

Since my time as the executive director of a nonprofit in Chicago, I have seen community organizations nurture and sustain a healthy democracy by providing lifesaving services, including housing and warm meals while holding those in power accountable.

It is clear that strengthening, repairing, and defending our democracy is not solely the work of government. It requires the fabric of our communities, it requires civil organizations who are weaving their work together on the front lines to protect, to defend, and to enrich our communities and our neighborhoods.

Today, I am grateful for faith communities like the member institutions of the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance and DuPage United; for community organizations like Onward Neighborhood House, La Casa Norte, and Habitat for Humanity DuPage; for schools and universities like Northeastern University's El Centro and North Park University; for early childhood centers like Educare DuPage and Chicago Commons; for human rights advocates like Palenque LSNA and AFIRE; for cultural organizations like the National Veterans Art Museum and the Mexican Cultural Center of DuPage.

There are too many strong civil society organizations to name. To the many, many civil service organizations across Illinois Third, I want to say, "thank you," "gracias." I appreciate the opportunities and possibilities they create for our neighbors independent of their ZIP Code, independent of their citizenship status or past actions, and the way they keep me rooted in a community ready to fight like hell for our neighbors.

As I celebrate the work of civil society, I also want to uplift the team that puts in the long hours, that makes so many sacrifices for the people of Illinois Third, and who are seldom mentioned and seldom seen in public. That team is my staff.

My staff, who despite the challenges of this Congress and despite a Congress that oftentimes negates the humanity of their own family, has used their professional and lived experiences to introduce and champion transformative and progressive legislation, has pushed the government to work for our constituents and deliver resources back to Illinois Third, and has ensured our neighbors receive the lifesaving services that they deserve.

To my entire team: Ellen, Luis, Claudia, Karsen, Deepa, Noemi, Jowen, Marina, Daniela, Valeria, Kat, Jennifer, Nataly, Vianey, Micaela, Magda, Levi, and Rogelio, as well as the countless interns, fellows, and past staffers who have supported our work, I say thank you. They are seen, they are appreciated, and I am so proud to have worked with them in this first term and as we prepare ourselves for the next.

Through gratitude I find hope. Both the community at home and the team

I have here in Congress have reminded me that in uncertain times one thing is certain: Our communities are prepared to organize, to protect each other, and to unite no matter what the next 4 years brings us. I am forever grateful and I am ready.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF BLACK MEDIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Mrs. LEE CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of outstanding Black media in the 18th Congressional District in the great city of Houston.

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Houston is one of America's most diverse cities, and it has a large, vibrant African-American community.

Black media has always been a critical component in keeping us informed, speaking truth to power, honoring unsung heroes, and shedding light on racial injustice.

Associate Justice Felix Frankfurter once said: "Without a free press there can be no free society."

I recognize the important contributions of those who have blazed a path for us.

May 2, 1919, Clifton Frederick Richardson, Sr., founded and became publisher and editor of the African-American newspaper the Houston Informer, which published its first issue a few weeks later. It ran for 20 years and covered so many critical moments in Houston's history, and it continues today through a foundation.

In 1930, the Houston Defender was founded by Clifton F. Richardson, Sr., and he was born after the vestiges of slavery in 1897 in Marshall, Texas. He learned the basics of journalism and printing during his studies at Bishop College. Today, the proud tradition carries on through CEO Sonny Mesiah-Jiles, who publishes it weekly and manages a vibrant online community.

The Houston Forward Times was founded in 1960 under the leadership of the late founder and publisher Julius P. Carter. Mr. Carter, no relation, founded the Forward Times as a means of uniting Black Houston to overcome the obstacles that were holding Blacks in the shackles of second-class citizenry. Now, his daughter, Karen Carter Richards, carries the torch as CEO and publisher.

The Houston Sun, founded in 1983, was published by Doris Ellis, who is still at the helm today. This community newspaper focuses on education and historical events in the African-American community.

Our legacy also continues with the more recently established journals, Houston Style magazine and Dee Morris magazine.

As Houston's Black community continues to grow, our media has grown with it, and Black radio became an undeniable influence.

