

lanes because neither had a vehicle. The following day, Robert bought himself an XL500 red Ford.

The Pyles married on April 10, 1964, and Robert was deployed to Vietnam in 1965. His service to the United States included assignments at Ft. McClellan, North Carolina, NATO-Naples, Italy, Georgia, and Korea. He retired from the Army in 1976.

The Pyles have always put God at the center of their marriage and are active members at The New Hope Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Pastor Judge Stringer, III.

The Pyles have also been active in their community. Robert served as a council member and as mayor of Hobson City while Katie served on various boards.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the Pyles and thanking them for their service to their area and wishing them a happy 60th wedding anniversary.

#### RECOGNIZING KAREN EPTING

#### 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, Karen Epting. Ms. Epting's leadership at the YMCA of the Suncoast—James P. Gill's Family Branch goes beyond mere titles; it's rooted in her genuine passion for making a difference in the Pasco community. As Chair of the YMCA Branch Advisory Council for many years, she provided strategic guidance and rolled up her sleeves to actively participate in the branch's many initiatives and events. Her role as Campaign Chair for the YMCA's fundraising efforts in Pasco County underscores her ability to rally support and resources for vital programs and services.

Her dedication ensures that the YMCA can continue its mission of serving the community effectively. Karen's continued involvement in the YMCA's partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay reflects her compassionate response to urgent community needs. Karen helps oversee the distribution of food to over 130 families every two weeks. In this capacity she not only addresses immediate hunger but also fosters a sense of belonging and support within the community.

Coordinating a team of 30 volunteers is no small feat, yet Karen does so gracefully and efficiently. She assists in recruiting and training volunteers and fosters a sense of camaraderie and purpose among them. Her hands-on approach during food pick-ups, where she personally welcomes each family and assists with intake procedures, demonstrates her commitment to serving others with dignity and respect. Karen's advocacy for youth literacy is also a testament to her belief in the power of education to transform lives. By leading volunteer efforts for youth reading programs, she promotes literacy and instills a love for learning in young minds, empowering them to reach their full potential. During the holidays, Karen's leadership shines brightly as she volunteers many hours to the YMCA's Seasons of Giving and Giving Tree programs, encouraging community members to spread joy and

generosity by purchasing gifts for children in need. Her ability to inspire others to give back underscores her exceptional leadership and ability to mobilize resources for the greater good. Despite her preference for working behind the scenes, Karen's impact reverberates throughout the YMCA and the community at large. Her selfless dedication and unwavering passion serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration, inspiring others to follow in her footsteps and make a positive difference in the world.

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

#### HONORING JAYLEN WATSON

#### 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 and acknowledge the remarkable achievements of student Jaylen Watson.

Jaylen Watson, born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, is the youngest of two children to his parents, Chandra and Ronald Watson, Sr. His older brother is Ronald Watson, Jr. Currently, a student at Madison S. Palmer High School in Marks, Mississippi, Jaylen is excelling in his academic studies and maintaining an impressive 4.0 GPA. As a proud member of the class of 2024, Jaylen looks forward to graduating soon.

Throughout his high school years, Jaylen has actively participated in various community and educational activities. Some of his involvements include being a member of the Beta Club, FCCLA, The Global Teaching Project, and Jobs for Mississippi Graduates, among others. Within these organizations, Jaylen has taken up leadership positions, such as serving as a Chick-fil-A Leadership Ambassador and currently holding the role of Vice-President in his school's Beta Club. Additionally, he takes on responsibility of Class President for his senior class and Vice-President for Jobs for Mississippi Graduates.

While Jaylen has achieved many accomplishments and held numerous leadership roles, his faith in God remains his utmost priority. He is an active member of the New Covenant Missionary Baptist Church in Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he finds solace and support from his church family.

Apart from his academic and extracurricular pursuits, Jaylen has a strong passion for caring for the elderly in his community. To support this cause, he organized a community service project to raise funds for blankets and sock footies during the cold winter months. Jaylen successfully purchased these items for all the residents of Quitman County Health and Rehab, bringing joy and comfort to the vital citizens in need. Furthermore, he has also extended his support to preschoolers by sponsoring a class during Christmas time, motivating and uplifting their young minds with toys and treats. Jaylen finds great satisfaction in nurturing the future leaders of his small town.

