

HONORING DR. TRAGIL WADE-JOHNSON

**HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Tragil Wade-Johnson, a distinguished entrepreneur, philanthropist, inspirational speaker, life coach, and author.

Dr. Wade-Johnson has dedicated her life to the pursuit of improving the lives of others through education, empowerment, encouragement, and enlightenment. As the former caregiver and devoted sister to retired NBA Champion Dwyane Wade, her family's journey from tragedy to triumph inspired her to commit her life to supporting underprivileged youth. Dr. Wade-Johnson's passion for children led her to found America's Big Sisters Foundation which seeks to change the narrative for youth facing challenges similar to those she and her brother overcame.

Establishing America's Big Sisters Foundation in 2017 as a 501(c)3 organization, Dr. Wade-Johnson continues her mission to empower, encourage, and educate young ladies in underserved communities. The foundation's annual Empowerment Conference, uniting girls across backgrounds and providing strategies to overcome societal challenges, has grown exponentially, impacting the lives of thousands. With a city tour reaching multiple states, this visionary leader aspires to touch the lives of 2,500 girls in 2023 alone.

Dr. Wade-Johnson's educational achievements, including degrees in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, coupled with her certifications in ministry, leadership, and trauma-informed care, underscore her commitment to lifelong learning and personal development.

Her illustrious career path encompasses roles as a teacher, principal, and executive director, reflecting her diverse skill set and dedication to shaping young minds. Notably, as the Executive Director of Wade's World Foundation from 2006 to 2017, she led the organization in raising more than \$3.4 million and garnered numerous awards. Recognitions such as the BET Humanitarian Award, Woman of Excellence, and the Dr. Rita Marley Ambassador Award underscore her impactful presence in the philanthropic landscape.

Dr. Tragil Wade-Johnson's dedication to positive change and her unwavering commitment to uplifting the next generation epitomizes the transformative power of education, resilience, and compassionate leadership, inspiring us all to strive for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Dr. Tragil Wade-Johnson for all she has achieved, and for her commitment, dedication and service to our community.

RECOGNIZING MS. AMY CHAVERS BOWDEN, OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**HON. MATT GAETZ**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Okaloosa County School District

Teacher of the Year. Ms. Amy Chavers Bowden, for her exceptional efforts in advancing youth education and dedication to positively impacting the lives of countless students at Antioch Elementary School.

A fourth-grade teacher, Ms. Bowden's reputation precedes her as a woman of motivation, kindness, inspiration, and most of all, an unwavering commitment to the betterment of her students. Her leadership with the Hope Squad, Drone Team, and Young Astronauts Club exemplifies her message that all children are capable of achieving success. Each Monday, the scent of freshly made hot chocolate fills her classroom as her students each contribute to their class newspaper, demonstrating elementary comradery made possible through a teacher who serves as a role model and leads by example. Ms. Bowden's aspiration to evoke joy in her students makes her beloved by her students.

I am proud to know that so many children in my district have had the opportunity to have been taught by Ms. Bowden. Her stated mission to change the world has certainly been achieved and her lessons of leadership are sure to remain through many generations to come. It is for these reasons that I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

HONORING CAPTAIN CHRISSY VALADEZ

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chrissy Valadez, a paramedic and fire captain with the Northshore Fire Protection. I have named Ms. Valadez as Public Safety Heroes of the Year from Lake County in California's 4th District because of her extraordinary selflessness, dedication and service to others.

Ms. Valadez was born in Klamath Falls, Oregon, to Robert and Tina Allen. She attended Mendocino College Fire Academy and Paramedic program and earned her associate degree in emergency management from Coastline College in Costa Mesa, California. Ms. Valadez began her career in 2003 with Lucerne Fire Department which consolidated and formed Northshore Fire Protection District in 2006. She has served as Northshore Fire Protection District's EMS Liaison since 2007. She is also a part of the Lake County Emergency Medical Care Committee and has been a Field Training Officer precepting paramedic interns since 2008. Having worked for nearly 21 years in Lake County, she has assisted in many of the major wildfires, including the 2018 Ranch Fire that devastated our community.

Ms. Valadez has been serving her community for over two decades. She teaches CPR to a wide range of community members including high school students and school staff. She's also been educating community and tribal organizations on Narcan administration, tackling the opioid crisis head-on. As the driving force behind the Every-15-Minutes program at Upper Lake High School, she has been helping students understand the dangers of driving under the influence. Ms. Valadez is currently finishing her bachelor's degree in science education with an end goal of teach-

ing health science and emergency medical services (EMS) to high school students.

