

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DR. JULIE GAFNEY

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, as a celebration of Women's History Month, I want to highlight the work and life of Dr. Julie Gafney. She has pushed both inclusive and equitable learning environments as well as environmental justice forward by leaps and bounds throughout her long career in both public policy and higher education.

Dr. Gafney began her own educational journey at Tufts University and earned a Bachelor's in English Language and Literature. She then enrolled in the prestigious University of Chicago to pursue a Master's in Comparative Literature, and later completed her doctorate in English Language and Literature at The City University of New York. Dr. Gafney would later return to the University of Chicago to serve as a Project Manager for the Dean of Students and served as both an Adjunct Professor and later as a Senior Advisor to the President at the City University. Dr. Gafney has spent much of her life in higher education as both a student and administrator, making her work uniquely situated to bridge gaps in educational access.

Dr. Gafney currently serves as the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Mission Initiatives at Fordham University, where she also teaches in the English department. Dr. Gafney and her team plan to soon launch the Bronx Research Institute for Community Solutions, a public think tank dedicated to leveraging higher education as a means for effecting change in the Bronx through partnerships with local policymakers and community leaders. Dr. Grande has also spearheaded many of Fordham's environmental justice initiatives and serves as the Chair of Fordham's Sustainability Council. Her work in sustainable development led to her role as the Thriving Communities Grantmaker Project Lead and Principal Investigator, where she spearheads Fordham's newly acquired \$50 million dollar grant program that will focus on environmental justice across New York, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In addition to her role as Assistant Vice President for Strategic Mission Initiatives, Dr. Gafney is also the Executive Director of the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) at Fordham University. She focuses on student success, faculty development, and enhancing the University's levels of engagement within its own community, as well as with the wider Bronx and New York.

Dr. Gafney is proudly recognized as a changemaker and pioneer, and her work will continue to inspire others to greater heights. I know that her work, especially the grant maker program, will be extremely transformative for so many communities across the region.

RECOGNIZING THE 2023 FAIRFAX COUNTY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDEES

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the recipients of the 2023 Fairfax County Design and Environmental Achievement Awards.

This annual event celebrates Environmental Excellence awardees, Friends of Trees awardees, as well as James M. Scott Exceptional Design awardees. Each of these three awards celebrate dedicated individuals, county employees, and organizations or businesses who have made a lasting impact in our community.

The Environmental Excellence Awards recognize individual county residents, county employees, and organizations or businesses who advance or support the county's environmental goals and policies, dedicate personal time and expertise beyond their normal fiscal and civic responsibilities, and demonstrate leadership within the community. It is with great pride that I include in the RECORD the names of the following:

Individual County Resident Category: Mei Torrey, Langley High School

County Employee Category: Craig Carinci, Director of Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Stormwater Planning Division (retired); Joseph Gorney, Principal Environmental Planner with the Department of Planning and Development, Environmental Policy and Plan Development Branch; Hugh Whitehead, Urban Forest Management Division (retired)

Organization and Business Category: Trace—The Zero Waste Store, Vienna; Montebello Condominium Unit Owners Association, Grounds Committee

Since 1999, the Friends of Trees Awards have highlighted exceptional, outstanding, and innovative tree conservation actions in Fairfax County that meet one or more criteria: to protect and preserve existing trees and associated habitats, to increase the urban tree canopy and its related habitats, to educate and inspire people to plant more trees and properly maintain them, and to convey an understanding of the value and benefits of trees. It is with great pride that I include in the RECORD the names of the following recipients:

Individual County Resident Category: Steve Lagerfeld, McLean Trees Foundation; Jim McGlone, Virginia Department of Forestry (retired); Bob Vickers, Tree Commission

Non-profit Citizens Group Category: McLean Citizens Association, Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee

Non-profit Business Category: Inova Health Systems Office of Sustainability

Schools Category: Fairhill Elementary School, FCPS; Liberty Middle School, FCPS

Development Awardee: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States

Established in 1984, the James M. Scott Exceptional Design Awards recognize achievement in the total design of a building and its site. The awards aim to raise awareness of outstanding planning and design projects among design professionals and the general public. It is with great pride that I include in the RECORD the names of the following recipients:

Honor Award: G+G House, Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect; Capital One Hall, HGA, Architect

Merit Award: Spring Mill House, Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect; The Residence at Colvin Run, Architecture, Incorporated

Honorable Mention: 1800 Tysons Amenities, WDG Interior Architecture; Lorton Community Center and Library, Grimm + Parker Architects; The Crossroads Building at the Langley School, CGS Architects

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the 2023 Fairfax County Design and Environmental Achievement awardees and thank them for their impact on our community. Their efforts, which are deserving of our highest praise, provide immeasurable benefits to their fellow residents and serve as a reminder of why Fairfax County remains such a great place to live, work, and raise a family. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

HONORING MARY ESTHER RODRIGUEZ

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the life and legacy of Mary Esther Rodriguez, who passed away on Sunday, March 10, 2024, in the town of Losoya, Texas.

Mary Esther Rodriguez was born October 4, 1944, in San Antonio, Texas. The oldest of ten children, she was a devoted wife, mother, and community servant who enjoyed volunteering her time to help those in need.

As a young woman right out of high school she began working as a nurse's aide at the San Antonio State Hospital and later focused her energy as a Home Health Aide for the sick and elderly.

A woman of deep faith she began teaching religious education at 19 years of age and eventually became the Director of Religious Education at El Carmen Catholic Church in Losoya. She was moved to instill and strengthen the role of faith in the lives of children in the same manner that faith guided her life.

An active member of The Ladies of Charity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, she lived by their motto "to serve rather than be served, in humility, simplicity and charity." As a member she visited parishioners in nursing homes and the homebound, offering assistance to the poor in the community. She

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

helped run their community service programs including the thrift store and wellness center.

She leaves behind her husband, Ramon Rodriguez, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, whom she shared a life of love, joy, and many blessings over more than 57 years. She will be remembered by her daughters Rosalinda and Elizabeth, her sons-in-law Henry Macias and Estuardo Rodriguez and her most treasured grandchildren, Maria Isabella, Valencia Lael, Nicolas, Fidel, Abram, and Emilio. She will forever remain the heart of the Rodriguez family and serve as an unyielding call to charity and service for those she leaves behind.

RECOGNIZING JENNIFER BERNSTEIN

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the work of Jennifer Bernstein during this Women's History Month. Jennifer is a distinguished leader renowned for her exceptional management prowess and commitment to philanthropy within the realms of culture, education, and environmental advocacy. As the CEO and William C. Steere Sr. President of the esteemed New York Botanical Garden, she has orchestrated transformative initiatives that underscore her visionary leadership.

Upon assuming her role in 2021, Jennifer spearheaded the launch of a groundbreaking master site planning process, resulting in the formulation of "Branching Out: A Strategic Plan for 2024–2030." This blueprint, which was ratified by the Board of Trustees in November 2023, charts a course for the Garden's evolution by revitalizing over 100 acres of its property, reinforcing its stature as a global scientific hub, and enriching programs dedicated to empowering the Bronx community.

Jennifer's deep-rooted passion for environmental conservation drew her to NYBG, with its rich legacy of plant research and preservation. Prior to her tenure at the Garden, she served as the Chief Development Officer and interim Chief Operations Officer at the Natural Resources Defense Council. At NYBG, she champions the institution's mission to educate others on the pivotal role of plants in sustaining a vibrant ecosystem and nurturing a healthier planet.

Jennifer's dedication extends beyond her professional career, as evidenced by her active involvement in organizations such as the Women's Forum of New York and the board of the City University of New York's Lehman College Foundation. Earlier in her career, she honed her fundraising abilities in leadership roles at institutions such as Pace University, Playwrights Horizon, and Roundabout Theatre. Her impressive resume exemplifies commitment to leveraging expertise in fundraising and board development to effect positive change on the cultural, educational, and environmental landscape of New York City and beyond.