With a deep commitment to giving back and caring for his community, Jaylen has decided to pursue nursing in his undergraduate studies

in college. His ultimate goal is to continue his education in graduate school, aiming for a doctorate degree to make a significant impact on his community. Jaylen is driven and excited to be the best version of himself, striving to make his family, friends, and community proud. He firmly believes that nothing is impossible with faith and lives by the inspiring words of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in acknowledging and celebrating the outstanding achievements of Jaylen Watson.

#### CONGRATULATING JAKE MERKLINGER AND RASHAWN TRUELL

#### 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 congratulate two Georgia quarterbacks—Calvary Day School's Jake Merklinger, and New Hampstead High School's RaShawn Truell, for their tied win of the Finocchio Award.

The Michael Finocchio Memorial Outstanding Football Player Award, now in its 43rd year, crowns the standout high school player in Savannah and Chatham County. Remarkably, the recent award ceremony marked only the second occasion in its history where two players tied after voting concluded.

Merklinger, the senior quarterback who is committed to Tennessee, also took home the Ashley Dearing Award as a junior, which is awarded to the most versatile male high school athlete.

Truell says "this is a big honor for [him], especially as a junior, to win this award." He followed that by stating, "It shows that all the hard work that I have put in has paid off. But everything I work for is to help our team—our goal is to win a state championship."

Congratulations again to both Jake and RaShawn.

#### HONORING THE CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MR. ANGELO K. TSAKOPOULOS

#### HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 9, 2024*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Angelo K. Tsakopoulos upon receiving the American Hellenic Institution Hellenic Heritage Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Tsakopoulos is the founder, CEO, and co-chairman of AKT Development and has devoted his career to improving California for all.

Born in Arcadia, Greece, Mr. Tsakopoulos first came to the United States at the age of 15. He worked diligently to send money home to his family in Greece and attended the University of Illinois and Sacramento State University, where he cultivated his passion for learning. In 1964, he founded AKT Development, beginning what would become a lifetime of leadership in California's residential and commercial development.

Through his work with AKT Development, Mr. Tsakopoulos built entire communities, universities, and homes, helping California and its residents thrive. Since its founding, AKT Development has built over 60,000 homes and today, it manages nearly 20,000 acres of farmland in Northern and Central California. Mr. Tsakopoulos' critical work is characterized by his commitment to balancing the need for natural spaces with real estate development. His philosophy is simple: plant as many trees as possible and preserve the existing ones whenever possible.

Mr. Tsakopoulos' passion for environmental stewardship led him to establish the Sacramento Tree Foundation, which is dedicated to protecting and growing the urban forest within Sacramento. His dedication to planting and preserving trees as both a developer and lifelong advocate will continue to benefit California for generations.

Mr. Tsakopoulos' leadership, generosity, and compassionate spirit have impacted the lives of countless members of his community and beyond. I join the American Hellenic Institution in honoring the critical contributions of Mr. Tsakopoulos.

#### RECOGNIZING THE SALINE FIDDLERS' 30TH ANNIVERSARY

#### HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 9, 2024*

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic, a premier youth fiddling show band from Saline, Michigan, on their 30th anniversary. Comprised of students from Saline High School the fiddlers present an energetic and polished show that features a diverse range of music from American folk, fiddle, bluegrass, jazz, western swing, and Celtic traditions. Their 30 years of unforgettable performances are remarkable, and their commitment and skill are worthy of commendation.

The Fiddlers began in 1994 with the simple idea of introducing an alternative style of musical education to public school students to maintain and expand their interest in musical performance. Since 1994, these remarkable students have set the standard for extracurricular music programs in the United States and have become a model for instruction and motivation that other schools across the nation have added to their own programs.

With over 1,500 performances in the majority of the states in our nation, the Fiddlers have a storied history that includes three performances at the White House, two performances on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center, and a performance at the State of Michigan's Presidential Inaugural Ball. The Fiddlers have also traveled to Canada and Europe for performances and have made multiple trips to Saline's sister cities of Brecon, Wales and Lindenberg, Germany. Each year, the group performs 50–60 times, with around a third of their annual schedule being donated to community service events. I still fondly remember their performance at the Saline Celtic Festival this past summer.

