

Beyond his pastoral work, Pastor Gillison is committed to serving his community in all capacities. Through his leadership with the Concerned Clergy Coalition, the Baptist Ministers Conference of Buffalo & Vicinity, and the Urban Think Tank, Pastor Gillison is a guiding figure in the community. Further, Pastor Gillison leads the Mount Olive Development Corporation, a non-profit organization founded by his late father, Pastor William Gillison. With the Mount Olive Development Corporation, Pastor Gillison provides resources for families on Buffalo's East Side to address their economic, social, and educational needs. Pastor Gillison established the Buffalo Raiders Little League Football team, a safe place for youth to participate in healthy programming.

Today, Pastor Gillison is a loving husband to his wife, Victoria, father of three, and grandfather of three. He continues to unify our community through his devotion to faith and commitment to service. Please join me in congratulating Pastor Dwayne R. Gillison, Sr. for receiving the Community Leadership Award and thanking him for his remarkable dedication to our community.

COMMENDING MEMPHIS PUBLIC
WORKS DIRECTOR ROBERT
KNECHT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Memphis Public Works Director Robert Knecht who is retiring from the City of Memphis after 23 years of making it a safer and more attractive place. Mr. Knecht is a hard-working and outstanding public servant who always had time to answer my questions about federal funding for city projects or how securing federal funding could advance the city's infrastructure needs, a quality invaluable to me as the Congressman representing Memphis. Mr. Knecht concentrated his efforts on the full Public Works portfolio including stormwater and wastewater operations, blight remediation, Code Enforcement, environmental enforcement, sustainability, street sweeping and street maintenance operations, and the results are to his credit. My staff and I worked closely with Mr. Knecht as we realized the \$41 million Big River Crossing project, which included improvements on downtown Memphis' Main Street from Uptown to the Harahan Bridge and the conversion of the vehicle sections of the bridge into a bike/pedestrian path. This project was made possible by \$15 million in federal funds I secured through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER IV) Grant as well as matching grants from state and local funds and private funds. Mr. Knecht was instrumental in helping to execute Community Project Funding I secured for projects such as developing the Memphis Cobblestone Landing Recreational Center, which received \$4 million. I have also worked closely with him to secure district projects in the past several Water Resources Development Acts, including provisions to deauthorize the Wolf River to create a lake adjacent to the historic downtown Snuff District and to accommodate a floating entertainment dock at Cobblestone Landing. A

graduate of the University of Memphis with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering (2003), he also has a Master of Business Administration (2008) from the University of Phoenix. A veteran of the U.S. Air Force, he served during Desert Storm/Desert Shield. Married to Memphis native Mandy, he and his three children have bright days ahead as he heads for an opportunity in the private sector. As Mayor Paul Young has said, his shoes will be hard to fill. His has been a job well done.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSIONAL PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT
MICHAEL MURGO

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach Michael Murgo of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and present him with the Congressional Patriot Award. Coach Murgo has dedicated himself to faithfully serving and uplifting his community.

A native of Bristol, Rhode Island, Coach Murgo attended Colt Memorial High School and Brewster Academy. During this time, he discovered his passion for sports, and this inspired him to study physical education. In 1969, Coach Murgo graduated from the University of Rhode Island, where he was recognized for his athletic abilities and distinction in football. As such, he was selected to play professional football for the Providence Steamrollers. Coach Murgo began working for the Pittsfield Public School System in 1972 as a physical education teacher, a role he held for over 35 years. He also served as the football coach for Pittsfield High School for 17 years and led his students to success through physical fitness, teamwork, and discipline.

On top of his professional career, Coach Murgo worked diligently to support his four children so that they had the opportunity to pursue their interests. He is married to his wife, Ellen, and they will celebrate 52 years of wonderful marriage this year. I am pleased to recognize Coach Murgo for a lifetime of service as a teacher, coach, and mentor for our youth. His contributions to our community have been nothing short of outstanding, and I wish him continued success for many years to come.

It is an honor to bestow Coach Murgo with the Patriot Award for his exceptional service to the people of Pittsfield.

HONORING EDGAR "EDDIE" PETER
GUARALDI OF BROCKTON, MASSACHUSETTS ON HIS 100TH
BIRTHDAY, JUNE 29, 2024

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Edgar "Eddie" Peter Guaraldi, in recognition of his 100th birthday and with the deepest appreciation for his courageous service to our Nation during World War II and his many contributions to the Brockton community.