I celebrate notable institutions, including KTSU, which is now 52 years old, having been established June 23, 1972, following approval from the FCC. KTSU 90.9 emerged as an educational FM radio station at Texas Southern University's campus. It is known for its "Gospel Sundays" that uplifts us all.

Former general manager of KTSU 90.9 FM for 18 years, George Wilson Thomas became a launching platform for "The Tavis Smiley Show" and other HBCU public radio stations that were soon to follow. It is now led by Ernest Walker as he takes it into the next generation of radio.

KMJQ 102.1, known as Majic 102, is a commercial radio station owned and operated by Urban One. Originally founded in 1961, it has had many disc jockeys who are now in the Texas Radio Hall of Fame. It also partners and is coowned with our urban station, 97.9, KBXX, The Box.

I salute the legendary radio DJs "Uncle Funky" Larry Jones, who has had a 50-year career and is in the Texas Radio Hall of Fame, as well as Kandi Eastman, who is "the only Kandi mom wants you to have," who is a 43-year radio veteran.

In addition to those, I salute the legendary Don Patrick Samuel, Sr., affectionately known as Don Sam, or The Original DS. He began his professional career at KYOK Radio in Houston in 1973 and spent 32 years at KCOH Radio as director and a radio personality. He was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2018.

Last but not least, an important name and influence in my growing up in Black media is Benjamin Thompson. For over two decades, he has been the voice known as the Madd Hatta, a voice of inspiration, entertainment, and empowerment. He started in Houston in 1993 and ascended to new heights, taking over the morning show on 97.9, the "Madd Hatta Morning Show."

He is a mentor and an advocate and a community leader who, in 2014, was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame. He continues to be on many stations, and you will often see him out and about throughout Houston.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to salute Houston's rich legacy of Black media. I commend those who continue to use their voice to express the pains, passion, needs, and wants of our community.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE RETIREMENT OF JEFFERSON PARISH COUNCILMAN MARION EDWARDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the remarkable career of my dear friend, Marion Edwards, as he prepares to retire from Jefferson Parish Council.

A proud Louisiana native, born in Monroe, Marion Edwards has dedicated

his life to serving our State with integrity, passion, and a commitment to justice. From his role as assistant district attorney of Jefferson Parish, to serving as judge of division O of the 24th Judicial District Court and chief judge of the Fifth District Circuit Court of Appeals, he has worked tirelessly to uphold the principles of fairness and equity for the people of Louisiana.

Marion's service for our State extends to every part of our community. He was on the boards of several nonprofit organizations, including the board of the Boys & Girls Club, The Salvation Army, Grace House of Louisiana, Responsibility House, G-REDI, and the Jefferson Parish Community Foundation.

He has also supported those suffering with substance abuse in our State, founding one of the first treatment-based district courts in Louisiana and receiving awards, including the Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Pioneer and Recovery Award of the Office of Addictive Disorders Professional Services Award. The compassion he has shown to his neighbors in their most difficult moments is a testament to his character and serves as a shining example for all of us to follow.

Through his leadership, compassion, and vision, Councilman Marion Edwards has left a lasting mark on Jefferson Parish and our great State. His contributions will resonate for generations to come.

As Marion enters this new chapter of his life, he should know that his legacy of service, leadership, and love for community will continue to inspire all of us for many, many years to come.

My dear friend is, in fact, a gentleman, a scholar, and a statesman. I congratulate Marion on an extraordinary career and thank him for his unwavering dedication to the people of Louisiana and to our country. I also thank him for allowing me to call him my friend.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF KIRK SCHURING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SYKES) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and mourn the loss of Ohio State Senator Kirk Schuring, a true advocate and champion for the people of Stark County, Ohio.

Senator Schuring was a dedicated public servant who took great pride in serving Stark County for over three decades in the Ohio General Assembly as both a member of the house of representatives and the senate.

Senator Schuring held multiple leadership positions during his time in the general assembly, including as senate president speaker pro tempore, and acting as speaker of the house.