Working alongside the artistic team, the Saline Fiddlers help plan each aspect of their shows by crafting arrangements and making

diverse organizational decisions that helps teach the students collaborative ownership while giving students the opportunity to explore their creativity and showcase their enthusiasm throughout the show making process. These accomplished members of the Fiddlers are selected through competitive auditions that assess their musical talent and personal maturity. They balance academics, school organizations, jobs, and other extracurricular activities. Teaching students not just about music but about maintaining a balanced schedule and workload is a true testament to how the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic has helped 30 years of students prepare for their futures through music.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic on their 30th anniversary. Their commitment to music and community is an incredible accomplishment and has helped preserve music and tradition for future generations. I cannot wait to see all they accomplish in the years to come.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF SERVICE OF DR. WILLIAM "BILL" GREER

#### HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 9, 2024*

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. William "Bill" Greer, a distinguished leader, educator, and advocate for higher education who has announced his retirement as the 15th President of Milligan University. Dr. Greer's exemplary tenure, spanning more than 13 years, is marked by significant transformation, growth, and achievement for Milligan University.

A proud alumnus, Dr. Greer graduated from Milligan in 1985 and returned to his alma mater in 1994 as a Professor of Economics and Business. With a wealth of experience after a decade in the private sector, Dr. Greer led the institution's business initiative as the founding director of Milligan's MBA program. His leadership as Vice President for Institutional Advancement was instrumental to the success of the "Forward Ever" campaign, raising \$28 million for the university in its first phase of implementation.

Since assuming the role of president in 2011, Dr. Greer has been a visionary, guiding Milligan University to unprecedented levels of achievement. Under his leadership, the university has received recognition as one of the Best Regional Universities and Best Values in the South. In 2020, Dr. Greer helmed the impressive modernization and expansion of 25 additional academic programs, elevating Milligan's status from a college to a university.

Dr. Greer's presidency is highlighted by a series of significant accomplishments, including record enrollment, giving, and endowment growth. He presided over the integration of Emmanuel Christian Seminary, the establishment of Milligan Village, and the growth of multiple academic and athletic facilities. His efforts have significantly increased the university's footprint to 355 acres and brought numerous national recognitions to Milligan.

Additionally, Dr. Greer's focus on Milligan's mission as a premier, Christian liberal arts institution has resulted in the education and

support of thousands of students, overseeing nearly 4,000 graduates under his tenure. Furthermore, his leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified compassion and resilience, guiding the university through unprecedented challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Bill Greer for his outstanding service to Milligan and our region. His retirement marks the end of an era of exceptional service and dynamic leadership. I am certain his legacy will continue to inspire current and future generations of Buffs. I wish him and his family all the best in his retirement and his continued service as Chancellor of Milligan University.

#### RECOGNIZING DANIEL PRITZ

#### 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 of one of my constituents, Daniel Pritz, who serves as a volunteer Board Member for the local non-profit, Brooksville Main Street. These outstanding volunteers put in hundreds of hours while running their businesses and organizations.

They have all come together for a common cause—to serve the community by bringing much-loved events to downtown Brooksville. Each of these board members have servant hearts, and their dedication and commitment to our community is impressive. Part of what makes our country so great is the willingness of ordinary Americans to go above and beyond to selflessly give back to others.

Volunteerism is one of the cornerstones of our society and part of the fabric that unites us.

It is clear that Daniel Pritz and fellow board members have made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for their service.

#### HONORING DELTA MISSIONS

#### 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 remarkable organization, Delta Missions.

Delta Missions Ministry is a nonprofit Christian outreach organization dedicated to advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ, offering discipleship training to local residents, and empowering them to actively engage in their local churches. Our mission is to impact lives and nurture spiritual transformation through weekly Bible studies, lay training, recreational activities, and mentoring programs tailored for youth, adults, and senior citizens.

Under the guidance of Reverend Herron Wilson, Delta Missions was born out of a desire to replicate the impactful work experienced during his time with The Sonflowers, a mission focused on Vacation Bible School (VBS) camps in the town of Sunflower. Upon returning to the Southgate Community in