITH

HON. MIKIE SHERRILL

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Ms. SHERRILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Councilman Ron Smith, who will retire at the end of this month after years of dedicated service to Jefferson Township.

After earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Seton Hall University and a Master's Degree in Supervision and Administration from Kean University, Councilman Smith embarked on a career as a School Business Administrator. Over his career, he has worked for Essex County Vocational Schools and as an Interim School Business Administrator for numerous school districts,

most recently the Kearny Board of Education. Currently, he is the President and Educational Management Consultant with HRS Management Services.

In addition to serving as an adjunct faculty member at Kean University and Seton Hall University, Councilman Smith was an Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance at Kean University and an aide to New Jersey State Senator Robert Martin. Prior to being elected as a Councilman in 2017, he was a member of the Piscataway Board of Adjustment, the Jefferson Township Planning Board, and served as the President of the Jefferson Township Board of Education. Additionally, he currently serves as a Chairman of the Lake Hopatcong Commission.

A U.S. Army veteran, Councilman Smith received an honorable discharge after serving from 1954 to 1956. His dedication to his community and country is reflected in his civic activities and professional memberships, including leadership roles with the Association of School Business Officials International and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials.

Councilman Smith's lifelong dedication to service and leadership has left an indelible mark on the community.

I want to express my gratitude to Councilman Smith for his decades of service and for the countless ways he has enriched the lives of others, and I wish him the best for a well-earned and restful retirement.

HONORING ANDRE PIERRE

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the outstanding service of Andre Pierre, my former intern who served with distinction and dedicated his time to serving the people of Florida's 24th Congressional District. Andre is currently a student at Florida International University, where he focuses on International Business and serves as the Vice-President of the Real Estate Club. I am proud to highlight Andre's remarkable contributions, particularly in foreign policy and Haiti. His work in this area has been instrumental in shaping policy discussions and providing valuable insights into the complex challenges facing Haiti. In my office, Andre has shown great dedication, immersing himself in the legislative process, especially in transportation and infrastructure. He has also worked closely with the Caucus on the Commission of the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, demonstrating his commitment to addressing critical issues impacting communities. Andre has emerged as a true leader on the Hill, uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds to foster a more inclusive and collaborative culture.

I wish Andre all the best as he continues his academic journey, which I am certain will be filled with success.

On behalf of Florida's 24th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Andre for his commitment and service.

HONORING THE BREVARD HIGH SCHOOL CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM

HON. CHUCK EDWARDS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Brevard High School boys' cross-country team for winning the 2A state championship. This is the Brevard "Blue Devils" second 2A state championship in a row and third in the last four years, solidifying their dominant status as a dynasty.

The Brevard High School girls' cross-country team placed 7th at the state cross country meet.

Congratulations to the Blue Devils. Their continued success is a testament to countless hours of training, hard work, and a genuine passion for running.

They have made Western North Carolina proud.

May the future bring many more years of success as we continue to celebrate the legacy of your exceptional cross-country program.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes due to recovery from a hip replacement surgery after sustaining an injury during a bipartisan Congressional delegation trip to Luxembourg to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 516.

HONORING ROBERT SENA

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the outstanding service of Robert Sena, my intern who served with distinction in my office and dedicated his time to serving the people of Florida's 24th Congressional District.

Robert, a graduate of Rollins College, brought his background and enthusiasm for communications and civic engagement. His service in my office has been instrumental to the constituents of Florida's 24th Congressional District as well as the state of Florida. Robert's hard work and dedication were highlighted in his outstanding skills for sharing the functions of the federal government with a wide audience.

I applaud Robert's passion for civic involvement and his plan to educate the youth on the importance of local-level government.

Robert leaves a legacy of hard work and dedication. I do not doubt that the next step in his journey will be filled with continued success.

On behalf of Florida's 24th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Robert Sena for his commitment and service.

HONORING MAJOR MICHELLE QUINTERO

HON. CHUCK EDWARDS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor Major Michelle Quintero of the Madison County Sheriff's Office who was killed as Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina on September 27.

As director of operations at the Madison County Detention Center, which includes Madison Juvenile Detention Center, Michelle was known for her positive influence on inmates and as a source of comfort and strength for young people.

Michelle's family and friends described her as a second mother to juvenile inmates, employees, and members of her community, even bringing juvenile inmates Christmas presents, making sure no one felt left out. On the morning of Friday, September 27, in the midst of Helene's destruction, Michelle thought only of serving others and attempted to get to work from her home in Yancey County.

Michelle was quickly surrounded by the rising flood waters after going outside to enter her car and became caught in the current; Michelle's neighbor, Chris Robinson, jumped into the flood water and made attempts to save Michelle's life but she was fatally injured by the falling trees and waves of debris in the water. Michelle was 48 years old. Michelle made a lasting impact on the law enforcement community and on those who were lucky enough to know her.

The Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety posthumously awarded Michelle the Raising of the Bar award, for her lifetime of public service and going above and beyond to help create better outcomes for incarcerated youth.

Michelle spent nearly 18 years working at the sheriff's office and came from a family dedicated to public service. Michelle leaves behind the love of her life and husband, Isaac Quintero; daughter, Ashlyn Quintero; son, Isaac Quintero; and many extended family members.

I thank Michelle for her contributions to Western North Carolina and for the positive influence and safe environment she provided for youth in her care.

I offer my deepest condolences to the Quintero family. I will continue to keep them and their loved ones in my thoughts and prayers. Michelle will be remembered for her lifetime of service and in every life she touched.

RECOGNIZING MARK R. BAKER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 20, 2024

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Mark R. Baker, who is retiring after more than a decade of distinguished service as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.