

It is my great privilege to represent BTAC in my Congressional District. My commendations to longtime Executive Director Barbara Howell, BTAC staff, the Board of Directors and all the volunteers for their dedicated and outstanding service to the Burbank community.

I ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Burbank Temporary Aid Center upon its fiftieth anniversary.

HONORING THE LIFE AND
MEMORY OF AUDREY BURGETTE

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to commemorate the life of Mrs. Audrey Burgette. Mrs. Audrey lived a life of selflessness, service, and desire to better her community. There are individuals whose impact transcends time, leaving an indelible mark on those fortunate enough to have known them. Audrey June (Stewart) Burgette, the first Black female graduate of William Jewell College, was one of these special people.

Audrey Burgette was born in Liberty, Missouri on July 18, 1930. The circumstances of her childhood were a reflection of the times—Liberty was a racially segregated community still in the grips of Jim Crow laws. Her early educational years were also plagued by second-class treatment due to her race. This was before the Brown v. Board of Education ruling, so her schooling occurred under less than ideal conditions. She grew up in a supportive African American community and a loving family, which bolstered her to remain steadfast in her put suit of academic excellence and personal growth. As a testament to this, she graduated as Valedictorian of her class at Garrison School in Liberty.

Throughout her life, Audrey stood as a beacon of resilience and determination for overcoming numerous challenges. In her early 20s, she married John West Stapleton and welcomed two children, Carrie Eileen Stapleton and John West Stapleton, Jr., Esq. At the young age of 25, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and was partially paralyzed by the disease. She battled back and regained her ability to walk, only to face the pain of divorce. Fortunately, she found love once again with Herbert Lee Burgette, a Korean War veteran from Kansas City. Together with Herbert, Audrey welcomed two more children into her loving embrace, the late Dr. Phillip Leroy Burgette, M.D., and Brigitte Burgette Bradley, Esq. Love was always present in her blended family's lives. Even though she and John were divorced, her second husband, Herbert, would sometimes connect with John Sr., a disabled war veteran, and offer to drive him to milestone events in Carrie and John Jr.'s lives, such as graduations and sporting events.

While raising four children under the age of 10, Audrey was unrelenting in her quest for education. She achieved her dream of attending and graduating from William Jewell College with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education in 1966. She later earned a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1972.

Audrey's dedication to education extended beyond her own academic pursuits. She was a revered elementary school teacher and counselor in the Kansas City MO School District for over 26 years. She touched the lives of countless children, instilling in them a passion for learning and a belief in their own potential. This commitment expanded beyond her professional life. Audrey became a foster parent to several young people during this time, giving them the same love and support she showed for her own students and children.

Audrey's commitment to excellence in education has also shaped the lives of her four children in profound ways, guiding them towards fulfilling their dreams and aspirations. They were inspired by her example to achieve great success in various fields, from law to medicine to public relations. Her legacy lives on through her three grandchildren, Carrie Nicole Randle, Langston Colin Taylor Burgette and Brandon Byron Hays; and one great-granddaughter, Nya Simone Payne. Carrie Nicole holds a master's degree and is pursuing a doctorate.

In the community, Audrey was an active member of the Kansas City Chapter of the National Association of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., for which she was an officeholder and served on several committees. She was also a charter member of the Kansas City Chapter of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, which was established in 1979 by the Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc. Later in life, she added entrepreneur to her list of endeavors—she owned and operated a successful small business, the Stuart House of Maids.

Her relationship with Christ was a central force in her life with one ultimate goal: to give Jesus the glory. She was a member of Liberty's St. Luke A.M.E. Church, and later found her spiritual home at the Unity Church of New Life in Kansas City. She also wanted her children to put Jesus first . . . every Christmas Eve, her family would celebrate by holding a birthday party for Jesus with a cake with one candle, singing Happy Birthday to him, making sure they knew the real meaning of Christmas.

In 1986, the Urban League of Greater Kansas City's Black Family Recognition Committee honored the Burgette-Stapleton Family as a Model Black Family, recognizing them for their "sterling qualities or support, love, sharing, stability, nurturing, and the ability to overcome adversity."

Tragically, Audrey's life was cut short by cancer at the age of 62. Her passing left a void in the hearts of all who knew her, but her spirit of love, laughter, and dedication to education continues to inspire all who were touched by her presence. Her unwavering support for her family and community endures—a shining example of the transformative power of a life lived with purpose, perseverance, and passion.

