

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING ANGEL COOK

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions made in our community by one of my constituents, Angel Cook. Angel is an esteemed member of the community with a huge heart for at-risk youth and a duty to serve beyond measure. For the past 15 years, Angel has committed time, effort, and energy to support the RAP House in New Port Richey and more specifically, the runaway, homeless and foster youth that reside in the shelter. RAP serves an average of 200 youth every year which means that Angel has touched the lives of over 3,000 children.

What drives Angel's dedication and passion is her extraordinary personal story and relationship with RAP House. Growing up in a troubled home, Angel eventually found her way to RAP where she resided off and on for some time. Angel does not hesitate to share how RAP "saved her life" and helped her envision a positive and productive future despite the odds. As an ambassador for RAP, Angel has been a part of the Rap River Run (RRR) committee, raising well over \$300,000 since 2016 to support RAP in meeting the needs of youth in crisis. These funds are crucial to support operations and services at RAP including counseling, tutoring, clothing, and extra-curricular activities. Additionally, Angel has been the RAP Queen of Christmas for over 10 years, gathering youth Christmas wishes and making sure they are fulfilled every year. And what an amazing effort this is. Each child creates a list of 10 wishes and Angel works with the community to make it happen, including a wrapping party to ensure the gifts have a personal touch. The looks on the faces of the kids when they see they were remembered at Christmas and their wishes fulfilled is the touch of magic Angel consistently delivers. One of the true "doers" in the community, Angel seems to always be organizing fundraisers and community events to better the lives of others. She helps coordinate annual parades and is involved in numerous local non-profits. She truly is an angel—touching the lives of those she serves.

It is clear that Ms. Cook has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service.

HONORING BRINSON FUNERAL HOME

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a long-standing family business, Brinson Funeral Home.

Brinson Funeral Home is a cherished family-owned establishment in Cleveland, MS. Brinson Funeral Home has been a beacon of compassion, affordability, and unwavering care since its founding in 1939 by the late Booker T. and Ruby Brinson. Their legacy of considerate and attentive funeral services spans over eight decades and several generations.

Brinson Funeral Home remains steadfast in its commitment to providing excellent service during people's most vulnerable moments. Their unwavering dedication continues to honor an incredible legacy. Brinson Funeral Home is recognized as one of the first Black-owned businesses in the State of Mississippi. It has remained true to its founding principles and honored its incredible legacy by continuing to provide excellent service in helping people during their most vulnerable times.

Recently, it received well-deserved recognition from Delta State University's "Winning The Race" organization, in collaboration with the Bolivar County Board of Supervisors and the Amzie Moore House. This esteemed recognition celebrates Brinson Funeral Home's historic significance as one of the first established Black-owned businesses in the state.

The compassionate, dedicated, and professional associates treat each family as their own and are available to assist every step of the way during the funeral/memorial planning process. The business mottos, "Our Family Serving Your Family" and "The Home That Service Built," reflect their commitment. Members of their staff are like family, with some serving the funeral home for over 20 years. As a family business, Brinson Funeral Home also gives back to the community by donating a portion of proceeds earned from all funeral services to a charitable organization dedicated to uplifting and improving the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Brinson Funeral Home, a steadfast beacon of vision, fueled by compassion, unwavering commitment, and a deep sense of duty. For years, it has faithfully served Bolivar County, neighboring counties, and the entire State of Mississippi.

HONORING MICHAEL DONATO

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Michael Donato for his service at Fort Pulaski National Monument.

Michael began working for the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. as a park guide. In 2021, Michael moved to Savannah, Georgia to become an Administrative Officer at Ft. Pulaski.

He was promoted to the Chief of Business Management and Operations in 2023.

In just a few years, Michael has contributed greatly to the park's organization and develop-

ment while coordinating beneficial partnerships for the park.

His partnership with the Friends of the Cockspur Island Lighthouse helped relight the historic lighthouse. He also worked with Chat-ham County to enhance the facilities at the Lazaretto Creek Boat Ramp.

Michael has taken a new position back in D.C. as Chief of Staff for National Capital Parks East, but his contributions will serve as a reminder of his public service for generations to come.

