

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

commendable. I am more than honored to recognize him today and wish him nothing but the best for the future.

RECOGNIZING MR. GEORGE
CARATAN

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. George Caratan on his retirement from the Board of Directors at the Delano Growers Grape Products. Mr. Caratan is a native of the Central Valley. From an early age, he learned the values of hard work and perseverance, spending his youth assisting his father with the family grape-growing business, Anton Caratan & Son in Delano. Mr. Caratan graduated from St. Mary's High School in Moraga Valley and then attended St. Mary's College. After his studies, he returned to the family business where he established his career in the agriculture industry. In 1940, Caratan & Son joined Delano Growers Grape Products (DGGP), a cooperative of grape farmers in the Central Valley. Mr. Caratan was selected as a board member of Delano Growers Grape Products in 1953. For 71 years, Mr. Caratan has helped lead Delano Growers Grape Products through the development of the grape growing business in the Central Valley, and his expertise and passion for the industry has been crucial to their success. Mr. Caratan's commitment to agricultural innovation was instrumental in the commercialization of two table grape varieties—rouge and blanc seedless grapes. Mr. Caratan has also dedicated his career to serving on several boards, including the Kern Tulare and Rag Gulch Water District, the California Fresh Fruit Association, and the American Slavonic Social Club. In 2014, Mr. Caratan received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the California Fresh Fruit Association in recognition of his significant contributions to the industry. The success of the Central Valley agriculture industry owes much to the dedication of our community's growers, and I want to thank Mr. Caratan for his commitment to innovative, high-quality and delicious grapes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in celebrating Mr. George Caratan on his incredible career. His service to the Central Valley agriculture industry will be felt for generations to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF OLNEY
RESIDENT ERIC RINEHART

HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Eric Leroy Rinehart, an incredible public servant from Olney, Illinois. Eric was born in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on February 19, 1953. After graduating from Flora High School, Eric chose to attend the University of Illinois, where he received his degree in mathematics. After college, Eric dedi-

cated his career to his community and worked for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

After retiring in 2005, Eric became dedicated to gardening, establishing gardens around the Springfield region. If you used to call the Illinois Extension Office about which vegetables grow the best in Central Illinois' climate, you'd be transferred to Eric. Eric's passions extended beyond gardening; he especially loved spending time with his family, Manchester City Football Club, Star Trek, and Science News Magazine.

As a computer programmer in the 1970s and an early adopter of the internet, he was constantly learning about and fascinated by the latest developments in the tech world. He enjoyed discussing science, engineering, physics, technology, and statistics with anyone.

Eric's greatest accomplishment, however, was his incredible family. Eric married his wife, Penny, in 1977 after meeting her at the University of Illinois. Penny and Eric had two sons, Jonathan and William, and two granddaughters Claudette and Camille. I will be keeping them in my prayers during this very difficult time. Eric's incredible life has left a lasting mark on his family and community. He will be deeply missed by all of those who call Central Illinois home.

HONORING 170 YEARS OF THE
INGHAM COUNTY FAIR

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I honor and celebrate the 170th anniversary of the Ingham County Fair, a staple of the community and an annual celebration of the best Michigan has to offer.

The Ingham County Agricultural Society held the first Ingham County Fair in 1855 in Mason. It began as a "free street fair" held at the Court House Square and since then has had several different homes. In fact, the fair was so popular in its first year that the following year, the Agricultural Society purchased a four-acre plot of land in Vevay Township to host the annual event. The fair stayed there until 1871, when it once again needed to find a larger venue and was moved to a plot of land on the corner of Jefferson Street and Kipp Road. Finally, in 1930, the Ingham County Road Commission purchased the land off Ash Street in Mason, which remains the fairgrounds' home today.

Each year, the Ingham County Fair hosts a wide variety of activities that cater to a diverse range of interests. While some people may attend for the carnival rides, others spend all year preparing for the shows and competitions the fair hosts. For example, it partners with the Ingham County Junior Livestock Association to provide kids and young adults the opportunity to showcase their projects in areas of science, health, and agriculture. The fair also hosts animal auctions that give young people experience showing and selling livestock—skills that are becoming harder and harder to foster in an online world. Educational opportunities such as these are essential to our communities and are just one of the many reasons why the Ingham County Fair is so special.

In 2009, the Ingham County Fair Foundation was established to support and enhance the fairgrounds to serve agricultural, business, cultural, educational, recreational, urban and youth interests of Ingham County. Most recently, the Fair Foundation has focused on raising funds to build a new grandstand, which hosts widely-attended events including demolition derbies, truck and tractor pulls and mud drag racing. The first grandstand was constructed in 1939, providing covered seating for all events on the fairgrounds. Unfortunately, it was torn down in 2015 due to structural issues and since then, the Fairgrounds has rented portable seating solutions that do not meet the demand. To put it simply: the grandstand is the pulse of events at the fairgrounds, and this is why community members have come together to build a new one. I was happy to assist in that mission by securing \$2.5 million in Community Project Funding and I cannot wait to see the many ways it will serve as a place for folks across the state to come together to enjoy all that the Fairgrounds have to offer.

It is with great pride that I honor the Ingham County Fair's 170 years of providing enjoyment, education, and community. May the Fair continue to serve as a highlight of the summer for many more years to come.

HONORING CARLSBAD CAVERNS
NATIONAL PARK ON THE OCCA-
SION OF ITS 100TH ANNIVER-
SARY

HON. GABE VASQUEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 2024

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Carlsbad Caverns National Park in Carlsbad, New Mexico. On October 25, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge took a momentous step by designating a remarkable natural wonder—what was then known as the Carlsbad Cave—as a National Monument. He described it as "a limestone cavern of extraordinary proportions and of unusual beauty and variety of natural decoration." This decision marked the beginning of a century-long journey that would captivate millions of visitors from around the world.

Nestled beneath the Chihuahuan Desert in southeastern New Mexico, this vast and stunning cave system has continued to enchant and inspire. Anyone who has been to Carlsbad Caverns understands how special it is—from watching the evening bat flight to descending more than 750 feet to reach the bottom, Carlsbad Caverns is a New Mexican treasure.

Furthermore, in 1995, Carlsbad Caverns received an extraordinary accolade when it was designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This prestigious recognition not only celebrates the park's global significance but also ensures its protection and preservation for future generations.

The Caverns are also critical to the nearby community of Carlsbad, supporting the local economy as tourists from around the world travel our beautiful district to travel nearly 1000 feet underground to view this natural wonder. Over 500,000 people visit the Caverns each year, supporting hundreds of jobs in