Eddie was born in Bourne, Massachusetts on June 29, 1924, to John and Angelina Zambelli. Along with his siblings Yober "Bert," Yolanda, and Lillian Guaraldi, Eddie lived in Bourne and Springfield before moving to Brockton. He graduated from Brockton High School in 1941 and worked at a shipyard for ten months before enlisting in the United States Army.

Eddie served his country with pride and distinction from March 1942 to December 1945 as a Sergeant and member of the 296th Combat Engineer Battalion, Company C. He fought in five major battles, including the Battle of Normandy, Battle of the Bulge, and battles in northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe. Mr. Guaraldi landed on Omaha Beach during the Normandy Landings on D-Day and was part of the liberation of Buchenwald—courageous acts that later earned him the European Campaign Medal and the French Legion of Honour Medal.

Eddie met the love of his life, Rose Marie Altieri on New Year's Eve in 1947. They married in Brockton on October 12, 1950. The couple raised two sons, E. Peter Guaraldi, Jr. and John Joseph Guaraldi. Eddie and Marie doted on their grandson, Peter James Guaraldi, throughout his childhood.

After his service, Mr. Guaraldi attended school to be a radio and electronic technician, eventually getting a job at Central Radio in Brockton. There, he fixed televisions and installed antennae, with the desire to open his own business. In 1951, that dream came true as Eddie opened Community Television in Brockton, running the family business for 44 years before working part-time alongside his eldest son until the age of 80.

Eddie was very involved in the South Shore and Brockton communities. For decades, he was a longtime volunteer and communicant at his local church Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Brockton. His volunteering at the Brockton Kids Road Races at D.W. Field Park for nearly 15 years helped make a positive impact on thousands of children and aspiring athletes. Mr. Guaraldi was also a regular at various veterans' meetings and events hosted by the Brockton VA Medical Center, and the Whitman Veterans of Foreign War Post, among others.

He and Marie were known for their love of travel, visiting many places around the world, including Europe, China, Japan, and South America.

Eddie is a man of many hobbies and talents, particularly his ability to repair electronics, appliances, and anything else his family needs fixing. He looks forward to supporting his favorite team, the New England Patriots, every Sunday during football season.

Mr. Speaker, Edgar "Eddie" Peter Guaraldi's legacy is one of committed service to his country, and his community, and most importantly, his family. It is my distinct privilege to join Mr. Guaraldi's family and friends in recognizing his 100th birthday and to thank him for his service on behalf of a grateful Nation.

RECOGNIZING COL. ANDREW L. LIPUT'S OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, this week in New Jersey at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Colonel Andrew L. Liput, Commander of the New Jersey Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, will receive a Presidential Lifetime Achievement and Volunteer Service Award, recognizing his outstanding commitment to volunteerism and his remarkable 10 years of service to our country in the Civil Air Patrol.

Sworn in as the 24th Commander of the New Jersey Wing of the Civil Air Patrol on July 10, 2021, Col. Liput is a three-generation Civil Air Patrol family member. National service and volunteerism runs in their blood.

Col. Liput's father, Andrew Liput Sr. served in the Pennsylvania Wing during World War II as a submarine spotter on the East Coast and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for his contributions to the American war effort in defense of the homeland. Col. Liput's daughter, Sloane Liput, was a member of the Picatinny Composite Squadron from 2015–2018 and achieved the rank of C/MSGT before beginning her studies at Rutgers University on an ROTC scholarship. The Liput family's commitment to service to our nation in the Civil Air Patrol represents the best attributes of volunteerism and civic engagement.

Col. Liput previously served at the squadron, wing, region, and national staff levels where, among other achievements of distinction—including the Civil Air Patrol Meritorious Service Award—he was named National Government Relations Officer of the Year for 2020 by CAP Commanding Officer Maj Gen Mark Smith. Col. Liput's tenure as Commander of the New Jersey Wing, has brought the NJWG to the forefront of the Civil Air Patrol's mission and has led to new initiatives to modernize the Wing and connect them to the community, including key strategic partnerships with the NFL Alumni Association and the National Law Enforcement Against Drugs organizations to offer new opportunities through the national cadet program.

With its roots in World War II, the Civil Air Patrol is a Total Force partner and serves as the United States Air Force Auxiliary, prepared to answer the call to search for and find the lost, provide comfort in times of disaster, and work to keep the homeland safe. It provides a proving ground for the next generation of American pilots through its Cadet program—many of whom continue their service to our Nation in the Armed Forces—while promoting aviation and the fields of aerospace and STEM. Through his distinguished term of service in the Civil Air Patrol, Col. Liput has enriched the national cadet program and ensured continued engagement of America's future leaders in the fields of aviation and aerospace technology.

