

RECOGNIZING THE 130TH
ANNIVERSARY OF FAIR OAKS

HON. AMI BERA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fair Oaks on their 130th Anniversary. Originally founded as an agricultural colony, Fair Oaks has grown into an area of deep cultural history and a strong sense of community.

The land in Fair Oaks was part of the original 1844 Mexican Land Grant, Rancho San Juan, and was advertised as a new paradise waiting for farmers looking to make a comfortable living. Even though founding residents experienced hardships like the Great Depression, World War II, and a devastating freeze that wiped out many citrus crops, the area continued to thrive and develop.

As Fair Oaks grew, so too did its industry and commerce. The completion of the Folsom and Nimbus dams, and arrival of Aerojet signaled a new page in Fair Oaks' history. Fair Oaks is a booming town that continues to change with its fast-growing population.

It is with great appreciation to the Fair Oaks Historical Society that the founding and legacy of Fair Oaks has continued to be preserved and honored. On this day, the Society celebrates their 50th Anniversary alongside Fair Oaks' 130th Anniversary.

I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing this day as Fair Oaks' 130th Anniversary and commend this community's beautiful history.

HONORING KENTUCKY CHIEF
JUSTICE DEBRA LAMBERT

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the first female Chief Justice of Kentucky Debra Hembree Lambert, who was elected to the helm of the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of Kentucky by her fellow Justices. Chief Justice Lambert will serve a four-year term, which began on January 6, 2025.

Chief Justice Lambert is a proud native of Bell County, a rural community in Kentucky's Appalachian Mountains and part of Kentucky's 5th Congressional District. During her investiture, she reflected on how her childhood shaped her pursuit of justice, stating, "When you grow up so modestly, you develop a strong sense of a need for a level playing field and for everyone to be heard. Those concepts are foundational in my world view."

Chief Justice Lambert has 17 years of experience on the Kentucky Court of Justice, having served as Circuit Judge/Family Court division for the 28th Judicial Circuit, Kentucky Court of Appeals, and Justice for Kentucky's 3rd Supreme Court District. She was also tapped to lead the first Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health in 2022, working to improve the justice system for individuals with mental health issues, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. In fact, she volunteers as a certified

suicide prevention trainer, training others how to properly intervene to prevent suicide.

Her compassion and fortitude for justice as a Family Court Judge inspired her to create the first Drug Court for Lincoln, Pulaski and Rockcastle counties. As the founder of Operation UNITE, I worked tirelessly to ensure those successful Drug Court efforts were funded and expanded into every county in Kentucky's 5th Congressional District, which are still in existence today. In 2002, Lambert was inducted into the Stanley M. Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. She also volunteered at local middle schools, working 10 weeks each semester with at-risk children and families to help them avoid truancy charges.

As Chief Justice Lambert leads Kentucky's Judicial Branch of government, I am confident that she will continue to serve the Commonwealth of Kentucky with the utmost integrity and resilience, first forged in the hills of southeastern Kentucky. May God continue to bless Chief Justice Lambert and her family during her historic service as the first woman to lead our Judicial Branch.

HONORING THE MILESTONE OF
MIKE ROOS 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my esteemed colleague, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, to honor and celebrate the 80th birthday of Mr. Mike Roos, a devoted public servant, legislative leader, and lifelong advocate for California communities.

Born on August 6, 1945, in Memphis, Tennessee, Mike Roos brought to California a deep passion for public policy and a Tennessee drawl and smile that could put anyone at ease. After earning his bachelor's degree from Tulane University and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Southern California (USC), Mike embarked on a career defined by public service and civic leadership.

In 1977, he was elected to represent Los Angeles' 46th District in the California State Assembly, a role he held for 14 years as he championed issues that shaped the future of his community and the state. During his tenure, Mike rose to the role of Majority Floor Leader, and later Speaker Pro Tempore, presiding over the Assembly in the final years of his service. Throughout, he earned the respect of colleagues on both sides of the aisle for his extraordinary work ethic, sharp policy acumen, and gift for building consensus.

Mike's legislative accomplishments were both timely and visionary. In the early days of the AIDS crisis, when few dared to touch the issue, Mike took bold action to protect the state's blood supply and the public's health. He authored pioneering legislation that laid the groundwork for HIV testing protocols and blood safety, long before it became part of the national conversation. He was also instrumental in advancing California's first recycling law, helping negotiate key amendments to move the "Bottle Bill" out of committee after years of delay. And of course, he co-authored the landmark Roberti-Roos Assault Weapons

Control Act of 1989, the first law of its kind in the Nation, setting a precedent for common-sense gun reforms that still resonate today.

