

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE VFW NISEI
LIBERTY POST 5869

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the VFW Nisei Liberty Post 5869 on their 75-year anniversary. During World War II over 33,000 second-generation Japanese Americans, known as Nisei, bravely served in the United States military, even while their own families were kept in internment camps. Nisei veterans of World War II were instrumental to our county's victory and their accomplishments deserve recognition.

The 100th/442nd Regimental Combat team, made up almost entirely of Nisei, is the most decorated unit in American military history. They served throughout the European theater and contributed to the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. The Nisei's efforts in World War II resulted in over 9,000 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 4,000 Bronze Stars, and 9 Presidential Unit Citations. Nisei Liberty Post 5869 was established in Hanford in July 1949 and serves as a hub for fostering camaraderie among local Nisei Veterans.

Nisei Post 5869 has dedicated their time to serving the community by supporting the Boy Scouts of America and providing scholarships to local high school students. Over the years, Nisei Post 5869 has become a cornerstone of the community, committed to honoring the legacy of Nisei veterans and providing essential resources for their well-being. Seventy-five years later, Nisei Liberty Post 5869 remains steadfast in their commitment to serving the needs of veterans. Through their efforts, they have ensured sick and wounded veterans receive healthcare, provided funeral honors to veterans, and assisted families after their loved ones have passed. The work of Nisei Liberty Post 5869's dedicated staff and volunteers has been essential to the health and well-being of Hanford's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating Nisei Liberty Post 5869 on their 75-year anniversary. Their commitment to veterans in the Central Valley will be felt for generations to come.

REMEMBERING GINA SUGARMON

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to my friend Gina Sugarmon, a civil rights groundbreaker and a passionate advocate for children, who passed on Saturday at the age of 86. Mrs. Sugarmon came to

the United States as a refugee escaping from defeated Germany after the Second World War ended and settled in Memphis after marrying a soldier from the area. That marriage ended, and she met and married Russell B. Sugarmon, a lawyer, judge and member of the Tennessee General Assembly. Their biracial marriage in 1968 caused a stir in then-racially fraught Memphis just months after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They were married 51 years. Russell Sugarmon passed in 2019, and I successfully introduced and saw signed into law the legislation that named the U.S. Post Office at 1325 Autumn Avenue in Memphis in his honor. Mrs. Sugarmon was active in the Head Start program that prepares young children for success in school for 30 years. She also worked with the Memphis Council for International Visitors to show off her adopted city to foreign visitors with her unique international perspective. Mrs. Sugarmon was a trailblazer and an inspiration to all who came to know her. I valued her friendship and join her family, friends and admirers in saying hers was a life well-lived. She will be missed.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
BOCHASANWASI AKSHAR
PURUSHOTTAM SWAMNARAYAN
SANSTHA (BAPS)

HON. THOMAS R. SUOZZI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS). BAPS is a worldwide Hindu denomination dedicated to fostering faith, inspiring service, and promoting better living. Over the last 50 years, BAPS has opened over 100 Hindu Temples or "mandirs" across the United States. The Revered Pramukh Swami Maharaj (1921–2016), established the first BAPS mandir in the United States of America on August 4, 1974, in New York City. BAPS mandirs bring His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj's words, "In the joy of others lies our own", to life, by supporting those in need, organizing health fairs, food drives, and disaster relief work. BAPS mandirs offer a welcoming spiritual space for thousands of families, as well as worship, fellowship, education, community, and social activities for the youth and elderly.

At this time, I also wish to reaffirm the shared values of democracy, religious pluralism, and respect for human rights, between India and the United States. The United States and India have a strong partnership as the world's oldest and largest democracy, respectively. Both countries share the values of pluralism, human rights, liberty, and respect for the rule of law. The people-to-people connections between the United States and India are stronger than in any other time in history. In-

dian Americans embody the American dream, and flourish in all areas of American life. Indian Americans come from diverse backgrounds, including Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Zoroastrians, Jains, and Bahai's. These hardworking communities enrich the fabric of our nation. I wish our friends at BAPS a joyful anniversary.