The Volunteer Service Award that Col. Liput receives is a presidential citation that honors Americans who have served more than 5000 hours in support of their community and nation and is a well-deserved recognition of Col. Liput's leadership, commitment to civic en-

gagement, to the State of New Jersey, and the United States of America.

A graduate of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey and Fordham Law School, Col. Liput enjoyed a distinguished career as a corporate and banking attorney for more than 25 years and is a successful entrepreneur, currently employed as the Founder, President, and CEO of Secure Insight, a financial services and technology company. While establishing a successful career in law, Col. Liput continued his family's tradition of service to our nation by joining the Civil Air Patrol, serving throughout the Northeast before his appointment as Commander of the NJWG.

During his time of service and as Commander of the NJWG, Col. Liput has embodied the Civil Air Patrol's values of Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect, rightfully earning this recognition which is a testament to his character and contributions to our community. I am honored to join his family, friends, and the greater New Jersey community in thanking him for his service to our Nation, his dedication to our state, and his selfless work to instill the values of patriotism and service in the next generation of New Jersey—and America's—leaders.

SUPPORTING RACE-CONSCIOUS ADMISSIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we end the 2024 session of the Supreme Court and prepare for students to return to school, I wish to reaffirm the need for race-conscious decisions in higher education to ensure that students of color receive fair consideration in admissions.

Affirmative action is an important equity tool to counteract the effects of discrimination and structural barriers to education facing students of color, a tool that emerged from the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. President John F. Kennedy first established affirmative action to promote racial equality and prevent unfair labor practices through an executive order in 1961 that created the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. The landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 went further to prohibit discrimination and promote equal opportunity based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Subsequent executive orders, laws, and holdings by the Supreme Court supported race- and gender-conscious actions to address discrimination and enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The consideration of race in college admissions promotes equal treatment without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. The resulting campus diversity is a crucial element of quality higher education. Diversity curates higher learning opportunities and fosters a sense of belonging for traditionally-marginalized communities. Research shows that a strong sense of belonging has many positive outcomes for students, including improved persistence, retention, grades, and health. Diversity in higher education expands perspectives, promotes innovation, and prepares students to interact with our diverse citizenry.

One year ago, the Supreme Court gutted 50 years of race-conscious admissions in higher education with its decision in *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President and the Fellows of Harvard*. In a 6–3 decision, the extremist-dominated court ruled that affirmative action violated equal protection under the 14th Amendment. The 14th Amendment manifested new freedom and rights at the federal level by establishing “equal protection under the laws” for all American citizens regardless of race. Shockingly and offensively, the conservative-dominated court manipulated an amendment intended to cultivate racial equality to stifle programs that correct systemic racial discrimination. I firmly agree with Justices Jackson and Sotomayor who opposed the ruling. Justice Sotomayor warned that “. . . racial inequality will persist in educational institutions so long as it is ignored.” Justice Jackson noted the contradictory nature of the absence of race in admissions decisions but not in military academies, prioritizing racial inclusion for military benefit rather than educational enrichment.

The 7th District of Illinois, Chicago, and Illinois are home to millions of families whose children deserve the same access to higher education opportunities that privileged individuals enjoy. Extremists' attacks on race-conscious admissions jeopardizes the future educational opportunities of Black and Brown children. A colorblind approach to the college admissions process does not acknowledge the entrenched racial struggles that minorities face in America. When institutions fail to acknowledge race, they fail to recognize the barriers to education associated with race that can perpetuate racial inequality in higher education. The Supreme Court's promotion of a colorblind society serves to protect the wealthy and well-connected.

I vow to fight for equal opportunity and justice. We must protect the tools that are key to securing our civil rights—like race-conscious admissions, free and fair elections, and voter protections—to ensure that our nation's progress in civil rights does not reverse. Advancement toward racial equality cannot be made without consideration of race.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSIONAL PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT JO-ANNE SOULES

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. JoAnne Soules of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and present her with the Congressional Patriot Award. JoAnne has dedicated herself to faithfully serving and uplifting her community.

JoAnne was born in Pittsfield and attended Pittsfield High School. In 1969, she graduated from Elms College with a bachelor's degree in history. JoAnne also obtained her master's degree in educational administration and leadership from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She later taught social studies at South Junior High, now known as Herberg Middle School. In 1994, JoAnne transferred to Pittsfield High, where she taught history before being appointed to serve as the Dean of Students and Vice Principal. After retiring in 2006,