

HONORING THE IMPACT OF JESSY LAKIN AND TIANA FREEMAN ON ALASKA'S VETERANS

HON. MARY SATTLER PELTOLA

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Mrs. PELTOLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two exemplary Alaskans. They have been inspirational to others, as well as a gift to the communities they serve across our great state.

Jessy Lakin of Wasilla has served as the Program Lead for the Alaska Warrior Partnership since December 2022. As a combat veteran, co-founder of Battle Dawgs 501(c)(3) and veteran advocate, Jessy's skillset in collaboration, problem solving, marketing, and community relations has helped AKWP grow exponentially. Jessy's ability and collaboration skills have helped find solutions to generate momentum within the state to address difficult issues that veterans face. Jessy has spearheaded and organized monthly meetings that host up to 85 various agencies. This collaboration and partnership have been instrumental in the ability to assist veterans and their needs. Jessy also volunteers as a Co-Chair for the Veteran Community Partnership (VCP) with the Department of Veterans Affairs Alaska Health Care System. This group works with VA programs and community partners to address gaps in service, access to care, and provide outreach opportunities to connect veterans to the VA system.

Tiana Freeman of Eagle River serves as a case coordinator for the Alaska Warrior Partnership. Tiana works to engage veterans and stakeholders who are seeking resources for the warriors in our community needing assistance. Her duties include intake of warriors, determination of needs, and screening for Suicidal Ideation and Risk before then connecting the warriors with resources in the community. Tiana has worked and closed 147 cases so far this year. Tiana goes above and beyond for each warrior; she establishes a trusting and lasting relationship with everyone she encounters. She has outstanding reviews from veterans, community partners and state and federal level agencies.

Together, Tiana and Jessy work to identify gaps in services. They also work to obtain grants and funding. Their efforts to engage and recruit community agencies, businesses, and other non-profits have resulted in over 85 partnerships across Alaska. These partnerships have worked and closed 730 cases resulting in a successful closure rate of 97.5 percent since December 2022.

Jessy's and Tiana's dedication, selflessness, and empathy have positively impacted the veterans they assist as well as the community partners they engage.

RECOGNIZING TAMPA BAY'S TRAILBLAZER MARCUS BROOKS, IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate

a change agent and one of Tampa Bay's most distinguished torch bearers, Marcus Brooks.

Mr. Brooks is a fourth-generation resident of St. Petersburg, Florida, where he currently lives with his wife and children. He received his bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in communications from Florida State University. Brooks credits his upbringing of racial contrast in Clearwater, Florida and South St. Petersburg, which afforded him different perspectives to shape him into the leader he is today. He is also a recipient of the St. Petersburg NAACP's Next-Gen Trailblazer award and currently serves on the boards of the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership and Alleghany Franciscan Ministries.

"Whatever gifts you are believed to have are not yours. They were gifted to you for a finite amount of time to be passed on and used in service of others." These are words Mr. Brooks uses to govern his work and daily life. After graduating from Florida State University, he began his journey in public service of more than 15 years. Mr. Brooks has served as the youth coordinator for Coordinated Childcare of Pinellas, development officer at St. Petersburg College, regional director of Junior Achievement of Tampa Bay, director of development for Eckerd Youth Alternatives, to name a few. While serving in these roles, his goal was to cultivate, plan and execute developmental efforts that would change and touch the lives of our youth through education.

Mr. Brooks is an advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion, and believes unequivocally that if we advance racial equity and improve the overall health of the community, we will see the growth of more sustainable communities. Mr. Brooks is the executive director of the Center for Health Equity, whose mission is to inspire and empower people, share ideas, exchange information, organize and build relationships to end differences in health due to institutional racism. Under his leadership, the Center for Health Equity has pushed new bounds with the creation of Courageous Conversations, which is an award-winning protocol for effectively engaging, sustaining and deepening interracial dialogue. This conversation examines the impact of race in our lives and fosters the development of essential literacy and competency through which to experience our personal, professional and organizational journeys. Mr. Brooks believes that if we are able to strip away past beliefs, experiences and actions to truly get to know our neighbor, we can begin to have a better understanding of one another.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am honored to recognize the outstanding accomplishments, leadership and service of Mr. Marcus Brooks, who stands as a shining example of the tremendous impact of hard work, nurturing others and service to the community to encourage others to reach their highest potential.

