

His dedication to supporting fellow veterans and their families highlights his belief in service beyond self.

Those who know Walter describe him as embodying the values of duty, honor, and country. His selfless commitment to helping others continues to inspire all who meet him.

To honor his sacrifice and service, I am pleased to award retired USN Senior Chief Petty Officer Walter Miller Lavender with a Congressional Veteran Commendation.

INTRODUCTION OF FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH RESOLUTION

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, since 2019, and as the Member of Congress with the most Filipino Americans of any U.S. House district nationwide, I have been honored to co-lead an annual resolution recognizing October as Filipino American History Month. I have joined many colleagues in doing so in order to recognize and celebrate the great contributions of Filipino Americans to our country, in government and law, music and entertainment, sports, business and countless other ventures.

The first recorded arrival of Filipinos in the continental United States took place on October 18, 1587, when the "Luzones Indios" came ashore from the Manila-built galleon *Nuestra Senora de Esperanza* in Morro Bay, California. This was followed by the first permanent Filipino settlement in the United States in St. Malo, Louisiana in 1763. Since those early beginnings, our Filipino American community has grown to approximately 4.4 million citizens and is the third largest Asian American and Pacific Islander group in the United States. Many of the early Filipino immigrants were young men who came to the United States, most to Hawaii, California, Washington and Alaska, seeking a better life.

This first generation of Filipino immigrants are commonly referred to as the Manong generation (Ilocano for first-born male). They worked mostly physically demanding jobs in tough conditions for very little pay. Over the years, they fought against discrimination, found a way forward, became respected members of their communities, and made a better future for themselves and their future generations. The several generations since have thrived upon that foundation.

The history of the Fil-Am community in Hawaii is particularly rich and echoes the national story. In 1906, the first fifteen sakada contract laborers arrived in Honolulu from the Philippines aboard the SS *Doric*, marking the first sustained immigration into our country and the humble beginnings of Fil-Ams in Hawaii. These first immigrants, those that followed and the subsequent generations eventually became trailblazers in politics and government, the military, business and entrepreneurship, journalism, popular culture, music and the arts and more.

Our resolution honors the tremendous and increasing contribution of Filipinos Americans to our country in all areas including music, dance, literature, education, health care, business, literature, journalism, sports, fashion,

politics, government, science, technology, the fine arts and other fields. To name just a few as examples, again from my Hawaii:

Domingo Los Banos was Hawaii's first Filipino American school principal and a loyal veteran of the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment that fought in the Philippines during World War II.

Carolina Dizon Wong broke a glass ceiling when she obtained an M.D. degree and became the first Filipino American to start a medical practice in Hawaii in 1952.

Peter Aduja became the first Fil-Am elected to public office in the United States when he was elected to the Hawaii Territorial House of Representatives in 1954.

Larry Ramos became the first Filipino and Asian-American to win a Grammy Award playing the banjo for the New Christy Minstrels in 1963.

Ines Cayaban was the first Filipino American graduate of the School of Public Health, Nursing and Social Work at the University of Hawaii. She received the prestigious Jefferson Award in 1986 for her service.

In 1994, Ben Cayetano was elected the Governor of Hawaii, becoming the first Filipino American governor of a state in our union.

In 2019, Roy Macaraeg became the first Fil-Am to become a general officer in the history of Hawaii's citizen soldier ranks.

In Hawaii, we also regularly honor the over 250,000 Filipinos nationwide who answered the call to protect and defend America and the Philippines in the Pacific theater. In 2016, President Obama signed into law the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act to bestow Congress's highest honor upon those veterans. With my colleagues in the House, I have introduced our Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, which seeks to reunite World War II Filipino soldiers with their children, so that we can honor those living in our community who fought to protect the free and open Indo-Pacific that we have today.

Each and all of these lives of achievement are but a small sampling of a broader community that has achieved so much and contributed so much to the rich fabric of our country. And the story of Filipino Americans is still in its early chapters.

It is fully appropriate that we again honor our Filipino American community whose story is a quintessentially American story.

