

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

RECOGNIZING KYRII PETRALIA

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kyrii Petralia for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Kyrii 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 Kyrii, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Kyrii's hard work, determination, and perseverance at The Manning School of Academics and Arts and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Kyrii Petralia on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

HONORING THE NEW HAVEN ORATORIO CHOIR ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to join the members and supporters of the New Haven Oratorio Choir as they mark the 60th Anniversary of this exceptional organization.

The New Haven Oratorio Choir is a community-based, auditioned chamber choir whose mission is to provide the New Haven region with unique and intimate choral performances, a repertoire chosen to inspire and inform performers and audiences alike. Indeed, the celebration of their 60th Anniversary includes an upcoming performance entitled "Blossoms, Beasts, and Birds: Songs About Nature" which will feature selections from renowned composers such as Britten, Copland, Whitacre, Gibbons, Price, and others.

The choir was founded in 1963 when Allen Wolbrink, the then music director of the Church of the Redeemer, wanted to expand its Senior Choir. He did so by inviting singers from the larger community to join with the goal of performing larger works. At the time, the New Haven Chorale was the only area chorus open to all singers and with a membership of over one hundred, it did not offer the more spiritual experience Mr. Wolbrink envisioned. Originally named the Redeemer Oratorio Choir, over the course of its history, choir members have come from Greater New Haven and all over the world, all finding a community of belonging while they lived, went to school, or worked in the area. In fact, former members still reflect on the feeling of community they still have when remembering their time with the choir.

In 1990, the choir was officially incorporated as the New Haven Oratorio Choir and when the Church of the Redeemer closed, they found a new home just down the road at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. Today, the New Haven Oratorio Choir carries on the legacy of its founder, performing two concerts a year, each with a unique focus.

Over its sixty-year history, there have been changes in performers, musical directors, and even their home base, but two features at the heart of the organization remain its foundation—a commitment to sacred music and an openness to all members of the community. As they celebrate this remarkable milestone, I am honored to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the New Haven Oratorio Choir and wish them all the best for many more successful years to come. As we say in Italian, "C'ent Anni!"

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE, TEXAS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the First Christian Church of Gainesville, Texas as it celebrates the 150th Anniversary of its founding. I'm pleased to congratulate the congregation on this significant milestone. With its long and storied history in Cooke County, it is truly an honor to join the congregation in recognition of the longevity of First Christian Church.

The church had a presence in Gainesville for several years before its members officially organized as a congregation, meeting first in a local schoolhouse then at the Cooke County Courthouse. The congregation officially organized as the Dixon Street Christian Church on Sunday May 10, 1874, with thirteen original members. Those charter members were Mr. and Mrs. John Darnell, Mollie Lee, Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Barrett, Brother Hill and Aunt Nancy Hill, Mrs. Jennie Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. John Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. B.F. Carpenter. Church records are unclear as to who served as the church's first minister. One account lists Dr. Thomas C. Barrett as the first minister, serving from 1874 to 1878. A different source identifies Rev. A.J. Farthing as the first minister, followed by Dr. Barrett.

Mr. Rufus F. Scott, a pioneer Gainesville businessman, donated a lot on North Dixon Street to the congregation. Mr. J.Z. Keel, a schoolteacher, came to Gainesville and donated \$7,000 for the church to build a building. During the week, the building was utilized by Mr. Keel as a schoolhouse and by the church for worship on Sundays. First Christian Church has continuously existed at this location ever since.

Rev. A.J. Bush, serving as minister, brought an organ for use during services, which caused a split in the congregation between 1884 through 1886. This schism reflected the wider disagreement over the use of musical instruments in the church going on nationally in the Stone-Campbell movement.

The church has had several buildings over the years and was known as the Christian

Church, the M.E. Church and the First Christian Church. The "First Christian Church" name was officially adopted in 1950. A clapboard church building was erected in 1878 and used by the congregation until it was donated to the Bethel AME Church in 1892 and moved to Cummins Street. A bigger building was constructed in 1892 and used until 1926. A brick edifice was erected in 1927 and used as a sanctuary until 1956 before being converted for use as a classroom wing and a Fellowship Hall until 1993. The current sanctuary building was erected in 1956 and continues to serve the congregation. The new Pauline Roberts Fellowship Hall and classroom wing was added to the property in 1993 along with a Christian Life Center in 2004. Both facilities are still in use by the congregation.

The current congregation of 125 members continues to serve Gainesville and Cooke County with multiple outreach ministries including Coats for Kids, Backpack Buddies, SoulFood, Stanford House Activity Center for Active Seniors, VISTO and Care Corp. I join the members and all those who have had the privilege of being involved with First Christian Church in wishing them a happy anniversary and many more years of ministry and service to the community.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM WEST

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize William West for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

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

It is my honor to congratulate William West on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

HONORING KEITH CARSON, SUPERVISOR FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY'S 5TH DISTRICT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of Supervisor Keith Carson, who has represented the 5th District on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors since 1992. Supervisor Carson has been a fearless leader in Alameda County, fighting for access to health care, improving business retention, addressing the scarcity of jobs in our communities, and ending poverty and homelessness. He approaches his role as Supervisor with the goal of creating a more inclusive and accessible government for the people of Alameda County.

