

He spent his college years at Bethune Cookman University. Following his college years, Yokeenba found his passion for music, becoming one of the biggest DJs in the urban industry.

When he was not on tour, he would spend his time coaching youth football at the age of 18 and volunteering his time at Chambers Park, where he is now a recreation supervisor.

Yokeenba is a child of God, husband, father, mentor, community spokesperson, and leader. Yokeenba is a person with a passion for shaping the youth in his community. He is hard working, dependable, has great energy, and has a drive to see his programs succeed. He is always willing to help out wherever needed and assist his fellow co-workers, family, and community in any way possible.

He is a dedicated individual who displays an enormous sense of pride in his daily work. Since taking on his role at the Chambers Park Community Center, he has been instrumental in creating some well attended recreation programs while maintaining a successful summer camp program where a large portion of the community benefits from. In addition, he has organized essential events that promote fellowship within the community, such as Breakfast with Santa, Daddy and Daughter Dance, and Back to School Jam, among others.

He has done an excellent job of stepping right into the role and ensuring its continued success. He is an excellent team player and works very well with diverse populations of families, participants, employees, and co-workers who visit his facility daily. He is a capable and independent leader who takes pride in being an active member of the Kissimmee community.

On February 22, 2024, Yokeenba Jenkins was honored as a distinguished leader in Central Florida for Black History Month.

#### RECOGNIZING ALEXA BARTELL

### HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 23, 2024*

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of 20-year-old Alexa Bartell from Arvada, Colorado.

Alexa's friends and family knew her as an outgoing, compassionate, and energetic young woman, saying she could light up the room with her infectious personality. She loved basketball, music, and connecting with others. Tragically, Alexa's life was cut short in April of 2023 by an act of reckless endangerment when she was driving near her hometown. Everyone who was fortunate to meet Alexa could see how intelligent, funny, and kind she was, and this tragedy took away her bright future.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, we honor the life of Alexa Bartell and continue to send support and love to her family and friends. In remembering Alexa, we not only mourn her passing, but also celebrate the joy and warmth she brought into the lives of those around her.

#### RECOGNIZING RARE DISEASE DAY

### HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 23, 2024*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Rare Disease Day on February 29, 2024. According to the Federal Drug Administration, over 7,000 rare diseases affect more than 30 million people in the United States. That's nearly one in every ten Americans.

The National Institutes of Health recognizes more than 7,000 rare diseases. Of those 7,000 plus diseases approximately 95 percent have no treatment. Instead, many patients receive treatments that are not approved by the FDA for their specific conditions. This treatment process can lead to patients experiencing difficulty with insurance reimbursements. All Americans deserve quality access to affordable health care, and we must do more to assist our fellow Americans with rare diseases in reaching these standards.

Rare diseases not only have a debilitating impact on the individuals affected but also the families and loved ones who support them. On average, individuals with rare diseases do not receive an accurate diagnosis for more than four and a half years, in addition to difficulty in finding medical experts and treatments for their conditions. This leaves patients, families, and caregivers waiting indefinitely for diagnoses, treatments, and additional support for indefinite periods of time.

Rare Disease Day is a significant step in increasing public awareness and encouraging funding for research into these conditions. It is critical that Congress continue to partner with patients, advocates, scientists, and health care employees to seek solutions that will prioritize public funding for the health, wellness, and treatment for all those impacted by rare medical conditions.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I want to commemorate this important day and remind my fellow Americans to recognize those impacted by rare diseases, in addition to the medical professionals committed to finding treatments for them.

#### COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND THE ERTEGUN BROTHERS

### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 23, 2024*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Black History Month, a time dedicated to recognizing the contributions of African Americans to the rich tapestry of American history. This month serves as an opportunity to reflect on the achievements, struggles, and enduring resilience of the Black community.

One noteworthy aspect of Black history that deserves recognition is the profound impact of African Americans on the world of music, particularly in the realm of jazz. Jazz, born from the African American experience, has become a universal language, transcending borders

and connecting people from diverse backgrounds. It is a powerful expression of creativity, resilience, and cultural richness.

In this context, I'd like to emphasize the significant partnership of the Turkish Embassy and the Ertegun brothers. Sons of Turkey's first ambassador to the United States, Ahmet and Nesuhi believed in the power of music to bring people together. Beginning in 1940, musicians such as Duke Ellington, Johnny Hodges, "Lead Belly," Teddy Wilson, Lester Young, and members of the Benny Goodman, Ellington and Count Basie orchestras performed at the Turkish Embassy. Their father insisted that in the embassy, all, regardless of color, be treated with dignity and respect.

As co-founders of Atlantic Records, the Ertegun brothers were instrumental in bringing together artists from different backgrounds, breaking down racial and cultural barriers in the world of music. Ahmet traveled to New Orleans and Harlem to sign the greatest black musicians of the time, including Stick McGhee, The Harlemaires, and The Drifters. In the 1960s, Atlantic Records, often in partnerships with local labels like Stax Records in Memphis, helped to develop the growth of soul music, with artists such as Ben E. King, Solomon Burke, Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Percy Sledge, Aretha Franklin, and Wilson Pickett.

The Turkish Embassy's commitment to hosting these jam sessions exemplifies the importance of cultural diplomacy and the unifying power of music. Through these events, artists of diverse backgrounds, including African American musicians, have had the opportunity to showcase their talents, bridging cultural gaps and promoting understanding.

As we commemorate Black History Month, let us go beyond celebrating the achievements of the past but also recognize the importance of continued collaboration and dialogue to build a more harmonious future. The blending of Black history and jazz, coupled with the dedicated endeavors of entities such as the Turkish Embassy and the Ertegun brothers, stands as a powerful tribute to the transformative potential of cultural interchange and the unifying power of music.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the significance of Black History Month, celebrating the contributions of African Americans to the arts and culture, and recognizing the positive impact of initiatives like the Turkish Embassy-hosted jam sessions in fostering unity and understanding.