As we remember Audrey June Burgette, we honor her trailblazing spirit, her commitment to education, and her profound impact on all of those whose lives she touched. As Audrey herself said in a letter to her daughter in 1983, "Remember to love all people, places, things, and mainly yourself. With love you need nothing else, but without it you have nothing else." Mr. Speaker, let us rise today and honor Audrey's life and legacy. May her memory continue to inspire future generations to em-

brace challenges with courage to pursue their dreams with determination, and to always strive for excellence in all endeavors. Audrey June Brigitte, a pioneer in education and a mother extraordinaire, will forever hold a special place in our hearts and in local history.

CELEBRATING JANIE BARRERA

HON. GREG CASAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Mr. CASAR. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to call the attention of the House in celebration of a true Texas visionary, Ms. Janie Barrera, for decades of work to provide small business owners and working families with the means to achieve their dreams.

A native of Corpus Christi and a sixth-generation Texan, Ms. Barrera's entrepreneurial spirit began in her youth. At the age of 12, after her mother denied her request to purchase a new bicycle, Janie went door-to-door selling raffle tickets for her old bicycle and used the proceeds to purchase a new one. Later, as a waitress in her parents' restaurant, Ms. Barrera witnessed both the hard work and the great financial risks of running a small business.

After high school, Ms. Barrera became a nun and joined a local covenant. She ran the Telecommunications Center for the Diocese of Corpus Christi for 15 years. When a bishop told Ms. Barrera that she couldn't get a promotion because of her lack of business experience, she pursued a Master of Business Administration from the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. She left the covenant shortly after graduation.

Ms. Barrera's parents ended up with nothing saved for retirement after running their restaurant for 20 years. This motivated her to use her personal experience and academic training to support both small businesses and working families. In 1994, Ms. Barrera founded Accion Texas (later renamed LiftFund) with the commitment to provide small businesses with sorely needed financial support through microloans and ongoing guidance as they navigated complex financial systems.

Today, LiftFund has over 100 employees and has disbursed close to \$500 million to small business owners in underserved communities, particularly people of color and low- and moderate-income individuals. Ms. Barrera stepped down as CEO of LiftFund in 2023 after three decades.

Ms. Barrera has been an integral part of the creation and sustainability of countless small businesses. Her work has received high recognition in Texas and beyond, including the "Small Business Administration Financial Services Advocate of the Year," and the "Minority Enterprise Development Consortium's Corporate Advocate of the Year." She received the 2022 Ned Gramlich Lifetime Achievement Award for Responsible Finance, which is the Community Development Financial Institution industry's highest individual honor. Ms. Barrera has also served on boards of directors at various levels, including the Federal Reserve Board's National Consumer Advisory Council. An invaluable leader in her field, President Barack Obama appointed Ms. Barrera to the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability.

As Texans, we are all forever grateful to Ms. Barrera for her vision of shared prosperity, her decades-long service to creating economic mobility, and her unwavering dedication to our community. As the Congressman for the 35th District of Texas, I am proud to congratulate Ms. Barrera and LiftFund on 30 years of service in Texas, and beyond.

HONORING DOUGLAS G. LEE FOR
HIS SERVICE TO WAYNESBURG
UNIVERSITY

HON. GUY RESCENTIALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Mr. RESCENTIALER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Douglas G. Lee on his exceptional decade of service as President of Waynesburg University. He assumed the office on July 1, 2013.

President Lee devoted the past decade to improving the educational experience for students and serving the Waynesburg, Pennsylvania community. He managed a \$32 million revitalization of the Paul R. Stewart Science Hall and successfully implemented a health and safety plan that allowed students to remain on campus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. His efforts ensured continued academic excellence and a safe environment for the university's thriving student population.

A Waynesburg University alumnus himself, President Lee graduated from the university in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science degree in business. His loyalty to the institution deepens his connection to the school's faith, academic mission, and focus on the community. President Lee continues to serve the university and Pennsylvania's academic community as secretary and treasurer of the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania. He also serves on the NCAA Division III Board of Governors to help student athletes grow their academic and athletic character.

The Greene County Chamber of Commerce awarded President Lee the Distinguished Service Award to recognize his contributions to the university and community. President Lee lives out his faith as an elder at his church, a board member of several local charities, and a loving husband and father.

Mr. Speaker, President Lee leads a life of integrity and service. He inspires all members of the Waynesburg University community to pursue a life of leadership and purpose. On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 14th Congressional District, I congratulate President Douglas G. Lee on this remarkable anniversary and look forward to Waynesburg University's continued success under his leadership.

HONORING DR. RONALD VAUGHN
AND HIS EXCEPTIONAL CAREER

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the career and service of Dr. Ronald Vaughn, president of the University of

Tampa. Throughout his 28 years of leadership with the University of Tampa, Dr. Vaughn has lifted students, faculty, the university, and the Tampa Bay community. He spearheaded a remarkable turnaround for the university and leaves UT ranked among the best medium-sized private universities in America.