THANKING DAN WUNDERLICH FOR
SERVING MICHIGAN'S 9TH CON-
GRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a brief opportunity to recognize Dan Wunderlich, who for over two years has served the People of Michigan's 9th District as my director of communications.

In 2017, Dan began his career with Representative Dave Trott as an intern. Since then, he has served a United States Senator and three House Representatives including myself.

At every opportunity, Dan has proven his devotion to his community, his family, his friends, and his team. He has been an integral part of my office, has always brightened everyone's day, and will forever be someone I can rely on for advice.

We will all miss Dan's role in my office, but I am heartened that he will have the opportunity to spend more time with his family and find success in other ventures. I sincerely hope that he will come visit us again sometime soon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Dan Wunderlich for his years of service to the United States Congress.

RECOGNIZING TEXAS-24
HOMETOWN HERO, NIC FINK

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our Texas-24 Hometown Hero, Nic Fink. This year, at 31 year old, Nic Fink made history as the oldest first-time Olympic swimming medalist in history, proving that age is no barrier. Growing up in New Jersey, Nic fell in love with swimming as a teenager in high school. He continued to pursue his passion while completing an electrical engineering degree at the University of Georgia. In recent years, he's established himself as a top-tier competitor, taking home gold six times at the World Championships and placing fifth in the men's 200-meter breaststroke at the Tokyo games.

After his Olympic debut in Tokyo, he went on to receive his master's in electrical and

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computes engineering at Georgia Tech. Nic juggles working a 9-to-5 Job at Quanta Utility Engineering Services while continuing his swim training at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he lives with his wife, Melanie, herself a gold medalist Olympian swimmer. Nic says that he likes to focus on the mental, physical, and emotional demands of performing at the elite level when naming so that “when the race comes, you don’t really have to think at all.”

Nic is an inspiration to North Texans and swimmers of all ages, and I’d like to congratulate him on earning an Olympic Silver Medal.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MINNIE
MAE ROBINSON

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, It is with a heavy heart that I rise to recognize the remarkable life of Minnie Mae Robinson. Ms. Robinson was an extraordinary woman who, until the age of 102, lived her life with an unwavering love for serving God. Born on May 18, 1922, in the small town of Louisville, Georgia, Minnie’s spiritual journey with faith began at an early age, and her humble beginnings set the groundwork for the profound spirituality that defined her life and legacy.

She moved to Miami, Florida in 1950 and was always passionate about helping and caring for others. Minnie became a member of the historic St. John Institutional Missionary Baptist Church in the heart of Overtown, was an active and longtime member of the Usher Board, and served diligently as a member of the Mission Circle, the Flower Club and Eastern Star.

Her passion for caring and serving others led her to pursue a career in nursing, a role she embraced with dedication and love. She was a committed and hard worker who believed in charitable giving and community service. Her first nursing Job was at Christian Hospital located in Overtown, the first black-owned hospital that provided medical care for black Miamians. She also worked at Mount Sinai Medical Center on Miami Beach and privately until her retirement.

Throughout her life, Minnie exuded infinite wisdom and grace, taking on the roles of a devoted mother, loving grandmother, cherished sister, caring aunt, supportive cousin, and true friend. Her impact was not confined to her immediate family. She touched the lives of countless individuals, offering unwavering support, genuine compassion, and a listening ear to all who were fortunate enough to cross her path. Her relentless dedication to serving others and her community made her a pillar of strength and a source of inspiration.

Truly an inspiration, Minnie is remembered for her kind and generous spirit and legacy of service to family, church, and community. My heart is with her family in mourning the loss of this kind, generous, and compassionate soul. We were forever privileged to have shared this time with her. May her memory be a blessing.