HONORING TRISTAN CROCKETT

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable servant, Tristan Crockett.

Mr. Crockett was born and reared in Grenada, Mississippi, to the parents, Mr. Chris Crockett and Mrs. Earline Crockett. Mr. Crockett attended and graduated from Grenada High School the year of 2015, graduating with high honors.

After graduating from high school, Mr. Crockett embarked on his career journey by enrolling at Delta State University (DSU), where he pursued a major in Commercial Aviation in Flight Operations. Through diligent effort and dedication, Mr. Crockett successfully completed his studies at DSU, earning his Bachelor of Commercial Aviation in Flight Operations degree.

After obtaining his degree, Mr. Crockett diligently advanced in his career path. Presently, he holds the position of Current First Officer at Delta Air Lines.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Tristan Crockett for his dedication and tenacity to serving his community and desire to be an example for all.

HONORING DR. VANESSA ALLEN-MCCLLOUD DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. FRANK J. MRVAN

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise to celebrate National Women's History Month and its 2024 theme, Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Each year, the National Women's History Alliance selects a unifying theme in honor of Women's History Month. This year's theme recognizes the numerous brave women throughout history who have fought and continue to fight for justice and equality for women in all aspects of American society.

As we celebrate the relentless efforts of women who have devoted their lives to this cause, I would like to take the time to honor a true leader in Northwest Indiana, Dr. Vanessa Allen-McCloud. Her passion for civil service and education serves as an inspiration for women throughout the region and beyond. Dr. Allen-McCloud holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership from Calumet College of St. Joseph and a Master of Education degree from Purdue University Northwest. In 2013, she earned her Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Dr. Allen-McCloud's impressive career includes various professional positions in the field of education at Purdue University Calumet, South Suburban College, and the Gary Community School Corporation. In 2010, Dr. Allen-McCloud became President and CEO of the Urban League of Northwest Indiana, an organization that works to "promote, encourage, and enhance services to improve social, educational, and economic conditions of African Americans and other minority groups in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties." Under her leadership, the Urban League continues to grow and succeed and has become an outstanding source of support for many individuals and organizations. Throughout the years, the Urban League has hosted numerous programs and seminars highlighting opportunities for women. In addition, Dr. Allen-McCloud is a certified civility trainer in Civility in the Workplace and

Cultural Competence and has been a noteworthy speaker in this regard. For her extraordinary leadership and passion for giving back to the community, Dr. Allen-McCloud is worthy of the highest praise.

Over the years, Dr. Allen-McCloud has received many accolades honoring her impressive career. In addition, Dr. Allen-McCloud has generously served her community by giving her time and efforts to numerous charitable endeavors, and she serves on several local and national boards. For her exceptional devotion to these earnest causes, Dr. Allen-McCloud is to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating Women's History Month and recognizing the dedication and contributions of Dr. Allen-McCloud and so many other extraordinary women who work to make our communities more equal, diverse, and inclusive.

HONORING CARLA JEAN
MARTINEZ

HON. BLAKE D. MOORE

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to honor the exceptional accomplishments of Carla Jean Martinez who currently serves as the National President for the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) Auxiliary. She is the first veteran to hold this position. She is a dual member of both the VFW Auxiliary and the VFW and is also an All-American District Commander with VFW Post 409 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Ms. Martinez's life serves as an exemplary model of selfless, patriotic service. Born in South Carolina, she joined the United States Navy in 1981, embarking on an honorable career as a cryptologist until her retirement in 1997. Her military service spanned the globe, including assignments in Japan, England, Korea, Virginia, and at the Pentagon. Whether stationed overseas or at home, Ms. Martinez consistently distinguished herself through unwavering commitment to her country. She was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of her exceptional military service.

Following her military retirement, Ms. Martinez moved to Utah and married Stanley Martinez in 2001. Her son, following in her footsteps, served in the United States Air Force. Shortly after retiring, Ms. Martinez joined the VFW Auxiliary and dedicated countless hours to serving fellow veterans through the VFW and at VA hospitals.

I express my deep gratitude to Ms. Martinez for her decades of dedicated service and sacrifice. She epitomizes courage, selflessness, and unwavering commitment to her fellow veterans and the Nation.