Dr. Vaughn's remarkable career, his lifelong commitment to education, and exceptional stewardship of the University of Tampa have propelled the school into being an academic powerhouse. During his tenure as president, the school's academic offerings and footprint grew into the dynamic, community-connected institution that we are proud of today. Dr. Vaughn embraced the history of the historic Tampa Bay Hotel, Plant Hall and the iconic minarets and infused the university with life and amenities for students including an expanded campus with 71 construction projects completed or underway and investments worth a total of \$950 million.

The University of Tampa now hosts students from all 50 states and from almost all 195 countries. Dr. Vaughn's leadership has been fundamental to achieving academic excellence with a unique entrepreneurial spirit.

Dr. Vaughn's academic journey is a model for my others—a B.A. and an MBA from Indiana State University, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Georgia. Dr. Vaughn's comprehensive career as a business owner of a multi-office marketing research and consulting company provided him with the skills to lead the university into the established institution we know today.

His journey with the University of Tampa started in August 1984 as the Coordinator of the Marketing Department and holder of the Max H. Hollingsworth Endowed Chair of American Enterprise. Dr. Vaughn subsequently served as Director of the MBA Program, Dean of the College of Business and Graduate Studies and Co-Chief Academic Officer. In January of 1995 he became the president of the university.

Dr. Vaughn and UT hosted President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden in 2010 for a major economic policy announcement and a visit with students—the first time in UT's history that a sitting President made an official visit to the UT campus, and a rare joint appearance. President Joe Biden also visited the campus in 2023, the day after his State of the Union address, with many students watching from the pool deck and one noting "pretty cool vibes." As Vice President, Joe Biden also made a major international affairs speech in the Fletcher Lounge to Bay area business leaders in 2016.

Beyond his work as president of the university, Dr. Vaughn and his wife, Renée Vaughn, have been active members of the community. He has served on numerous boards and leadership positions, including the Straz Center for the Performing Arts, the Gulf Ridge Council of the Boy Scouts, the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, and the Florida Aquarium.

Dr. Vaughn has received numerous honors in recognition of his lifelong commitment to education and his exceptional stewardship of the University of Tampa. Among the countless awards that have been bestowed upon him nationally as well as locally are the Hillsborough County Administrative Volunteer of the Year for Tampa Bay's Chapter of the American Red Cross and the prestigious national recognition by the Ellis Island Honors

Society in 2004. Furthermore, the multi-purpose Vaughn Center facility is named in his honor, and it serves as the hub of student life and activity on the University of Tampa campus.

As we congratulate Dr. Vaughn for his remarkable career, we also express our gratitude for his continued commitment to uplifting the youth and laying the groundwork for a better tomorrow. Dr. Vaughn is the definition of a true public servant. On behalf of my neighbors across the Tampa Bay area, the great State of Florida, and our Nation, I thank Dr. Vaughn for his years of dedicated service and tireless commitment to making the University of Tampa the dynamic and growing university it is today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our gratitude sending best wishes to Dr. Vaughn and his family in their future endeavors.

COMMEMORATING JAMES
SOLOMON RUSSELL DAY

HON. JENNIFER L. McCLELLAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, the Virginia General Assembly proclaimed March 28th as James Solomon Russell Day. Today, I use to honor his legacy and incredible contributions to our Commonwealth.

Born enslaved in 1857, James Solomon Russell's life journey exemplifies resilience and determination. After receiving his teaching license in Warren County, North Carolina, and beginning to teach in the area, he attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1874. However, due to financial difficulties, he was unable to complete his studies and returned to teach in Warren County.

Thereafter, he became interested in the Episcopal Church and was the first student at Saint Stephen's Normal and Industrial School (later Bishop Payne Divinity School) in Petersburg, VA. He dedicated himself to uplifting his community and worked among Zion Union members in Brunswick County. His tireless efforts included the establishment of schools, senior housing, and the founding of Saint Paul's College in 1888. Through his leadership, thousands of African American youth were empowered to pursue education, becoming beacons of progress across the Commonwealth.

Despite closing its doors in 2013, James Solomon Russell's indelible mark at Saint Paul's College is kept alive at the James Solomon Russell—Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives in Lawrenceville, Virginia. I commend the James Solomon Russell Commemoration Committee and the Saint Paul's College Museum Committee for spearheading the community effort to open the museum to the public in 2019.

Moreover, I extend my deepest appreciation to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture Robert F. Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History. Their collaboration with the James Solomon Russell—Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives is invaluable. The Center's expertise in archiving and digitizing historical records ensures that Russell's story, along with the rich