HONORING THE CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MR. JOHN A. COLEMAN

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. John A. Coleman's leadership and service on the Board of the East Bay Municipal Utility District and as Executive Director of the Bay Planning Coalition. For his career of public service and leadership, Mr. Coleman is receiving the 2024 Lafayette Citizen of the Year Award.

A lifelong resident of Lafayette, California, Mr. Coleman demonstrated his commitment to his community at a young age. Even as a high school student, Mr. Coleman believed he could make a positive difference in the world. He spearheaded efforts to encourage civic participation among his fellow students and founded the Rossmoor Gardening Club, which continues to serve the Lafayette community today.

Mr. Coleman is the longest-serving board member at the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). For 33 years, Mr. Coleman served as an elected Director of EBMUD, representing Lafayette constituents and leading efforts to make the Lafayette Reservoir recreation area more accessible for the community. His policy guidance on EBMUD's water supply and critical leadership as President and Vice-President of the Board of Directors well positioned EBMUD to handle future drought and climate crisis challenges.

In addition to Mr. Coleman's vital work with EBMUD, he served as Chief Executive Officer of the Bay Planning Coalition, a non-profit organization. For 13 years, Mr. Coleman advanced the essential mission of the Bay Planning Coalition to ensure that commerce, recreation, and the natural environment thrive in the San Francisco Bay-Delta region. He is also the only individual in the California water and wastewater communities to have served as President of both the Association of California Water Agencies and the California Association of Sanitation Agencies.

Mr. Coleman's extensive leadership and service to California ensure that he will thrive in his new role as Manager of Natural Resources with the Calaveras County Water District. His talent for coalition building and critical

• 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.

knowledge of California's environmental resources will undoubtedly continue to enhance the lives of California residents.

While his presence on the Board of the East Bay Municipal Utility District will surely be missed, Mr. Coleman's decades of service reflect the very best of our community's leaders and will continue to improve the lives of citizens for many years to come. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for Mr. Coleman's dedication and commitment to public service. I wish him the best in his future role with the Calaveras County Water District.

IN MEMORY OF MRS. ADA M.
JACKSON LEE

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a devoted wife, loving mother, doting grandmother, community servant, and Civil Rights icon, Mrs. Ada M. Jackson Lee. Family, friends, and community leaders commemorated the sixth anniversary of her passing and celebrated what would have been her 100th birthday on April 6, 2024, at Ada Lee Park in Warner Robins, Georgia.

The journey of the remarkable life of Ada Lee began on March 6, 1924, when she was born to the union of the late Mr. Lewis D. Jackson and the late Mrs. Annie B. Jackson in Wellston, Georgia.

A lifelong and persistent learner, Mrs. Lee graduated from Booker T. Washington High School and the Culinary Arts Program at The Fort Valley State University. She went on to work as an Urban Renewal specialist where she later retired.

She was married to the late Sylvester Lee and to this union three children were born. Daron Lewis Lee, Vircy Anne Ferguson and Dorothea Rita Scott. Mrs. Lee was a woman after God's own heart who served her community with distinction and pride. "It has been said that service is the rent that we pay for the space that we occupy here on this earth." Mrs. Lee paid her rent, and she paid it well. She was nothing short of a trailblazer with several historic firsts for the Warner Robins community—first Director of the Warner Robins Day Care Center, she formed the first Girl Scout Troop for African American girls and the first Director of the Head Start Program in Warner Robins.

When Mrs. Lee saw a need in the community, she made sure that it was addressed. When she saw a need for a safe space for children to play, she approached the mayor and made it happen. Now that same park is named in her honor. She was a strong advocate for her community and for women. She truly believed in the words of Shirley Chisholm, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." Because of her lifetime of service, she was recognized with many awards to include The Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis for Outstanding Volunteer Services, The NAACP Trailblazer Award, Ms. Senior Warner Robins as well as one of the fifty Influential Women in Middle Georgia.

She gave her time, talent, and treasure to many organizations to include Board Member of the Family Support Alliance for the Mentally

Ill, Warner Robins Housing Authority, Houston County Democratic Advisory, Warner Robins Day Care Center, NAACP, SCLC and served as a member of the Christian Women United Association and the Georgia Council on Human Relations. She was also an honorary member of the Order of Eastern Star, Cinderella Chapter No. 406.