Three years ago, Ms. Valadez started working on a new passion in her spare time. She serves as a Regional Advisor for International Student Exchange, facilitating and supporting high school students in Lake and Mendocino Counties who are studying abroad in the United States for a cultural exchange experience. She is a local point of contact for any inquiries and emergencies, ensuring that the students have a positive and enriching experience while adjusting to life in a new culture. Ms. Valadez also organizes events and activities to promote cultural exchange and community integration to better connect international students and their host communities.

When she is not on duty, Ms. Valadez enjoys spending time with her husband, Ronnie, and three daughters, Regan (14), Charlotte (9) and Clara (2). Her crew members at the firehouse describe her as a dedicated worker who does her best to provide solutions even in the most stressful of times. She is a wonderful daughter, a caring sister, an amazing mother and a loving wife, and our community is grateful for her hard work and service.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Ms. Valadez for her persistence, service and commitment to our community. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

HONORING LEE CAPLIN

**HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Lee Caplin, a businessman and philanthropist.

As an attorney, entrepreneur, and educator, Mr. Caplin's contributions span over 25 years, including co-founding Penske Media and serving as the Special Assistant Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. With a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Duke University and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia Law School, Mr. Caplin has been an influential figure in various fields, embodying a commitment to education, innovation, and the arts.

Mr. Lee Caplin generously donated \$10 million to Florida International University College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts (CARTA) to establish the CARTA Lee Caplin School of Journalism & Media, marking one of the most substantial contributions to a journalism and media program in the history of the State University System of Florida.

The donation will empower a multitude of initiatives to support students, encompassing the strengthening of the curriculum, faculty, and professional staff to ensure graduates are well-prepared for interdisciplinary, high-demand professions. Additionally, it will involve the enhancement of the renowned South Florida Media Network, now rebranded as Caplin News, providing immersive professional learning experiences with news bureaus in Miami and Washington, D.C. The initiative extends to the development of engaging and inclusive coursework, fostering an experiential "learn by doing" teaching philosophy and equipping students with essential skills to combat misinformation and disinformation. Furthermore, it

aims at establishing a diverse and accomplished faculty of practitioners and scholars, providing instruction in the use of industry-standard equipment, software, and the latest immersive technologies. The donation will also contribute to capital improvements in facilities and equipment to create state-of-the-art learning spaces, along with offering student scholarships and financial assistance.

This significant gift reinforces the Caplin School's dedication to inclusivity, with 86 percent of students identifying as minorities, and its commitment to providing access to excellence, fostering "techquity," and preparing proficient, multilingual professionals in journalism, digital media, animation, broadcast media, and film (proficient in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole).

Lee Caplin, Founder and Chairman of Picture Entertainment Corporation, has a prominent role in the multimedia and telecommunications industry, serving as the Executive Producer of the Academy Award-nominated film "Ali" and leading initiatives such as the Immersive Studio for Altered Reality (iStar) at Florida International University.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Mr. Lee Caplin for all he has achieved, and for his commitment, dedication and service to our community.

#### HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

##### HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Holocaust Learning Experience, hosted by MorseLife in my Congressional District. This year, International Holocaust Remembrance Day marks 79 years since the liberation of the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Red Army and Allied troops. On January 27, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly officially reminded the world of the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution. We should never forget the atrocities of the Holocaust. At liberation, allies witnessed the devastation of human remains and the destruction of the human spirit. This is the day we also acknowledge the multigenerational impact of the horror and terror perpetrated against innocent women, men and children.

Globally, we are witnessing an alarming rise in antisemitism, and it is more important than ever to recognize the critical lessons from the Holocaust. I am proud to recognize the Holocaust Learning Experience, to continue to develop, deploy and deliver Holocaust education to public schools. Last year, the Holocaust Learning Experience was awarded seed funding from the state of Florida to cast the education statewide, scalable, and the Holocaust Learning Experience is poised to be in the 67 school districts, impacting approximately 2.1 million students.

I wish to congratulate and encourage the Holocaust Learning Experience to continue changing lives of our nation's young people. Each day, the Experience teaches students to stand up, not stand by.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

##### HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend votes. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 363; NAY on Roll Call No. 637; NAY on Roll Call No. 636; and NAY on Roll Call No. 648.