CONGRATULATING CITY OF HOPE ON BEING NAMED A TOP 5 HOSPITAL FOR CANCER CARE

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate City of Hope's National Medical Center in Duarte, California on being recognized as one of the nation's top 5 hospitals for cancer care by the U.S. News & World Report's 2024–2025 rankings. In the same report, the center was also rated as high performing in six cancer procedures: lung cancer surgery, colon cancer surgery, prostate cancer surgery, gynecologic cancer surgery, gastroenterology and GI cancer surgery, and in the treatment of leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

City of Hope is the only freestanding National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehen-

sive Cancer Center in California that is not affiliated with a university. Their system in California includes the Duarte campus, a new cancer center in Orange County, and clinical locations across Southern California, along with cancer treatment centers and outpatient facilities in the Atlanta, Chicago, and Phoenix areas. City of Hope continues to be a national leader and innovator in a range of complex cancer types and innovative technologies, and because of them, hundreds of thousands of lives continue to be saved through these advances.

I know firsthand of the dedication and devotion that City of Hope is committed to offering all who are in need, particularly to those from traditionally underserved communities. It has been a trusted institution in Southern California, offering superior care to the community for many decades.

I congratulate City of Hope and all its staff on this well-deserved national recognition by U.S. World News & Reports, and I wish them continued success.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF DOMINGA BUSTAMANTE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Dominga Bustamante, an integral and cherished figure in the San Joaquin Valley. Dominga's journey began when her family migrated to California in her early childhood so they could work in agriculture. After settling in Dinuba, she went on to graduate from Dinuba Unified School District and met her high school sweetheart, Cruz Bustamante Jr., along the way.

Together, they moved to San Joaquin, California where the newlywed Mrs. Bustamante recognized the pressing needs of her new community. This prompted her to join AmeriCorps and serve as a VISTA volunteer so she could help families obtain their much-needed Social Security benefits. Dominga then stayed the path of serving others by becoming a CSO Organizer. From driving the elderly to their appointments to interacting with local and county officials, she remained dedicated to ensuring the citizens of San Joaquin and neighboring communities received fair and equitable rights.

Recognizing her passion for advocacy, Dominga diversified her efforts across various roles throughout the community including law enforcement interdiction advocate, bilingual instructional aide, certificated health provider, and social and political advocate. She supported the youth by serving as a teen anxiety first responder and advisor for the San Joaquin Teen Club.

She also became known for going above and beyond to welcome new Hindu and Sikh families to the community as an unofficial "Welcome Host." In recognition of these efforts and more, California Latina Leaders in Action honored Mrs. Bustamante with the prestigious "Lifetime Achievement Award" in 2002.

In addition to serving her community, Dominga also honored her faith as a beloved Catechism teacher for over 30 years. The Diocese of Fresno eventually acknowledged her

service with the "Bishop's Catechist Appreciation Certificate", recognizing her as a faithful minister of God's Word.

During her retirement years, Dominga continued educating and volunteering at organizations such as the Central California Food Bank. She treasured her time with family and always opened her home for family gatherings on holidays and birthdays. She became an accomplished seamstress and quilter and created beautiful handmade blankets for each of her 13 grandchildren.

Mrs. Bustamante is preceded in death by her beloved husband, Cruz Bustamante Jr. She is survived by her six children, Cruz, Belinda, Dorothy, Ron, Andrew and Naomi and 13 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

In Dominga's passing, we celebrate a life that embraced adventure, embodied generosity and left an indelible mark on all who were fortunate enough to know her. Let us express our deepest gratitude for her immeasurable contributions to her community in the San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my esteemed colleagues to join me in commemorating the selfless life of Mrs. Dominga Bustamante. May her life's journey be an inspiration to us all.

RECOGNIZING SUE Z. McGRAY

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sue McGray, who was named a 2024 She Leads Woman of Distinction.

Sue Z. McGray, the president of Christian Women in Media teaches women that it's never too late for hope. Sue has experienced personal triumph over low self-esteem, co-dependency, a broken marriage, and domestic violence and today serves as a mentor for Morning Star Sanctuary, a Christian safe place for women and children. Her personal life experiences have given her the insight to author a book titled "Becoming Visible: Letting Go of the Things that Hide Your True Beauty," written to help and encourage women to become overcomers.

Sue's exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to empowering women through faith is expressed through her support and mentoring of women helping them overcome challenges to pursue their God-inspired dreams and goals.

Sue is a sought-after Christian women's conference speaker and teacher and an entrepreneur who has built a successful business that has reached the pinnacle of her industry. Sue has authored another book titled "Life Changing Encounters and Divine Appointments," a study of biblical encounters that continue to inspire people in the 21st Century.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating this outstanding woman of distinction.

