

RECOGNIZING AUDRA COHEN-PLATA FOR OVER A DECADE OF SERVICE TO THE 2ND DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

HON. MARK POCAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following Proclamation:

Whereas; Audra Cohen-Plata has resided and is an active community member, dedicated public servant, and resident of Dane County, Wisconsin, and

Whereas; Audra fulfilled her duties as an intern in my legislative office as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during my tenure as an Assemblyman in the Wisconsin State Legislature, and

Whereas; Audra assisted as a trusted ally as I attempted my inaugural run to represent the 2nd Congressional District in Congress, and

Whereas; Audra dutifully served as a valued member of my Congressional staff for more than eleven years, and

Whereas; Audra undertook many responsibilities in my district office including, but not limited to, direct constituent assistance and success related to Veterans Affairs and Education, and

Whereas; Audra professionally and loyally performed her duties as Constituent Services Manager, and

Whereas; Audra serves as an inspiration and leader to her fellow colleagues and many residents of the State of Wisconsin.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that I, Mark Pocan, U.S. Congressman for Wisconsin's Second District, do hereby express my appreciation to Audra Cohen-Plata for her many years of loyal service to myself, the 2nd District of Wisconsin, and our country.

HONORING JOHN L. BARNES

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a trailblazer in the realm of education and civil rights, John L. Barnes.

A native of Charleston, MS, John grew up about 10 miles north of Charleston and attended Sherman Creek Elementary School. He was also the valedictorian of his 1964 graduating class at Allen-Carver High School.

He courageously shattered racial barriers while pursuing his education at Mississippi State University (MSU). During his time at MSU, John encountered significant challenges due to racial prejudice and discrimination. As one of the first African American students at the university, he faced hostility, exclusion, and limited opportunities. Despite these obstacles, John persevered, contributing to the gradual transformation of MSU's campus climate. His courage and resilience paved the way for future generations of students seeking equal access to education.

His enrollment at MSU in 1965 marked a significant milestone, as he became the first

African American student to graduate from the university, June 2, 1968. He received a Bachelor of Arts from the MSU College of Arts and Sciences. His brother, Aaron was the third African American to graduate from MSU. After graduating from MSU, he briefly taught at Allen-Carver School before embarking on his corporate career in New York City. His achievements as the first African American graduate from MSU and his subsequent professional path demonstrate resilience and determination.

While specific achievements beyond this groundbreaking moment may not be widely documented, John's legacy remains an inspiration for those who continue to fight for educational equity and social justice.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing John L. Barnes for his dedication to advocacy in education, civil rights, his courage and perseverance.

HONORING THE LIFE OF COACH DOUG BLEVINS

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Coach Doug Blevins, who passed away on March 9th, at the age of 60.

Coach Blevins was born with cerebral palsy. While his condition confined him to a wheelchair for his life, he was not deterred in pursuing a career in the sport of football.

As a student at Abingdon High School, Mr. Blevins served as a student assistant coach, specializing in the kicking game. He would continue his education at Virginia Highlands Community College, University of Tennessee, and Emory & Henry University seeking more student coaching opportunities. Coach Blevins would stay close to home, starting his own consulting firm and assisting prospective kicking talents at summer camps, clinics and more.

In 1994, Coach Blevins was hired to be a consultant for the New York Jets. He would go on to coach for several years in the National Football League, working for the Miami Dolphins and NFL Hall of Fame Coach Jimmy Johnson, New England Patriots and Minnesota Vikings. From 1995 to 2000, he served as kicking coordinator for the NFL Europe League. He earned the remarkable achievement of becoming the NFL's first-ever disabled coach.

Mr. Blevins' success as a coach caught the attention of many talented kickers dreaming of playing in the NFL. Modern-day kicking legends, Adam Vinatieri and Justin Tucker, are just two of 26 current and former NFL kickers and punters who were trained and mentored by Coach Blevins.

Coach Blevins' years of hard work and tutoring prompted a significant recognition from the NFL community: his nomination to the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame. Perhaps, someday he will be inducted.

Most recently, he served as the kicking specialist at East Tennessee State University (ETSU), his alma mater, and as a volunteer assistant on the football staff at Science Hill High School.

Coach Blevins' inspirational journey from Southwest Virginia to the NFL, and his con-

tributions to the sport of football, will not be forgotten—along with his kindness and compassion for others. Despite his lifelong disability, Coach Blevins followed his dreams of coaching football and helped scores of young football players develop and succeed in the sport. May his legacy live on.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NEAL P. DUNN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Mr. DUNN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am not recorded for Roll Call No. 337, on Monday, July 8, 2024. Since my first day in office, I have been squarely focused on what I was sent here to do: Represent Floridians of the 2nd Congressional District of Florida. The Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act must be passed into law. The Long Island Sound is a unique ecological resource for eastern Connecticut, Long Island and the surrounding regions. More than 20 million people live within 50 miles of the Sound's beaches.

I am supportive of H.R. 5441, the Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Reauthorization Act—as a Representative of a coastal district myself, protecting this vast area on the East Coast will improve decades of high levels of pollution, dumping of dredged materials, and releases of untreated sewage that have put the Sound's wildlife population, fisheries, water quality, and surrounding communities at risk. The economic viability of the Sound, which annually contributes around \$9.4 billion to the regional economy, is dependent on activities like sport and commercial fishing, boating, recreation and tourism.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended, H.R. 5441 (Roll Call No. 337).

HONORING FREDRICK TIDWELL

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable servant, Fredrick Tidwell.

Fredrick "Fred" Tidwell hails from Grenada, Mississippi, where he was born to Tinal Lott Rias and Fredrick Tidwell, Sr. Fred graduated from Grenada High School in 2018, where he distinguished himself as the Vice President of the Class of 2018.

Deeply rooted in his community, Fred is an active member of Mt. Olive Pentecostal Holiness Church, where he serves as one of the youth leaders, demonstrating his commitment to both faith and leadership.

Continuing his education journey, Fred attended Northwest Community College, earning an associate of arts degree in 2020. He then pursued his passion for social work at the University of Mississippi, graduating with a Bachelor of Applied Science. Currently, Fred achieved another milestone by receiving his master's degree in higher education administration.

Driven by his aspirations, Fred envisions a future where he plays a significant role in higher education, aspiring to become Vice President of a Historically Black College or University. With his dedication, leadership skills, and academic achievements, Fred is headed to make a lasting impact in his community and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Frederick Tidwell for his dedication and tenacity to serving his community and desire to be an example for all.