

TRIBUTE TO HONOR BILL
SOMERVILLE

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work of Bill Somerville, an extraordinary philanthropist, maverick grant-maker, advisor and a generous, creative, and devoted advocate for those in need. He retired as President of the Philanthropic Ventures Foundation (PVF) on December 31, 2023 and is being honored for his work on April 12, 2024.

Bill Somerville served for 17 years as the highly regarded Executive Director of the Peninsula Community Foundation. Eager to exercise his creativity he established PVF in 1990, with funding by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Since that time PVF has given nearly \$250 million in grants, and in 2023 made grants totaling \$23.6 million, with a lean staff of 8 people. PVF gives grants of \$500 to \$10,000, without requiring the usual proposals or paperwork.

Among his many accomplishments, Bill Somerville proposed placing Stanford graduates in a year-long fellowship to bring more young people into philanthropy. He created the Parent Involvement Worker Program which places recent ESL graduates into classrooms to ease the transition for students. He wrote Grassroots Philanthropy with Fred Setterberg to show other foundations how to use wealth to improve the world. He is a consultant and advisor at Stanford and other area universities and has shared his approach to philanthropy with more than 400 community and family foundations.

Larry Purcell, the beloved Director of the Catholic Worker House in Redwood City, said recently that, "everywhere I look as a Catholic Worker in Redwood City, I see the footprints of Bill Somerville. He organized entire communities by targeted grants to the poor." Somerville funded the first truck that the Catholic Worker House used to pick up and distribute free fresh food to the poor. Bill helped establish a food bank which is now the San Mateo County Second Harvest Food Bank which serves tens of thousands of families a month.

Mr. Speaker, as I did on August 2, 2019, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring the transformational work of an extraordinary man, Bill Somerville, and thank him for his unique leadership. He has strengthened our communities and bettered our Nation through his vision/ passion, and integrity, and he stands as a role model of what a citizen can do to create change in the lives of so many.

HONORING SPECIALIST JUSTIN
MEDINA, CLEMENTON TOWN
HALL HOMETOWN HERO

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend Specialist Justin Medina, Clementon Town Hall Hometown Hero.

Born and raised in Blackwood, New Jersey, Specialist Justin Medina has shown dedication

and commitment throughout his life. During his time at Highland Regional High School, he was involved in sports. Immediately after graduating from Highland Regional High School Specialist Justin Medina enlisted in the United States Army.

Specialist Justin Medina enlisted in February of 2021 and served for two years achieving the rank of PSE E-4 before he was honorably discharged in 2023. Specialist Medina served as a paratrooper during his enlistment, and he was stationed at Fort Bragg, now known as Fort Liberty.

During his tenure in the United States Armed Forces, he served with distinction. Specialist Justin Medina was the recipient of multiple Army Commendation Medals which are granted for sustained acts of heroism or meritorious service.

Following his military service, Specialist Justin Medina began working as a security officer and is presently employed at a local smoke shop. Throughout his career he has shown a willingness to learn in different environments.

Today, Specialist Justin Medina is determined to further his education and pursue a college degree and he desires to earn a Real Estate License. Specialist Justin Medina has a strong work ethic, and there is no doubt that he will continue to make significant contributions to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in honoring and commending Specialist Justin Medina for his service to his community, the United States Army, and to the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING MRS. NICOLE VAN
HELDEN

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary leadership and contributions of Nicole Van Helden in safeguarding the land and water resources of Wisconsin's Eighth Congressional District.

Throughout her career, Nicole has excelled at bringing partners together to produce results through shared conservation efforts. She played a key role in the growth of Save the Bay, an initiative to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients leaving rural landscapes and entering tributaries. By facilitating conversations with leaders in a variety of sectors, Save the Bay hosted conversations on solutions to improve water quality and improve soil health. Nicole's leadership, vision, and ability to engage diverse groups were key to expanding Save the Bay's scope and objectives, identifying needs and gaps, and applying strategies to improve and expand conservation farming practices. Since 2015, Nicole has volunteered numerous hours planning and facilitating meetings for Save the Bay.