RECOGNIZING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ISLAND INSTITUTE FELLOWS PROGRAM

HON. JARED F. GOLDEN

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. GOLDEN of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Maine Island Institute’s Fellows Program. Through their dedication and commitment, these Fellows have helped our communities thrive by supporting local priorities such as expanding broadband access and affordable housing, facilitating clean energy transitions and education initiatives, strengthening community resilience efforts, and enhancing our quality of life by providing technical assistance and support to critical projects. This highly valued program has successfully engaged volunteers, connected communities to resources, and supported the development of Maine’s future leaders.

Since the program’s creation, 148 Island Institute Fellows have provided over 492,500 hours of much-needed added capacity to municipalities, school systems, and community organizations. Their contributions are felt more acutely given that 75 percent of Maine’s coastal communities have fewer than 3,500 people, and 25 percent have fewer than 800 people. We know that every leader to these communities wears multiple hats, which makes Island Institute Fellows an essential asset by providing the ability to write a grant, facilitate community planning, preserve historical documents, or train volunteers.

Maine’s small island and coastal communities understand the challenges and opportunities they must navigate and often need human capacity and technical resources to address their priorities. With more than forty years of community development experience, the Island Institute works with these communities to recruit Fellows, facilitate the community-to-Fellow match, and provide the management framework for this highly regarded program. By providing housing, pay, and benefits, the program decreases barriers to access and supports a strong and diverse pool of talent to tackle community challenges and opportunities.

The benefits of the Island Institute Fellows program extend into the fabric of the larger community and into Maine. The two-year program means that Fellows also become integral members of the communities they serve—from helping to plan potlucks or coaching sports teams to being members of the town’s Emergency Medical Services. As a state with an aging population, it is notable that half of Island Institute Fellows choose to stay in Maine, filling a critical need for talent and commitment to the community well after the fellowship ends.

I want to congratulate the Island Institute for their dedication and service to the people of Maine and wish them continued success with the Fellows program into the future.

HONORING UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM WAR VETERAN JAMES RITCHIE’S 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional constituent from my district, James Ritchie. As a veteran and dedicated community service member, James has devoted his career to his country and community. Through military service and volunteer work, James has spent the past 59 years cultivating a life rich in purpose and spirit. His relentless care and advocacy for others does not go unnoticed, and therefore, I wish to commend him today.

James Ritchie began his life of service on April 30, 1965, when he enlisted in the U.S. Army. With strong intentions to be part of the Army Security Agency, James embarked on a memorable military career. After completing Basic Training at Fort Dix, James went on to complete linguistic training at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California for a year. He then began training as an Army Security Agency Analyst at Fort Devans, Massachusetts. Following his training he completed two years of duty, with one in Sinop, Turkey, and then another in 1968 with the 175th Radio Research Unit in Bien Hoa, Vietnam. Notably, James went on to achieve the rank of Specialist 5th class.

After discharge from the Army, James opted to attend Temple University using the GI Bill. While at University, James took every opportunity to involve himself in his studies. He majored in accounting and became a CPA. Alongside his strong efforts to build his professional career, James never hesitated to dedicate his time to community service. He has honorably devoted his life in service to his community and advocacy for Veteran, POW/MIA, and Military issues. He has performed extensive volunteer work in various areas, primarily through the VFW, with which he has been a Life Member since 1995. James has held a host of roles, from Post Commander to District Inspector, with Post 6495 in Levittown and Pennsylvania District 8.

Beyond local VFW roles, James has been amply involved at the State and National level, holding the role of Chief-of-Staff for the Department of Pennsylvania, and the role of Deputy Chief-of-Staff Nationally. This is in addition to a vast number of other titles James has held, in his long career of community and volunteer service. He is also a Life Member of four major veterans’ organizations, including Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of the Vietnam War, American Legion, and the Military Order of the Cootie. In 2001, James was gifted the prestigious honor of being inducted into the Legion of Honor of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, reserved for outstanding individuals “whose lives model the giving spirit and unconditional service to community, nation, and humanity”.

I remain deeply grateful to James Ritchie for his life of service and sacrifice for our community, district, and country. His commitment to his fellow neighbors, veterans, and service members alike is a testament to his strong moral character. His dedication to improving the lives of so many around him is greatly