CONGRATULATING OLYMPIAN EVAN MEDELL

HON. HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my constituent, Mr. Evan Medell, for his exceptional performance in para-taekwondo at the 2024 Paris Paralympics. Evan proudly represented West Michigan on the world stage, displaying his exceptional talent and perseverance as one of the world's foremost para-taekwondo athletes.

Growing up in Grand Haven, Evan began his athletic journey at the Lakeshore Taekwondo Academy when he was just 12 years old. Throughout his career, Evan excelled in numerous international events, including winning gold at the 2023 Parapan American Games in Chile. When para-taekwondo made its Paralympic debut at the 2020 Tokyo Games, Evan became the first American to secure a bronze medal. Furthermore, he was the youngest athlete in history to compete in a para-taekwondo world championship. As an athlete competing with Brachial Plexus Palsy, a paralysis that impacts the nerves in the arm and hands, Evan is an inspiration to all West Michiganders who have dreams of competing at the Olympic level.

This year, Evan joined the 2024 U.S. Men's Taekwondo Team at the Paris Paralympics, where he secured a bronze medal for our country.

Mr. Speaker, once more, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Mr. Evan Medell for his commitment to sportsmanship, his perseverance, and his outstanding athleticism. I congratulate Mr. Medell and thank him for being such an admirable representative of West Michigan.

RECOGNIZING SPECIALIST DONALD GENE JOHNSON, USA, RETIRED, WITH A CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor retired USA Specialist Donald Gene Johnson, of Groesbeck, Texas, by presenting him with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His pledge to champion values of support and sacrifice exemplifies American patriotism.

Born in Texas, Donald received his draft notice in October 1965 and joined the Army to serve during the Vietnam War. He underwent basic training at Fort Carson, Colorado, before being deployed to the front lines in Vietnam. While overseas, he carried out critical operations vital to his unit's success, such as establishing forward base camps and managing supply runs. His efforts were essential in maintaining the operational effectiveness of his fellow soldiers under challenging and often perilous conditions.

One fateful night, while stationed at a listening post outside the perimeter, Donald and three other soldiers were struck by a mortar round. Despite being severely injured, he re-

mained composed and took actions that saved lives under extreme adversity. For his extraordinary courage and selflessness in the face of danger, he was awarded the Purple Heart, a testament to his bravery and dedication.

After returning to Texas, Donald channeled his entrepreneurial spirit into building a successful Pepperidge Farm franchise in Houston. Upon selling the business, he returned to Limestone County to operate a cattle ranch, applying the same dedication and hard work that characterized his military service. His commitment to his community remained strong; he drove a school bus for the Groesbeck Independent School District, serving as an inspirational mentor to many young people. Additionally, he worked as a jailer at the Limestone County Jail, where he continued to positively influence lives through his mentorship.

Specialist Johnson's military honors include the Purple Heart, the Sharpshooter (Rifle) qualification, the Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal. These accolades reflect his commitment to excellence and the sacrifices he made during his service.

Donald is part of a remarkable family legacy of service; his four brothers—Charles, Foy, Edwin, and Cecil—also served in the military, each risking their lives for their country. This collective dedication underscores their character and commitment to the Nation.

I am honored to award retired USA Specialist Donald Gene Johnson with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His life of service and dedication embodies the spirit of American patriotism, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to his country and community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MITCHELL MEISNER

HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to recognize the honorable life of my dear friend, Mitchell Meisner, a passionate legal professional and civil rights activist. Mr. Meisner, in his over 60 years of work, advocated for the original civil rights bills, volunteered his time to support aspiring lawyers, and protected vulnerable individuals by offering pro bono legal services.

Mr. Meisner was born in Washington, D.C. and was raised to value civil service. His parents exemplified these principles, as his father served as an attorney at the Department of Commerce, and his mother was as a teacher who also worked at NOAA and in the White House under President Jimmy Carter. I had the good fortune of seeing his childhood home in Bethesda, Maryland, with his only daughter, Amy, and am inspired by their story. Mr. Meisner carried on his parents' legacy, achieving a bachelor's, master's, and Doctor of Philosophy degree in political science. He then took his passion to Michigan, where he received his Juris Doctor degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Throughout his educational career, Mr. Meisner was incredibly active in national politics and the Civil Rights Movement. He bore