

## HONORING CECILIA POPE'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. TROY E. NEHLS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 23, 2024*

Mr. NEHLS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Cecilia Pope, a constituent of mine who turns 100 years old on August 26, 2024.

Her journey began in 1924 as Cecilia Lujan Baca, in Clayton, New Mexico, where she spent her early years. She ventured to Denver, Colorado for high school, carving out a path of independence and growth. In October of 1947, fate introduced Cecilia to her first husband, Master Sargent Alfred Hill of the U.S. Air Force. They had two children together, John in 1950 and Lisa in 1955. However, tragedy struck as they embarked on their move to Biloxi, Mississippi, in July 1957. Alfred, at the young age of 34, left this world due to a fatal heart attack, leaving Cecilia and their two children.

Undeterred by the hardships, Cecilia moved to Amarillo, Texas, with her children. In 1960, she married Alex Pope, and welcomed a daughter, Alexis in 1963. As life unfolded, they traversed through various cities due to Alex's profession, ultimately settling in Houston in 1966, where they rooted themselves in the Sharpstown area.

Tragedy struck once more when Alex passed away in 1987, yet Cecilia's spirit remained unbroken. In 2004, she made the decision to move to Katy, Texas, to be near her two daughters.

Her resilience and enthusiasm for life is inspiring. Despite the challenges she has faced, Cecilia remains active, independent, and devotes her time to her passions. She's an avid reader, immerses herself in the world of literature, and finds solace in her prayer and family.

Cecilia treasures the moments spent with her friends, children, eight grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. Her dedication to family and her unwavering spirit is a testament to her strength. Moreover, her faith has been an anchor throughout her life, and is an active member of the Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church in Katy, Texas.

Cecilia's story is not just one of resilience in the face of adversity, but also a celebration of a life richly lived—a life that continues to inspire those around her. To that end, I want to once again honor her on behalf of the people in the 22nd Congressional District of Texas. I wish Cecilia a happy birthday.

May God continue to bless her and her family every single day.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MARK MYERS, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS BRANCH 79

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 23, 2024*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mark

Myers, who served as the Vice President of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 79 Seattle.

Mark served as NALC's legislative liaison to my office for many years. He was a constant advocate for the voices and needs of his union's members. He was a very effective advocate and all that were lucky enough to know Mark know that he was both sincere and kind in all that he did.

Throughout his life, Mark embodied what it truly means to serve. Mark served his union through his work with my office, but also through his work at the Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council and the Washington State Labor Council. Not only was Mark the current Vice President of the NALC Branch 79 Seattle, but he had also served as Secretary-Treasurer and made history as the only retiree re-elected for three consecutive terms.

Mark spent his time outside of work continuing to serve his community. He was a former member of the Highline Community Council and a devout member of his local church, the Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Burien.

Mark is a shining example of true leadership and commitment. I appreciate his many years of service working with my office, as well as all of his service to our community. He will be deeply missed.

## HONORING MRS. FAYLENE WHITAKER ON BEING NAMED NORTH CAROLINA FARMER OF THE YEAR

**HON. RICHARD HUDSON**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 23, 2024*

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mrs. Faylene Whitaker on being named North Carolina Farmer of the Year.

Mrs. Whitaker has the unique honor of being the first woman to be named North Carolina Farmer of the Year. Mrs. Whitaker started Whitaker Farms with her late husband Richard in 1975, who she has surely honored with this award. Together, they purchased 36 acres of land in Randolph County and as a result of their hard work, Whitaker Farms has now grown to 1,000 acres and includes a variety of different crops. The Whitakers use innovative and sustainable farming practices to ensure high crop yields, healthy soil, drip irrigation and devote a majority of the land to organic production.