Supervisor Carson is a Bay Area native from Berkeley, California. He has a B.A. in Political Science and Business Administration from the University of California, Berkeley, a Master of Public Administration from Cal State University, East Bay, and a Juris Doctor from the John F. Kennedy School of Law.

Keith Carson has a long history of supporting our community through involvement in local politics. His interest in politics began in the Youth in Government program, where he was able to join a student assembly in Sacramento and learn about the government and legislative processes. He then served as an intern for Berkeley's first Black mayor, Warren Widener, as a student, and later went on to work for former Congressman Ron Dellums after his graduation from UC Berkeley. After working for Congressman Dellums for fifteen years in both his district and D.C. offices, Carson ran for the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in 1992.

As Supervisor, Carson chairs many Alameda County committees, including the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, the Alameda County Budget Work Group Committee, the Alameda County Personnel, Administration, and Legislation Committee, and the Alameda County Health Committee. As chair of the Budget Committee, Carson championed a more inclusive and transparent budgeting process for the county.

In addition to chairing committees, Supervisor Carson represents the Board of Supervisors on the Board of Directors for many local organizations, including the Executive Committee of the California State Association of Counties, the National Association of Counties, and the National Organization of Black County Officials. He is also a member of the Alameda County Transportation Commission, the Alameda County Employees Retirement Association, and the Bay Area Council Economic Institute.

Carson's many accomplishments as Supervisor over the years include creating AC Impact, a program that aims to reduce homelessness in Alameda County by providing permanent and supportive housing to chronically homeless adults. He has also been a leader in bringing the county to a more sustainable future, adopting a Green Building Ordinance that requires county municipal projects to be built to a U.S. Green Building Council LEED Silver standard. Additionally, he has supported the funding of a Community Capacity Fund, which helps community organizations deliver re-entry services for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Carson's 30+ years of service have undoubtedly made Alameda County a better, more inclusive place. Supervisor Keith Carson is a beloved leader in our community, and I honor and thank him for his dedication to supporting Alameda County over the years.

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER RHODES

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions of one of my constituents, Christopher Rhodes 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 Mr. Rhodes and his fellow board members have made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for his service.

RECOGNIZING JOHN VIGIL

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Vigil for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

John has overcome many challenges along his journey to success, demonstrating perseverance at every step. Students who strive to make the most of their education, like John, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to John'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 John Vigil on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

IMPORTANCE OF ACTION AND ADVOCACY FOR BLACK MENTAL HEALTH

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, today I stand with my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues to address the urgent challenges faced by the Black community in mental health during Mental Health Awareness Month and to call us to advocacy, awareness and action.

While Black adults experience mental illness at similar rates to the general population, they face different outcomes. Between 2010 and 2020, Black individuals saw significant increases in suicide rates. While the share of drug overdose deaths among majority individuals decreased between 2015 and 2020, shares of these deaths among Black people rose, accounting for their disproportionate share of drug overdose deaths.

The barriers to mental wellness for Black Americans are complex. They include but are not limited to mental health treatment stigma, limited access to culturally competent care, or care at all, and the enduring effects of racism and racial trauma. Historical and ongoing racism contributes to higher poverty rates, in-

creased incarceration, and limited access to healthcare and housing, as well as more subtle forms of discrimination like microaggressions, all of which deeply impact Black mental health.

Despite comparable rates of mental health conditions, only 39 percent of Black individuals have received mental health services due to systemic barriers and stigma. Approximately 10 percent of Black people lack health insurance, significantly affecting their access to care, and when care is sought, it often occurs in emergency departments rather than from mental health specialists. The scarcity of Black professionals in the mental health field exacerbates this gap in health care access, understanding, and trust.

Our response must include advocacy, awareness, and action.

We must push for policies that dismantle systemic barriers to mental health care, and societal drivers of Black mental health challenges. We must pursue initiatives that focus on education and destigmatization so more Black individuals seek help without fear of judgment. And we must act. We must promote diversity, equity, and inclusion training in medical education and provider training to mitigate provider bias and care inequality. And we must continue to address the enduring effects of racism and racial trauma.

Mental health is a right, not a privilege, and it is our duty to ensure that this right is upheld for every community, especially those that have been marginalized for far too long. Let us use National Mental Health and Wellness Month to commit to meaningful change. Together, we can foster healing, understanding, and resilience for all Americans.

HONORING THE VALIANT EFFORTS OF THE MADISON COUNTY COMMUNITY

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Madison County community for its valiant and courageous spirit.

On October 24, 2023, Madison County first responders began the difficult task of containing the Quaker Run fire. The following day, Madison County declared a local emergency after the fire continued to burn and eventually spread into Shenandoah National Park. As the fire continued to grow and weather conditions continued to work against first responders, it was inspiring to watch local residents and volunteers come together—soon, local news stations and articles began to highlight these efforts and the contributions made by these brave individuals who assisted first responders in navigating the steep and difficult terrain to contain the fire.

Unreliable cellphone service added to the uncertainty. In response to this, Verizon provided a mobile site for emergency personnel to use to facilitate and coordinate communication. It also allowed the Virginia Department of Forestry to generate maps on site that proved useful in helping organize the efforts on the ground to contain the fire.

In the face of adversity, the community came together to protect neighboring areas