#### HONORING ANDREW TOMELLOSO

##### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Andrew Tomelloso, a fire captain with the Dixon Fire Department. I have named Mr. Tomelloso as a Public Safety Hero of the Year for Solano County in California's 4th District as a result of his extraordinary selflessness, dedication and service to others.

Mr. Tomelloso was born in Vallejo, California and grew up in Dixon, California where he earned his high school diploma. Since then, Mr. Tomelloso has completed the National College of Technical Instruction Paramedic Program, the State Fire Marshal Company Officer Program and is a certified California Specialized Training Institute Hazmat Technician. He is currently enrolled at Columbia Southern University to complete an AS/BS degree. Mr. Tomelloso is the proud father of 15-year-old Owen Tomelloso and 14-year-old Marina Tomelloso.

Mr. Tomelloso began his career assisting emergency room patients, until he joined the Dixon Fire Department in February 2014 where he has since been serving as a firefighter and paramedic. Mr. Tomelloso's calm demeanor and approachability within the Dixon Fire Department makes him a valued leader and a respected colleague. As a newly promoted captain he is playing an essential role in helping make the department stronger, more resilient and more capable. Mr. Tomelloso is the Dixon Professional Firefighters Association (DPFA) Local 4665 Vice President, the grant committee chair, the Dixon Fire Department public education lead and a Solano County Hazmat team member as well as being the Solano County Rotary Firefighter of the Year for both the years of 2017 and 2020.

As a captain and paramedic, Mr. Tomelloso is tasked with public education within the fire department. He demonstrates incredible willingness to contribute and respond to the needs of our community in fire safety, adult and youth education programs and CPR training. Mr. Tomelloso's dedication to the Dixon Fire Department and our community has resulted in top caliber public education that improves the lives and wellbeing of our citizens.

Mr. Tomelloso is a standup citizen working with the community CPR program and contributing to public outreach events such as school festivals, Dixon May Fair, fire prevention week and senior resource fairs. Additionally, he was a member of the Solano County Urban Search and Rescue Team and the former president of the Dixon Firefighters Charitable Fund. Cur-

rently Mr. Tomelloso serves as the lead chair for both the Dixon Fire Department CPR program and DPFA annual Santa run.

From school programs to Fire Prevention Week events, to presentations with homeowner groups, to coordinating the Santa Run during the holidays to spread a bit of joy, his professionalism and dedication to making our community a smarter and safer place goes far and above the call of duty.

Mr. Speaker, we thank Mr. Tomelloso for his persistence, service, and commitment to our community. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

#### HONORING RICHARD CUFF

##### HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 30, 2024*

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Richard Cuff, a businessman, philanthropist, and friend.

Born and raised in Miami, the vibrant city within Florida's 24th Congressional District, Richard Cuff brought with him a wealth of experiences and a deep-rooted sense of community when he relocated to Jacksonville. His journey from the heart of Miami to becoming an integral part of the Jacksonville community reflects the interconnectedness of our great state. His commitment to bridging the gap between communities, fostering inclusivity, and celebrating diversity is a testament to the values instilled in him from his early days in Miami, the place he still calls home.

Richard Cuff, a dedicated and compassionate resident of Florida, has significantly contributed to the lively fabric of our community. Richard has selflessly devoted his time to enriching the lives of underprivileged youth through the art of music, sharing his passion and skill by teaching violin lessons through his Guiding Success Program. His comedic talents have not only brought joy and laughter to many but also served as a testament to his versatile and creative spirit. Richard's commitment to civic engagement has been demonstrated through his candidacy for public office, showcasing his unwavering dedication to making positive changes within local government.

Richard Cuff's influence extends beyond the realms of music, comedy, and politics. His fervent dedication to community service is evident through his leadership in various local initiatives. From spearheading neighborhood clean-up projects to organizing charity events, Richard consistently demonstrates a profound commitment to the well-being of our community.

In the realm of education, Richard has not only shared his musical expertise but has also actively engaged in promoting literacy and learning. His involvement in literacy programs for children and adults alike underscores his belief in the transformative power of knowledge and the importance of fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

As a staunch advocate for social justice, Richard has fearlessly addressed issues of inequality and worked towards building bridges between communities. His efforts to foster understanding and unity have not only resonated locally but have also inspired others to join the