I would like to wish her continued success at the NYBG and am excited to see all the projects and programs she successfully leads at the garden.

RECOGNIZING INGLEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ANDREW OGLES

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. OGLES. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I honor Inglewood Baptist Church in Nashville as it celebrates its 100th anniversary.

First meeting on November 18, 1923, Inglewood Baptist was officially "called to order" on March 18th the following year. In the late 1920's, its congregation moved to its current location on Gallatin Road, meeting in a basement auditorium on the site where it still meets today. Its seventh and current pastor, Dr. Kevin Shrum, has shepherded his community since 1995.

Existing to "make known the Glory of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Inglewood Baptist seeks to edify believers in their personal and saving relationship with their Lord. Over the past century it has continued to grow and build its community, completing its current auditorium in 1948 and finishing a four-story educational complex in 1955. In addition to its other ministries; it has instituted the Allegro School of Music, which provides an opportunity for music education and skill development for those living in the Nashville area.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Inglewood Baptist Church on its 100th anniversary and wishing it well as it starts its second century as a congregation.

HONORING CHIEF MIKE WAGNER OF SILER CITY, NORTH CAROLINA FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Chief Mike Wagner on his retirement from the Siler City Police Department and to honor his years of faithful service to the people of Chatham County, North Carolina.

Wagner began his career in law enforcement with the Albemarle County Police Department, in Albemarle County, Virginia in 1991, retiring on May 31, 2019, after 28 years of service. Subsequently, Wagner was appointed Chief of Police for Siler City, North Carolina on June 3rd, 2019, a position he has held up until this day. While serving as chief, Wagner served on the Board of Directors for the Chatham Outreach Alliance (CORA) and remains a member of the Chatham Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and Chairman of the Animal Appeals Board.

Wagner has earned numerous degrees and academic accolades over the course of his career. Some of these include an associate degree in Police Science from Piedmont Virginia Community College, a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Bluefield College, a Master's Degree from Liberty University along with various leadership credentials from such institutions as the University of Louisville and at the University of Richmond.

On top of this, Wagner served honorably in our nation's military. He is a veteran with 13 years of service in the United States Army and the Virginia Army National Guard. During his time in the service, he was deployed overseas as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2010.

Chief Wagner is a dedicated public servant, husband, father, and patriot. I know I speak for the whole community when I wish him well in this next chapter of his life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating Mike Wagner on his retirement and thanking him for his many years of dedicated service to both our state and country.

RECOGNIZING SPRING GARDEN GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM WINNING THE AHSAA 1A STATE TITLE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Spring Garden High School Girls Basketball Team for winning the AHSAA 1A State Title for the second time.

On February 29th, the Spring Garden Panthers beat Marion County 63–31 to secure their title win. The game was played at Legacy Arena in Birmingham.

The Spring Garden girls have won back-to-back state titles just like they did in 2004 and 2005.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Coach Ricky Austin, the Spring Garden Girls Basketball team, students, faculty and all the fans. Go Panthers.

RECOGNIZING DENISE ROSARIO ADUSEI

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 11, 2024

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Women's History Month, I want to honor some of the amazing and powerful women who live and work in the Bronx. Women like Denise Rosario Adusei, the Executive Director of the Bronx Children's Museum. Denise has left an indelible mark on the Bronx and in the greater New York area since beginning her journey in social entrepreneurship, authorship, and early childhood education leadership. Armed with a Master of Business Administration from Columbia Business School and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University, she embarked on a journey inspired by a fervent desire to foster the growth of future generations. She assumed leadership of the Children's Museum in 2023 and has since spearheaded efforts to provide inclusive learning opportunities for Bronx children and families centered around transformative arts and science programs.

Prior to joining the Children's Museum, Director Adusei founded the Peartree Preschool in Harlem, which stands as a testament to her dedication to innovative and collaborative education for children in New York City. Over the past twelve years, her initiative has aided the