#### HONORING ABIGAIL ELLIS AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 23, 2024*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Abigail Ellis is currently a registered mental health counselor intern, a devoted mental health advocate, a mentor, and an educator. She is steadfast in her commitment to effecting positive change in her community.

Raised in Moore Haven, Florida, she developed a passion for community service early on—learning from her grandmother, Ida M.

Ward, who was always giving back. Abigail earned a bachelor's degree in business and information management from Seminole State College, complemented by certificates in project management and human resource administration. Her academic journey culminated in a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from Nova Southeastern University.

In 2001, Abigail made history as the first African-American Chalo Nitka Pageant winner in her hometown, Moore Haven, Florida. This accomplishment not only showcased her resilience but also set a powerful precedent for others to follow. Abigail and her son, Lamar Allen, are deeply engaged in community service. She founded Steps Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization established in 2019 to serve marginalized youth in Osceola County.

The organization was born after years of watching her mother, Darlene Ellis, struggle to find resources to support her brother, Samuel Ellis. Through this initiative, she has demonstrated a proactive and hands-on approach to addressing the unique challenges faced by underserved teens.

In addition to her foundation, Abigail actively serves on several boards throughout Central Florida, focusing on mental health, community engagement, and youth development. She serves as a member of Chi Sigma Iota, the Florida Counseling Association, and the Osceola Chamber, just to name a few. This involvement underlines her dedication to a holistic approach in supporting the well-being of adolescents. Abigail Ellis exemplifies leadership, compassion, and expertise, utilizing her multifaceted role to create a positive impact on the lives of young people and their families.

On February 22, 2024, Abigail Ellis was honored as a distinguished leader in Central Florida for Black History Month.

**HONORING FRANCIS 'FRANK'  
HUMMEL, JR.**

**HON. ANDY KIM**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 23, 2024*

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the selfless service and incredible accomplishments of Francis 'Frank' Hummel, Jr., a United States Army Veteran, who passed earlier this month.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Frank spent his adult life in southern New Jersey. In December 1950, he joined the United States Army where he completed his basic training

on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, right in his own backyard. Frank was then transferred to a small town in Germany where he went through military intelligence training and served in the Army Security Agency. During this time, Frank enjoyed boxing, playing center and linebacker for the Seventh Army Special Troops Ramblers football team, and being a member of the 97th Signal Satans basketball team. Today, we all remember him for his brave service, and love for sports with his fellow soldiers.

After the Army, Frank opened his own mechanical engineering firm, Hummel Engineering Corporation, which served New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware. Frank also served as the Executive Vice President and then President of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Eastern Pennsylvania, and was the Secretary of the National Certified Pipe Welding Bureau of Philadelphia. Beyond that he was a member of the Christian Business Men's Association, where he helped mentor young men to succeed in their faith, business, and life's endeavors. Frank also taught project management at the Pennsylvania State University, Media campus.

A man of faith, Frank was an active member of his congregations and served on many church boards throughout the years. Formerly a member of Cherry Hill Baptist Church, he most recently was a member of Grace Baptist Church in Mount Laurel. Frank was active in supporting Christian mission work around the world and was an author in the Wiley Mission Community Newspaper.

Frank was not only a veteran, entrepreneur, and man of faith, he was a family man who loved spending time with his large family. He was known to spend his time visiting historical societies, libraries, and cemeteries across the United States and Europe where he listened to and learned about histories from ancestors and distant family members. He enjoyed recording family genealogy by hand, writing stories about his life experiences, and photography.

Frank married Lorraine Miller in 1951 and in their over 70 years of marriage, they had three children, eleven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

While many community members locally know Frank and his positive impact in our community, today I'm proud to honor his tenure as a veteran of the United States Army, and husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. We are lucky to have his inspiration in our community.

**HONORING NEALYA IRIS BRUNSON  
AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN  
CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK  
HISTORY MONTH**

**HON. DARREN SOTO**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 23, 2024*

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Nealya Iris Brunson is the dance director for the Osceola County School for the Arts, where she has dedicated 20 years to educating students in dance and the arts. Some of her contributions to student success include attending the National High School Dance Festivals in Miami and Philadelphia, as well as the Regional High School Dance Festivals in Norfolk, Virginia, where students received college acceptances and scholarships. Additional contributions include attending the Florida Dance Education Organization and Florida Dance Performance Assessment, where students in middle and high school received superior and excellent ratings in the areas of dance, technique, and performance. Over the years, Ms. Brunson has taught many students who have demonstrated outstanding achievements and have become professional dancers, artists, teachers, and choreographers nationally and internationally.

Ms. Brunson has served as a dance program coordinator, choreographed dances for many dance and theater programs, and served as a dance adjudicator in several public schools, universities, and performing arts centers, primarily in the state of Florida.

Ms. Brunson's training in dance began at B.J.'s School of Dance in St. Petersburg, Florida, under the direction of Barbara Hodges. She continued to study dance at the Pinellas County School for the Arts at Gibbs High School and at St. Petersburg College, Co-Motion Dance Theater. Ms. Brunson received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Florida, New World School of the Arts in Miami, Florida, under the direction of Daniel Lewis. She also received a Master of Arts in Dance from the American University in Washington, D.C., under the direction of Dr. Niama Prevots.

Ms. Brunson enjoys teaching the elements of dance, which is a major component of her dance classes. She will be releasing her first book titled, "Goals of Dance Technique: A Dancers Workbook," later this year.

On February 22, 2024, Nealya Iris Brunson was honored as a distinguished leader in Central Florida for Black History Month.