

HONORING VERA HALL

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and self-motivated leader, Vera Hall. Vera has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve success.

Vera is a native of Jefferson County, Mississippi. She is the mother to Christian Halle. Vera is a graduate of Jefferson County High School, Alcorn State University and Emory University. She has done further study towards a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree at Louisiana State University.

Vera is an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church and was a pastor of two churches in Clinton and Jackson, MS. Vera also served as a campus minister for Wesley Foundation Director for over 12 years at Alcorn State University and Jackson State University. Vera is currently a member of Mount Pleasant UMC in Fayette, MS.

In 2011, Vera formed Innovative Performance Construction Company, LLC (IPC), a licensed General Contractor Firm with Federal Certifications, located in Jackson, MS. IPC is a woman owned construction company and has successfully completed several hundred projects and has received numerous awards and recognition.

Vera's Awards includes: WJTV Remarkable Woman of the Year 2024 Nominee; Mississippi 2020 and 2021 Small Business Person of the Year; Featured on the cover of the Mississippi SBA Resource Guide and the only female contractor with the honor; 2019 PTAC Small Business Growth of the Year Award; 2018 SBA Emerging Leaders Award; ABC National Safety Award; and ABC Local Chapter Merit Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Vera Hall for her outstanding work and dedication in and throughout the 2nd Congressional District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALMA S. ADAMS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 154; YEA on Roll Call No. 155; YEA on Roll Call No. 156; YEA on Roll Call No. 157; and YEA on Roll Call No. 158.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, due to a family illness, I was unable to be present for votes on Monday, April 29, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 153 and YEA on Roll Call No. 154.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. WILEY NICKEL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, I was ill and unable to vote on Roll Call Numbers 164–171 on April 30th. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 164; NAY on Roll Call No. 165; YEA on Roll Call No. 166; NAY on Roll Call No. 167; YEA on Roll Call No. 168; NAY on Roll Call No. 169; YEA on Roll Call No. 170; and NAY on Roll Call No. 171.

RECOGNIZING MERRIMACK SENIOR CENTER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Merrimack Senior Center on its 50th Anniversary. Since 1974, this establishment has gathered seniors across the town of Merrimack and beyond to enjoy local speakers, educational workshops, and trips to concerts or plays throughout New England.

Serving nearly 200 seniors, the senior citizens club offers a centralized space to build community, play games, socialize, and create true friendship.

The Merrimack Senior Club offers meaningful services for seniors as well, including safety presentations from local police and fire departments and a discounted restaurant meal program in partnership with Meals on Wheels.

Furthermore, the club offers philanthropic opportunities to its members. Working with community organizations and leaders, the club provides a \$1,000 annual scholarship to a local high school student and gathers donations for local food banks.

I commend the Merrimack Senior Center for its many years of community-oriented service and look forward to its continued work to bring seniors together throughout the Merrimack area over the next 50 years.

RECOGNIZING DANE JANIS ON HIS OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding student from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am pleased to announce that Dane Janis of Lorain, Ohio, has been offered an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Dane's offer of appointment permits him to attend the United States Naval Academy this fall with the incoming Class of 2028. Attending one of our Nation's military academies not only offers the opportunity to serve our country, but also guarantees a world-class education while undertaking one of the most chal-

lenging and rewarding experiences of their lives.

Dane brings a tremendous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming Class of 2028. While attending Marion Steele High School, he participated in orchestra, L.E.O Club, National Honor Society, and was on the honor role. Throughout high school, Dane was involved in tennis, earning his varsity letter. I am confident that he will carry the lessons of his student and athletic leadership to the Naval Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dane Janis on his offer of appointment to the United States Naval Academy. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available, and I am positive that Dane will excel during his career at the Naval Academy. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes to him as he begins his service to our Nation.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF THE HONORABLE MARK E. JOHNSON

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the decades of dedicated service that the Honorable Mark E. Johnson has given not only to his country, but to his community.

Johnson spent 28 years of his life in the United States Army, rising through the ranks due to his impeccable service and endless perseverance. In this period, Johnson received an astonishing 30 awards and decorations, including the Combat Action Badge and Bronze Star.

After retiring at the rank of Colonel, Johnson embarked upon a new challenge, bringing his love of public service to the legal profession. Johnson worked in the private sector and as a Deputy Public Defender for the Riverside County Public Defender's Office to ensure everyone had access to a vigorous defense.

He went on to serve as a judge for the Riverside County Superior Court, ruling thoughtfully in over 200 jury trials and presiding over many of the most significant cases in our community.

Above all, Johnson worked at every point in his storied career to serve other veterans. Johnson labored endlessly to ensure no one who sacrificed for our nation would fall through the cracks. He developed the Riverside County Veterans Treatment Court to help address the service-related health issues too many of our veterans face.

The Honorable Mark E. Johnson has done more for our veterans, our communities, and our Nation than can ever be repaid. I stand today to ensure his work is never forgotten.

RECOGNIZING MIYA S. ATENCIO

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Miya S. Atencio for earning the

Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Miya has overcome many challenges along her journey to success, demonstrating perseverance at every step. Students who strive to make the most of their education, like Miya, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Miya's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Miya S. Atencio on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

HONORING KAREN COLLINS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Karen Collins, whom I have named the 2024 Woman of the Year for Sonoma County because of her excellent work in our community. Woman of the Year recognizes women who have made important contributions to California's 4th Congressional District in Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation or Community Service.