Among his advocacy was his tireless work to provide the freedom for com-

munities to create their own joint economic development districts and the creation of the Akron-Canton Metroplex to generate additional job opportunities and economic growth in the region.

I had the honor of working alongside Senator Schuring in the Ohio House of Representatives, where I witnessed firsthand his commitment to the people of northeast Ohio. Serving with Senator Schuring was a pleasure, and he was known as a reliable leader who found a way to work across the aisle and in support of his constituents every day.

As a first-term legislator, Kirk took me under his wing, a Democrat, because he was so deeply concerned about the work and did not allow partisan politics to get in the way of protecting our communities.

Notably, Senator Schuring was monumental in helping me pass House Bill 1, a bill to protect victims of dating violence. Surely, without his leadership, this bill would not have become law.

Without a doubt, Senator Schuring left a mark on Stark County and the State of Ohio. For his outstanding devotion to our community, he earned the respect and esteem of many. In the wake of his passing, his numerous contributions will not be forgotten.

Though his presence will be truly missed, his memory will live on through those he advocated for and his family, including his wife, Darlene; their son, J. Derrick; daughter-in-law, Allison; daughter, Kristen; and their six grandchildren, Preston, Parker, Quinn, Owen, Everett, and Lucy, whom he loved deeply. Thus, with deepest sympathy, I pay tribute to a truly phenomenal individual, Senator Kirk Schuring.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR VERNON SYKES ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of a truly dedicated and true public servant, Ohio State Senator Vernon Sykes, the ultimate statesman, who is retiring from the Ohio General Assembly.

As the Member of Congress representing Ohio's 13th Congressional District, but most importantly as his daughter, it is my privilege to congratulate Senator Sykes on a distinguished career and extend my sincere gratitude for all that he has done for the people of Akron and the State of Ohio for his nearly 50 years in public service.

Senator Sykes' career as a legislator began in 1980 when he was appointed as the Ward 3 Councilmember in the city of Akron. In 1983, he was then appointed to the Ohio State House, becoming the first Black person to represent Summit County in the Ohio General Assembly. He would eventually serve as the chair of the Ohio House Finance & Appropriations Committee, in the Ohio State Senate as the co-chair of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, and as a professor emeritus of political science and former director of

the Columbus Program in State Issues at Kent State University.

Go Flashes.

In the legislature, he became a champion for early education, criminal justice reform, economic development, and so much more. Notably, Senator Sykes passed the toughest fair housing law in the country, the State of Ohio's first legislation to compensate the wrongfully imprisoned, and was the lead sponsor of two constitutional amendments to end the scourge of gerrymandering in Ohio that were approved by over 70 percent of the voters.

During his time in public office, Senator Sykes championed the people of our community, and he is the example of true selfless public service. He has always put the people of our community first, and his deep desire to serve his community is an inspiration to all who have had the opportunity to experience his passion for people and for public service.

For his advocacy, Senator Sykes has earned numerous awards and accolades, including the Public Elected Official of the Year Award; the Champion for Working Families from Ohio AFL-CIO; alumni awards from his alma maters, the University of Akron, as well as Ohio University.

My father is one of the main reasons I am standing here on the House floor today. He and my mother, who is also a public servant, taught me the value of hard work from a young age and equipped me with constant support and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, today Senator Sykes is giving his farewell speech in the Ohio Senate, and I can't be there because of scheduled votes today, so I am doing the next best thing and giving him his flowers on the floor of the United States House of Representatives as a symbol of his legacy to the city of Akron, Summit and Portage Counties, the State of Ohio, the United States of America, and the entire global community.

It is not often elected leaders can brag about such impactful and prominent careers. Senator Sykes can, but he won't because he is simply too humble to do so. Thus, I am doing it for him.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Ohio's 13th Congressional District, I congratulate and thank Senator Vernon Sykes, my dad, on a storied career as a legislator at the State and local level and for over 40 years of outstanding service and devotion to our community.

FLORIDA BOOK BANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. MAGAZINER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, Kurt Vonnegut, Toni Morrison, and Stephen King are just a few of the authors whose books have been banned from Florida public school libraries because of the censorship laws passed by extreme Republican politicians.