Nicole has been involved in land conservation for her entire professional career. Shortly after receiving her Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Biological Aspects of Conservation from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she joined The Nature Conservancy. Over the past 25 years, she has continued to rise in the ranks at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) starting as assistant of land stewardship and land

protection all the way to her current role as TNC's Director of Land Conservation. In this role, she leads conservation staff, projects, and partnerships focused on conserving and improving Wisconsin's resilient landscapes. This includes overseeing TNC's land protection and management work in Wisconsin and forging cooperative relationships with partners from various backgrounds. Her most recent projects include the evaluation of natural lands for inclusion as a National Estuarine Research Reserve, constructed treatment wetlands to capture agricultural runoff, stream and wetland restorations, improved fish passage for migratory Great Lakes fish, and priority-setting tools for conservation actions in the Green Bay watershed. During her career she also played a key role in the protection of St. Martin Island, which is now part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Nicole has clearly been a leader in multiple facets of her career. From being a founding co-chair of the Green Bay Conservation Partners to chairing the Site Evaluation Committee for the Bay of Green Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. She is also active in her sons' Boy Scouts troop and volunteers on the Park, Recreation, and Forestry Committee for the Town of Ledgeview.

Highly respected throughout the conservation community in my district and across Wisconsin, Nicole's extensive institutional knowledge has been an invaluable resource to me during my term in office, and her can-do spirit is an inspiration to all who know her.

It has been my great privilege to work with Nicole during my term in Congress. I thank her for giving generously of her time and talents to advance the Save the Bay initiative, and I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding her unfailing dedication as a champion of conservation.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE

SPEECH OF

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge was a national tragedy that impacts all Americans.

I continue to pray for the families of the bridge workers who were lost in this catastrophe. While our hearts are with them, and with Maryland, the impacts of this disaster have a national and global reach.

The Port of Baltimore is one of the most critical pieces of maritime infrastructure in the United States, directly and indirectly employing thousands of hardworking Americans far beyond the Chesapeake Bay. Small businesses up and down the East Coast and across the country will feel the impacts of this disruption, and we must do all we can to minimize the economic toll they will bear, and to protect the workers they employ.

While the focus remains on clearing the channel and returning port operations to their full capacity, I stand with President Biden along with Maryland's state and local leaders and Congressional delegation—we will do all we can to assist those impacted by the loss of this thoroughfare and the closure of the Port of Baltimore.

I will continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to provide the resources needed to rebuild and recover.

CELEBRATING THE 248TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HALIFAX RESOLVES

HON. DONALD G. DAVIS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize history and a momentous occasion that shaped the very fabric of our Nation. Two hundred and forty-eight years ago, on April 12, 1776, in the politically eminent town of Halifax, North Carolina, a gathering of visionary leaders took an audacious step toward freedom and self-determination.

Imagine the scene: 83 delegates assembled, their hearts filled with determination and their minds resolute in purpose. These courageous men, representing the people of North Carolina, dared to challenge the oppressive grip of tyranny imposed by the King of England. In bold defiance, they authorized their delegates to the Continental Congress to vote for independence. But it was more than just a vote; it was an affirmation of our unyielding resolve to break free from the chains of colonial subjugation.

The Halifax Resolves were not merely a symbolic gesture but a beacon of hope for all who yearned for liberty and justice. The words echoed the sentiments of a nation yearning to breathe free. They laid bare the injustices inflicted upon a young country by a distant monarch and enumerated the usurpations and acts of violence perpetrated against the people and land.

However, the significance of the Halifax Resolves extends far beyond the borders of North Carolina. It catalyzed the cause of independence, igniting a flame of rebellion that spread like wildfire throughout the colonies. Inspired by the courage and determination of our forebears, other colonies followed suit, echoing the call for freedom and self-governance.

The Halifax Resolves were not crafted in isolation. They culminated a year of vigorous discussions and deliberations at the grassroots level, reflecting the will of the people who had long suffered under British oppression. The legacy of the Halifax Resolves endures to this day, a testament to the indomitable spirit of the American people. It reminds us that sometimes freedom is earned through sacrifice, perseverance, and unwavering dedication to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

As the community commemorates the 248th anniversary of this historic event, let us not only celebrate the bravery and foresight of those who came before us but also reaffirm our commitment to upholding the ideals enshrined in the Halifax Resolves. May we always cherish the precious gift of freedom and never forget the sacrifices made by those who dared to defy tyranny.

In the words of the Resolves, let us remember one of the first calls for American freedom: "Resolved that the delegates for this Colony in the Continental Congress be empowered to concur with the delegates of the other Colonies in declaring Independency . . ."

I look forward to the next two years of events and preparations for what I know will be the magnificent Semiquincentennial in 2026. Happy anniversary to the Halifax Resolves.

CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WILDFLOWER LUNCHEON

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Frisco Garden Club's Wildflower Luncheon in Frisco, Texas.

In 2002, the City of Frisco established a memorial composed of wildflowers in honor of the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks on our Nation. In the following year, Frisco Garden Club member Edna Willits proposed the addition of a native plant garden and monument at the memorial. Through her passionate advocacy and dedication, the Freedom Meadow memorial was constructed. In benefit of Freedom Meadow, the Club held its first "Wildflower Tea and Silent Auction" on April 29, 2004. This successful luncheon yielded the Club over \$4,500 and allowed Freedom Meadow to expand into the beautiful and moving monument it is today.

Since then, the Club has hosted the Wildflower Luncheon every year to raise funds in support of gardens throughout Frisco and conservation initiatives for Texas bluebirds. Additionally, the Club has annually awarded two high school seniors with scholarships thanks to funds raised from this event. I am proud to recognize the Frisco Garden Club's incredible efforts to support and uplift our community. Their important work represents American strength, hope, and resolve against those who would harm us.

I have requested the United States flag to be flown over our Nation's Capitol in recognition of this historic occasion. I wish the Frisco Garden Club and the Wildflower Luncheon continued success for many more years to come.

ADDRESSING THE CRIMES OF CHILD RAPE

HON. ANNA PAULINA LUNA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Mrs. LUNA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the horrific crimes of child rape.

A fundamental principle of justice: the punishment of those who commit the most egregious crimes against the innocence of our children. It is a matter that strikes at the very core of our values and demands our unwavering attention and action.

There will be those who argue that the death penalty is unconstitutional. But let me be unequivocal: when it comes to protecting our children from the horrors of child rape, the death penalty is not only constitutional, it is a moral imperative.

Our Constitution stands as a beacon of freedom and justice, crafted to safeguard the

rights and liberties of every American. Yet, what greater violation of those rights could there be than the brutal and unforgivable abuse of our most vulnerable—our children? The federal minimum for child rape must be upgraded to the death penalty, and a minimum of life behind bars. For it is not merely a matter of punishment, but of deterrence and justice.

We must send a resounding message to those who would prey upon our children: such heinous crimes will not be tolerated in our society, and those who commit them will face the most severe consequences, a life for a life. Protecting our children is not just a duty, it is our sacred obligation as a Nation. We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of innocent victims or allow such predators to roam freely among us. We must hold these monsters accountable.

It is our responsibility to ensure that our children are safe from harm, and that those who would seek to harm them are swiftly and decisively punished. Upgrading the federal minimum for child rape to the death penalty is not about vengeance—it is about justice. It is about standing up for the most vulnerable members of our society and sending a clear message that their safety and well-being are paramount.

The time has come to reaffirm our commitment to protecting our children from harm. Let us stand together, united in our resolve, and demand that those who commit such heinous acts face the full force of the law.

RECOGNIZING STAN LYFORD'S 50 YEARS WITH PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL'S TRACK PROGRAM

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 11, 2024

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of Stan Lyford's more than fifty years of outstanding contributions to the Portsmouth High School Track Program. Since 1975, Stan has been a committed coach and mentor for the Portsmouth High School girls track and cross-country teams where he works to motivate his athletes to succeed not just on the track, but also in their academic and personal lives. With a lifelong passion for giving back to his community and ensuring that every student can succeed, Stan embodies the value of service above self and has had an immeasurable effect on strengthening the Portsmouth community.

In addition to his profound impact on the Portsmouth High School Track Program, Stan was also a math teacher at Portsmouth High School where he worked to engage with students and equip them to reach their highest academic potential. Although he retired from teaching in 2007, his continued role as head coach showcases his lifelong commitment to his students.

On behalf of New Hampshire's First District, I commend Stan for reaching this remarkable fifty-year milestone in his continued service to his community. The amount of trust placed in Stan for over half a century is a testament to his efficacy and compassion as a teacher, coach, and leader. I look forward to seeing what he will continue to achieve as he carries