But more important than all of these accolades and memberships, Mrs. Lee was a woman of faith. A dedicated member of the Warner Robins Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Mrs. Lee was a member of stewardess board, missionary board, Lay Council, We Care-Golden Age, Social Concerns Hospitality Circle and served as Founder of the Pastor's Aide Board. The scripture tells us in Proverbs 3:6 that "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." The Lord truly directed the paths of Mrs. Ada Jackson Lee. The Middle Georgia Community, The State of Georgia, our country, and the world are better because Mrs. Lee passed this way.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, and my wife Vivian, and the 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District in honoring the life and legacy of Mrs. Ada Jackson Lee. May her life continue to be an inspiration to her family, friends, and all those that she touched during her remarkable life.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SHARON
RATLIFF-GROSS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life of an outstanding civil servant, Sharon Ratliff-Gross, who passed on April 2, 2024. She dedicated 37 years of her life to federal service and specialized in workforce planning, recruitment, and diversity at the U.S. Department of Labor. Before Mrs. Ratliff-Gross retired in 2010, she received several Secretary's Exceptional Achievement awards to recognize her work at the Department of Labor.

But family was the greatest joy for Mrs. Ratliff-Gross. Family members referred to her as "Ma 2," and it became the cherished name by which she was known. When her grandson was born, the nickname was shortened to "TuTu." Mrs. Ratliff-Gross loved to travel on cruises, play cards, attend church plays, and watch her favorite shows on television. One of her greatest joys was time spent with her husband. Mrs. Ratliff-Gross loved to join her husband on trips to the barbershop, grocery store, casino, and anywhere else in the neighborhood. She loved to bake and was known for her delicious sweet potato pie, pretzel salad, and brownies. In her spare time, she created her special "money cakes" and gifted them to friends and family for birthdays and retirements.

In addition, she was renowned for her efforts to support cancer survivors and others who struggled with the disease. Mrs. Ratliff-Gross dedication to life helped her conquer Breast cancer twice. She served as a beacon of hope for local women who needed comfort and encouragement to deal with their difficult cancer diagnosis. Even today, she is an inspiring figure who showed hundreds of local

women there is life and recovery after a Breast cancer diagnosis.

Mrs. Ratliff-Gross left an indelible mark on everyone who was fortunate enough to meet and know her as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, mentor, or friend. She made a difference in countless lives with her infectious smile, laughter, and caring spirit. She cherished her family and friends with all her heart and embraced life with love and vitality. Her legacy of love and resilience will live on in the cherished memories of all those she touched.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating Mrs. Ratliff-Gross' life of public service and extend the deepest condolences to her beloved family and friends during this difficult time.

CONGRESSIONAL PATRIOT AWARD
FOR DR. JAMES HURLEY

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. James Hurley of Stephenville, Texas, and present him with the Congressional Patriot Award. Since 2019, Dr. Hurley has served as the 16th President of Tarleton State University and dedicated himself to serving and uplifting North Texas students.

As a first-generation college graduate, Dr. Hurley understood the financial challenges that students face when it comes to obtaining an education. As such, he partnered with many schools and colleges in Texas to provide qualified students with guaranteed scholarships to Tarleton. Under Dr. Hurley's leadership, Tarleton has transformed into one of the nation's fastest-growing universities that is renowned for excellent academic, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. It has also been ranked as a high research institution and is among the top 4 percent of universities in the United States to have received this designation.

Moreover, Dr. Hurley launched the President's Excellence in Research Scholars program to provide direct funding for student research initiatives and promote creativity, innovation, and breakthroughs in research. He serves on several governing boards to address costs in higher education, expand economic development, and shape public policy to benefit students. In 2022, the North Texas Commission granted Dr. Hurley the prestigious Education Leadership Award for his work and impact on our community. I am proud of Dr. Hurley's continued efforts to make a difference in students' lives and lead them to success.

It is an honor to bestow Dr. Hurley with the Patriot Award for his exceptional service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

RECOGNIZING DR. JOHN HAMIL

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions