

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE
OF ELBERT KNOX

HON. NATHANIEL MORAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 6, 2024

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elbert Henry "Toughegg" Knox, a courageous American who gave his life in service to our country during World War II. Elbert Knox first served as an Army cook from 1919 to 1920. In September 1941, at the age of 40, he answered the call again, leaving his home to work as a civilian contract worker on Wake Island in the Pacific Ocean. There, Knox and other civilians built essential facilities for the military, helping to defend the island during a fierce Japanese attack on December 8, 1941.

Despite their valiant efforts, Wake Island fell to Japanese forces after a 15-day battle, and Knox became a prisoner of war. Transferred to Japan in September 1942, he faced brutal conditions—enduring abuse, starvation, solitary confinement, and exposure. Knox's resilience was unwavering, but tragically, he died in captivity. After the war, his remains were laid to rest in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. In 1981, Knox and his fellow civilian contractors on Wake Island were granted veteran status.

Today, I am proud to report that Mr. Knox has been posthumously awarded the Prisoner of War (POW) Medal and the Purple Heart. These medals will be presented to his family, who have waited decades to see his heroism formally recognized. His story is a powerful reminder of the price of liberty and the strength of the American spirit.

I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mr. Elbert Knox and extending our deepest gratitude to his family. May his legacy continue to inspire us all to serve our Nation with honor and dedication, and may we never forget his sacrifice.

CELEBRATING THE DESIGNATION
OF OLD FORGE, PENNSYLVANIA,
AND FELITTO, ITALY, AS SISTER
CITIES

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 6, 2024

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize a remarkable and historic milestone that unites two communities across the Atlantic Ocean. It is with great pride and joy that I announce the official designation of Old Forge, Pennsylvania, and Felitto, Italy, as sister cities. This designation not only honors our shared heritage but also strengthens the bond of friendship and cultural exchange between our two communities.

Old Forge, situated in the heart of northeastern Pennsylvania, has long been a beacon of Italian-American culture. Known affectionately as the Pizza Capital of the World, Old Forge boasts a rich history that is deeply intertwined with the Italian immigrant experience.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, waves of immigrants from Felitto, a picturesque town in the Campania region of southern Italy, made

their way to Old Forge, then known as Mudtown. Their arrival marked the beginning of a new chapter in the community's history, bringing with them their traditions, values, and, of course, their beloved culinary heritage.

Felitto, located in the province of Salerno, is renowned for its artisanal fusilli pasta and its vibrant annual celebration, the Fusillo Festival. This festival is a testament to Felitto's commitment to family, community, and the joy of food. The town's dedication to preserving its cultural traditions and fostering a strong sense of community is mirrored in the spirit of Old Forge.

The Felittese Association of Old Forge, now in its 35th year, hosts the city's annual Felittese Italian Festival on the second weekend in September in commemoration of Our Lady of Constantinople, who has been venerated in the town of Felitto since 1790. Much like Felitto's Fusillo Festival, this annual celebration stands as a proud homage to Old Forge's Italian roots by celebrating the rich tapestry of Italian culture through homecooked food and music with family, friends, and neighbors. It is a cherished tradition that underscores the deep connections that bind our two communities.

The sister city designation between Old Forge and Felitto represents more than just a symbolic gesture; it is a recognition of the shared heritage and enduring ties that unite us. It honors the legacy of the Italian immigrants who contributed so profoundly to Old Forge, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. and acknowledges the vibrant culture that continues to thrive today.

This partnership will strengthen economic ties and enhance the mutual understanding between our communities. It is a celebration of our shared history and a commitment to continuing the traditions that have enriched our lives and nations.

As we commemorate this new chapter in the relationship between Old Forge and Felitto, let us honor the contributions of the Italian immigrants who helped shape our communities. Their legacy lives on in the vibrant celebrations, the delectable cuisine, and the strong sense of community that define both Old Forge and Felitto.

As the Member of the U.S. House representing northeastern Pennsylvania, I extend my heartfelt congratulations on this historic achievement. May this sister city relationship continue to flourish, bringing us closer together.

HONORING PAT SMITH

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 6, 2024

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the incredible life and the amazing contributions of my friend Pat Smith, who passed away peacefully on August 17th. Tomorrow, September 7th there will be a "Celebration of Life" to honor and pay tribute to the remarkable Pat Smith.

Pat Smith's extraordinary work for patients, caregivers, and Lyme-literate doctors around the country has been transformational. An incredibly well-informed and tenacious leader,

Pat fought effectively and relentlessly for greater diagnosis, treatments, and outcomes for Lyme patients.

Because of Pat Smith, legislation to better meet the needs of Lyme patients is now the law of the land.

I first met Pat in 1992 and from that moment on, my understanding, advocacy, and legislative work for Lyme patients—and frankly the work of this Chamber—was substantially and positively influenced. She was an outstanding collaborator. She did meticulous research and was painstakingly honest, reliable, and hard-working—often to the chagrin of the Lyme deniers.

A widely respected straight shooter, Pat did not mince words as she and I worked together—along with other Lyme victims and family caregivers—calling on all public, medical, and insurance industry officials to be forthright and dedicated in fighting Lyme and saving lives.

More than 30 years ago, Pat Smith came to one of my town hall meetings in Wall, New Jersey, and shared with me the plight of those suffering from chronic Lyme, including her two daughters.

Shortly after, Pat and I sat down with the top leaders at the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health, who were polite but highly dismissive of our concerns surrounding the recommended treatment for Lyme.

Pat was brilliant in that meeting. She told them how CDC's "recommendation" for prescribing up to a mere 1 month's worth of antibiotics was being used by health insurance companies as the ceiling for what was covered. Even if the patient had Lyme for 5 years, only 1 month of doxycycline was covered.

The feds said it wasn't their intention to limit health insurance coverage, but they didn't fix the problem either.

If you knew Pat, you knew that answer would not suffice.

Already the founder and president of the Lyme Disease Association (LDA), Pat embarked on a personal and compassionate mission across the Nation to educate and help, spread awareness of this terrible disease, how to prevent it, and how to properly diagnose and treat it. She built synergistic coalitions around the country that worked relentlessly in support of Lyme research and to advance diagnosis and treatment for patients.

Beyond the working coalitions, Pat organized 22 national, scientific conferences and shared her wealth of knowledge at hundreds of government, business, and school events.

She provided both oral and written expert testimony in support of national and State laws and physicians' right to fully treat Lyme in numerous States, including our own.

When Pat brought her renowned expertise, passion, and admirable no-nonsense demeanor to Washington, people listened.

At my request, Pat testified before Congress and provided critical insights for substantive reform and Federal Lyme programs. And she skillfully made her case each year during the congressional appropriations process, ensuring that Lyme disease programs—and patients—finally got their due, or close to it.

Pat also served two terms as a public member of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Tick-Borne Disease Working Group, a working group created by legislation she and I worked on together and helped shepherd into law.

The working group reports, mandated by Congress, represent a true landmark in their far-reaching coverage of the persistent symptoms and persistent illness suffered by Lyme disease patients and the need for enhanced understanding of Lyme disease-associated chronic illness. And the reports referenced many published studies of chronic Lyme disease.

The groundbreaking content of the working group's reports and their positive impact on Lyme patients and Lyme study are due in no small part to two term working group member Pat Smith.

Under Pat's leadership, LDA provided 127 research grants that have been acknowledged in 62 scientific journals.

Working with author Amy Tan, she created LymeAid 4 Kids, a program that offers critical support to children with Lyme who come from families that face financial challenges. To date, this amazing initiative has provided more than \$475,000 for diagnosis and treatment for children in need.

Naturally inquisitive and loaded with "street smarts," Pat also continued to study and probe the origins of Lyme and the impact defense bioweapons experiments on ticks may or may not have had on Lyme's epidemic growth in the U.S.

Pat Smith's unyielding commitment to improving the Federal response to Lyme disease has made a huge difference and has offered so much hope for Lyme patients across the country.

She demanded fairness and honesty and never asked anybody to give more or do more than she and her husband, Rich, gave and did for the cause of conquering Lyme.

I will greatly miss my good friend, Pat Smith, a trailblazer for Lyme disease patients. Pat and I share a birthday, a last name, and a thirst for justice for patients with Lyme. For Pat, and in her honor, our fight will continue.

60TH ANNIVERSARY ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 6, 2024

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association on the occasion of its 60th anni-

versary. For six decades, this organization has been a steadfast advocate for tourism in the North Alabama region, significantly contributing to the economic vitality and cultural richness of our state.

Founded in 1964, the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association was established with the vision of promoting the diverse and breathtaking landscapes of North Alabama, which range from the majestic Appalachian Mountains in the east to serene lakes and vibrant vistas in the west. Over the years, Alabama Mountain Lakes has been instrumental in showcasing the natural beauty, historical landmarks, and unique attractions that make this region a cherished destination for tourists from across the Nation and around the world.

Under the dedicated leadership of its board and staff, Alabama Mountain Lakes has successfully partnered with local businesses, governments, and communities to enhance tourism infrastructure, support local economies, and preserve the region's natural and cultural heritage. The Association's innovative marketing campaigns, educational initiatives, and community engagement efforts have not only attracted countless visitors but have also fostered a deep sense of pride among residents.

The Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association is committed to sharing with the rest of Alabama, the South, and the nation the great attractions, festivals, restaurants, and other entertainment options that North Alabama has to offer. From the W.C. Handy Music Festival in Florence to the Christkindlmarkt in Cullman, to the World's Longest Yardsale in DeKalb County, there is something for everyone.

As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association for 60 years of outstanding service. Their tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on our state, and I am confident that they will continue to inspire and lead in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association for their exceptional contributions to the tourism industry and the lasting impact they have made on North Alabama and beyond.

CELEBRATING OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST AND WRESTLING CHAMPION SARAH HILDEBRANDT

HON. RUDY YAKYM III

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 6, 2024

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate Olympic Gold Medalist and wrestling champion Sarah Hildebrandt, who brought home the gold in the women's wrestling freestyle 50-kilograms event at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France.

Growing up in Granger, Indiana, and a proud 2011 graduate of Penn High School where she wrestled all four years, Sarah's achievements in the sport of wrestling are almost too numerous to list. Prior to coming to Paris this summer, Sarah could claim being a two-time world bronze medalist, a two-time world silver medalist, and an Olympic bronze medalist from the Tokyo Summer Games as just a few of her many accolades. With her win over Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez in the 50-kilogram weight class women's freestyle final on August 7, 2024, Sarah is now also just the fourth woman to win gold in wrestling for Team USA in history.

Upon winning the gold this summer, Sarah reflected, "this gold medal is for everyone who has ever faced a setback or felt like giving up. It's proof that with hard work, determination, and a little bit of faith, anything is possible." Sarah's determination and persistence have inspired so many around the world, especially but not limited to those in the sport of wrestling.

I have always found it fitting that the Summer Olympics take place in the same year as our U.S. presidential elections. While Americans are often divided politically, every four years the Summer Olympics afford us an opportunity to unite around our love of country and be united in pride and admiration for athletes like Sarah who represent our Nation on the world stage so well.

I thank Sarah for bringing a healthy dose of Hoosier pride to Paris this summer. I congratulate her on her incredible athletic achievements, both at this summer's Olympics and throughout her impressive, decorated career. I and so many others look forward to seeing what she will continue to accomplish going forward. May God bless.