Ms. Collins grew up in Spokane, Washington, with her dad and two brothers. She received a bachelor's degree in political science and American history from Whitworth University, and a master's degree in American Government from George Washington University. She also earned a junior college teaching credential from San Francisco State University, and is a graduate of the Public Affairs Institute of Washington, D.C.

Ms. Collins is a prominent leader on environmental and agricultural issues. She is an outstanding member of our community, having served on countless commissions and organizations throughout Sonoma County including the City of Sonoma's Environmental Advisory Commission, the Sonoma County Regional Parks Advisory Commission, and the City of Sonoma Parks and Recreation Task Force. She also served as President of the Bay Area Public Affairs Council, as chair of the California State Trails Commission, and as chair and member of various other community organizations. Ms. Collins, dedication as a public servant is clear.

Notably, Ms. Collins has volunteered for many campaigns including Cows not Casinos and ballot measures for the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District and Sonoma County Regional Parks Department. She also worked on the urban growth boundary campaign and the Sonoma Valley Hospital property tax campaign.

Her impact is not limited to Sonoma County. Ms. Collins served as the Deputy Director of the Container Corporation of America, as the Director of Governmental Relations for the Del Monte Corporation and as Deputy Director of California State Parks. She even started her own company, Going Places! Walking Tours for Women.

Ms. Collins' incredible impact on our community has been recognized by many. In 2019, she was named the City of Sonoma's

Alcaldessa. She received the 2017 California State Senate Woman of the Year award from California State Senator Bill Dodd, the City of Sonoma's Conservationist of the Year Award in 2014 and received the Sonoma Valley Hospital Pulse Award in 2008. These awards exemplify Ms. Collins' constant and unwavering dedication to our community.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Ms. Karen Collins for her excellent service and passion for our community. Therefore, it is fitting that we honor her here today as Sonoma County's 2024 Woman of the Year.

HONORING MATTIE L. WARREN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable trailblazer, Ms. Mattie L. Warren. Ms. Warren has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve success.

Ms. Warren is a woman of great courage and determination. During National Library Week, the local library took the opportunity to honor several people who are special to the branch of the Sunflower County Library System. Among them was a special recognition for Ms. Warren, who has worked for the Library System for 50 years.

As good fortune would have it, Ms. Warren issued B.B. King his first library card. Currently, she works at the library as a cataloger, making sure everyone finds what they are looking for within the library.

People often ask her, "When are you going to retire, and I say, don't worry about that—as long as I still have my mind and I can still do, I am going to thank the Lord and go ahead on." Staff members, family and friends all declared that when Ms. Warren speaks, they listen to everything she says.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Mattie L. Warren for her passion and dedication to her community.

HONORING RENALDINE LAFLECHE

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the outstanding service of Renaldine Lafleche, my fellow who has served with distinction in my office and dedicated her time to serving the people of Florida's 24th Congressional District.

Renaldine, a proud alumna of Florida International University, brought her background and passion for creating meaningful change to my office. Her commitment to improving transportation and infrastructure across South Florida was evident in her diligent support of my work on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Renaldine's exceptional expertise and strategic insight have been instrumental in advancing my legislative agenda and ensuring critical amendments were included in crucial pieces of legislation.

One of Renaldine's greatest strengths is building bridges and fostering collaboration.

Her dedication to empowering others and uplifting underrepresented voices has left a lasting impression on our team and the communities we serve.

As Renaldine concludes her fellowship today, she leaves a legacy of excellence and service. Her next chapter will undoubtedly be marked by her continued success and impactful work in public service.

On behalf of Florida's 24th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Renaldine Lafleche for her drive and dedication to public service.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSIONAL PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT GAIL UTTER

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Gail Utter of Sherman, Texas, and present her with the Congressional Patriot Award. Gail has over 30 years of experience in the investment industry and has dedicated herself to serving and uplifting our community.

Gail spent most of her childhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and earned her Bachelor of Business Administration from Southern Methodist University. She later received a Master of Business Administration from the University of North Texas and became certified as a Private Wealth Advisor and Chartered Retirement Plan Counselor. In 2001, Gail established the very successful Utter Wealth Management of Wells Fargo Advisors.

Over the years, she has provided stellar investment results for clients and earned numerous awards and recognitions for her work. Gail was named a Platinum Council Advisor Diamond level advisor, Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Advisor, and Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State. Additionally, she has been listed in Barron's Top 1200 State by State Advisor for eleven consecutive years, beginning in 2012.

On top of delivering for her clients, Gail serves in several leadership roles with the Austin College Board of Trustees, the Sherman Economic Development Corporation, SMU Perkins School of Theology, and many more. She is a frequent keynote speaker and supporter of beneficial community initiatives throughout North Texas. In her free time, Gail enjoys spending time with her family, taking care of her dogs, and strengthening her faith. I am proud of the outstanding work she has accomplished for our community. I wish her continued success for many years to come.

It is an honor to bestow Gail with the Patriot Award for her exceptional service to the people of North Texas.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA FAMILY SERVICE

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 100th Year Anniversary of Northern Virginia Family Service.