It is my honor to recognize her accomplishment as the first veteran to serve as the National President for the VFW Auxiliary.

RECOGNIZING TAMPA BAY'S
TRAILBLAZER GERARD (JERRY)
A. BELL, IN HONOR OF BLACK
HISTORY MONTH

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month with immense gratitude for the selfless community service of philanthropist and retired Tampa Bay Buccaneers player, Gerard (Jerry) A. Bell. Through Mr. Bell's dedication to advancing the success of his neighbors, young and old, our neighborhoods have positively transformed. Mr. Bell devoted his considerable time and talents to improving African American student retention and completion of higher education, and in doing has lifted us all.

Mr. Bell was born in Derby, Connecticut, in 1959. He earned his bachelor's degree in computer information systems from Arizona State University where he was a standout Tight End on the Sun Devil's football team and a master's in business administration from the University of Tampa. For the past 20 years, Mr. Bell has served as an adjunct faculty member at Hillsborough Community College, Pasco Hernando State College, and the University of Phoenix. He teaches various college courses in introduction to business, marketing, and personal finance.

Mr. Bell is married to Ruth Bell, his partner in life and in philanthropic and community service. They are notably most proud of their two children, Vanessa and David.

After five seasons as a Tight End for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Mr. Bell pursued his passion outside of the game and entered technology sales during the 1990's, a time when this industry was evolving before the world's eyes. Mr. Bell currently serves as the president and owner of Bell & Associates Business Consultants, Inc., a value-added reseller of information technology where he collaborates with local and national clients. Community service is at the crux of Mr. Bell's life and purpose. During his time with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, when he was not on the field, he was organizing food drives, tutoring young African American students for their SATs and ACTs, and holding football camps. Mr. Bell has served on numerous local and non-profit boards and he is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Mr. Bell's steadfast commitment to advancing student achievement has produced transformative results in diversifying higher education. The Bells were the first African-American couple to endow a scholarship at the University of South Florida, and to date have been able to provide financial assistance to more than 100 students who have successfully obtained a college degree, crediting the Bells' scholarship for their ability to succeed. Currently, Mr. Bell is a founding member of a new initiative at the University of South Florida, the Black Leadership Network, which is focused on the pillars of scholarship, mentorship, and internships for Black students.

Mr. Bell's public service is recognized widely. He was named a Community Hero by the Tampa Bay Lightning Foundation. Additionally, Mr. Bell's commitment to students was hon-

ored by the University of South Florida through the President's Distinguished Citizen Award.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am proud to recognize Gerard (Jerry) A. Bell, for his selfless public service and commitment to educational success and his work in diversity and uplifting the Tampa Bay community one neighborhood at a time.

HONORING PHILLIP C. WEST

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable servant, Phillip C. West.

Mr. West was born and reared in Natchez, Mississippi, to the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sam West. Mr. West attended and graduated from Sadie V. Thompson High School in 1964.

After completing high school, Mr. West advanced his career by enrolling at Alcorn State University, where he emerged as a student activist between 1966 and 1968. Demonstrating unwavering dedication, Mr. West ascended to the position of Vice-President of the Natchez NAACP from 1972 to 1974. His leadership continued to flourish as he assumed the role of President of the NAACP from 1974 to 1980.

He was elected and served on the Adams County Board of Supervisors from 1980 to 1997. Notably, in 1992, he achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first black individual to serve as President of the board. Following his tenure on the board, Mr. West was elected three times to the Mississippi House of Representatives, serving from 1997 to 2004. During his legislative tenure, he distinguished himself as a two-term chairman of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus.

In 2004, Mr. West continued to break barriers by being elected as Mayor of Natchez, marking the first time a black individual had held the position since Reconstruction.

Presently, Mr. West is serving as Vice-President of the Natchez-Adams School Board of Trustees for approximately (7) years. He is still active in many community affairs. He has continued his lifelong fight for equal opportunity, equal justice under law, and real progress for all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Phillip C. West for his continuing dedication and tenacity to serving his community and desire to be an example for all.

RECOGNIZING BILLY MCKINNEY'S
CONTRIBUTIONS TO NORTH-
WESTERN UNIVERSITY ATH-
LETICS AND ITS COMMUNITY

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements and public service of a basketball star, radio announcer, local mayor and my