Our state has a long and proud tradition of agricultural excellence. Many people don't even realize where the food they eat every day comes from, but the Whitakers could tell you they worked around the clock, 24 hours a day when they first started, to ensure they could pay back their first bank loan while overcoming weather conditions that make farming nearly impossible. I know I speak for our region and entire state when I say thank you to our hard-working farmers and the Whitakers for their dedication to putting food on the table in North Carolina. From peanuts to sweet potatoes, North Carolina farmers generate some of the highest quality produce in the world. We are thrilled to recognize Mrs. Whitaker for her continuation of that tradition.

Again, congratulations to Mrs. Whitaker for winning this prestigious award.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating Mrs. Faylene Whitaker on being named North Carolina Farmer of the Year.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF MR. ALDO JAVIER GARCIA

**HON. DAVID G. VALADAO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 23, 2024*

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Mr. Aldo Javier Garcia, who tragically passed away on June 24, 2024, at the age of 25. Mr. Garcia was born in Hanford, California to Javier Pelagio Garcia and Araceli Navarro Garcia. He had one brother, Orlando Navarro Garcia. Mr. Garcia grew up in the Central Valley and was the proud son of farmworkers, from whom he learned the values of hard work and perseverance from a young age. After graduating from Corcoran High School, Mr. Garcia went on to attend the University of California, Berkeley. Mr. Garcia was an exceptional student and dedicated his time to the university community, having served as the Student Director of the UC Berkeley Public Service Center. In 2021, Mr. Garcia received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and was accepted to the prestigious Jess M. Unruh Assembly Fellowship. After being selected by the fellowship program, Mr. Garcia served as a Fellow for California State Assemblymember Lori Wilson. Last year, Mr. Garcia began his dream job as a legislative staffer for Assemblymember Juan Carrillo. As Assemblymember Carrillo's Legislative Aide, he worked hard on legislation to help improve the lives of Californians. Mr. Garcia was a valuable asset and a strong leader on both Assemblymember Wilson's and Carrillo's teams, and he was at the beginning of an impactful career in California politics. Mr. Garcia will be remembered by his family, friends, and colleagues as a kind and compassionate young man who always put the needs of others before his own. His passion for politics, dedication to his community, and service to the State of California will never be forgotten. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the incredible life of Mr. Aldo Javier Garcia. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.

## JOYCE HUNTER DEDICATION

**HON. DAVID J. TRONE**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, August 23, 2024*

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I recognize and congratulate my constituent, Joyce Hunter, on her retirement from one of the largest multiemployer pension funds in the United States, the Central Pension Fund of the International Union of Operating Engineers and Participating Employers ("Central Pension Fund").

Joyce's lifelong dedication to the Central Pension Fund, which has spanned over four decades, and its mission to provide secure retirement benefits to operating engineers and

their families, has been unwavering. During her tenure, Joyce has successfully worked in various capacities in nearly every department of the Fund and has a well-earned reputation both inside and outside of the organization for her institutional knowledge and her unwavering work ethic. Indeed, most developments at the Central Pension Fund—both big and small—have likely involved Joyce's input and advice.

As Director of Human Resources and Administration, Joyce has effectively served as the face of the organization for the Fund's employees, having spearheaded the Fund's recruitment and hiring efforts, while also playing

an integral role in strategic planning. In addition, by all accounts, Joyce has always gone above and beyond her technical job duties and has prioritized the professional development and personal well-being of her colleagues by creating and fostering a positive and enjoyable work culture. In that regard, Joyce is notorious for hosting and facilitating costume-themed events and ice cream socials, and for placing personal notes and small gifts on her colleagues' desks in the pre-dawn hours before work.

In summary, Joyce's well-deserved retirement marks the end of an illustrious career, and while the Central Pension Fund will un-

doubtedly miss her deep institutional knowledge, dedication, and guidance, I am confident that the Fund will continue to thrive for decades to come as a result of her efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in recognizing the lifetime of selfless service and tireless dedication of Joyce Hunter. Her commitment to the Central Pension Fund serves as an inspiration to us all, and we extend our best wishes upon her retirement in the years to come.