But what truly made Mike stand out was his political compass, he proudly led what he called the "radical center," a group of legislators who reached across the aisle to forge compromises and get things done. In an era when bipartisanship was both a necessity and an art, Mike was a master. His humor, eloquence, and deep sense of purpose made him a trusted leader and an impassioned voice on the Assembly floor. When Mike got serious, people listened.

Beyond his legislative achievements, Mike has been a tireless advocate for education, civil rights, public health, and responsible governance. Whether leading the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Restructuring Now (LEARN) or mentoring the next generation of civic leaders, Mike has never strayed from his core belief in the power of public service.

Mike is also a devoted and loving father to two daughters—Shelby and Melissa—and a proud grandfather. He welcomed his daughters into his life in his early-to-mid-30's, during the height of his Assembly service, and raised them with the same generosity, humor, and grace he brought to the Legislature.

After his retirement in 1991, Mike continued to influence public policy and community development through his public affairs firm and as President of the Southern California Leadership Council, where he remains a respected voice on economic and infrastructure policy.

Mr. Speaker, Mike Roos is more than a public servant. He is a champion of reform, a proud grandfather, and a dear friend to those who have had the honor of working alongside him. As he celebrates his 80th birthday, we ask our colleagues to join us in honoring Mike's enduring legacy and wishing him continued health and happiness in the years to come.

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF DR. CARLOS J. FINLAY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. CARLOS A. GIMENEZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay Elementary School, a dual-language professional development school dedicated to academic excellence and innovative instruction in Miami, Florida.

Dr. Carlos J. Finlay Elementary first opened its doors in the fall of 2000 under the visionary leadership of Principal Lourdes P. Gimenez, who spearheaded the school's founding and development. Since then, successive principals, most recently Ms. Madelyn Rodriguez, have carried forward the mission of providing a world-class child-centered education.

Named in honor of Dr. Carlos Juan Finlay, the world-renowned Cuban epidemiologist who discovered that the Aedes aegypti mosquito was the carrier of yellow fever, the school proudly celebrates his legacy of scientific discovery. Its students, affectionately known as the "Skeeters," embody Dr. Finlay's persistence, curiosity, and commitment to learning.

As a proud Title I school, Finlay Elementary combines its dual-language Bilingual School

Organization model with its partnership as a Professional Development School with Florida International University to ensure students are bilingual, biliterate, and prepared to succeed in today's interconnected world.

I am proud to commend all the faculty, staff, students, and families of Dr. Carlos J. Finlay Elementary for twenty-five years of excellence, innovation, and community service. Their dedication exemplifies the very best of Miami-Dade County's public education system. Go Skeeters.

RECOGNIZING APRIL WOODY

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today alongside my colleague Congressman VINCE FONG to recognize Ms. April Woody on being awarded the 2025 Cattlewoman of the Year by the Kern County Cattlewomen's Association.

Nearly sixty years ago, April Woody joined her husband, Ron Woody, in continuing his family's cattle ranching operation. Though new to ranching, she quickly learned the ropes and became an essential part of the operation, helping to carry forward a legacy rooted in hard work and dedication to the family business. Ms. Woody joined the Kern County Cattlewomen in 1969 and became deeply involved in the organization's community work. She organized the fair booth, served on the Cattle Princess Selection Committee, and brought humor to the High Fever Follies fundraiser by wearing the group's famous "beef cut suit." Following her early involvement with the Kern County Cattlewomen, Ms. Woody began a distinguished career in education. She taught both junior high and high school English before earning two master's degrees in Pupil Personnel Services and Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling. For the final sixteen years of her career, she served as a counselor at Centennial High School in Bakersfield, where she dedicated herself to the academic and personal development of all students. Since her retirement, Ms. Woody has reconnected with the cattle community and remains involved with the Kern County Cattlewomen. Over the past nine years, she has served in numerous leadership roles, including Vice President and President. Currently she serves as Secretary and on the Board of Directors, chairs the organization's annual Clay Shoot, and has chaired the Scholarship Committee for seven years. Beyond her service to Kern County Cattlewomen, Ms. Woody also remains active in her church and throughout the community.

Mr. Speaker, we ask our colleagues in the House of Representatives to join us in congratulating Ms. April Woody on being named Kern County's 2025 Cattlewoman of the Year. Her dedication to agriculture, education, and service to the community embodies the values that define the Central Valley.

HONORING DR. BOBBY G. COOPER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable educator, musician, and mentor whose influence has shaped generations of students and preserved the musical legacy of a historic institution, Dr. Bobby G. Cooper.

Perhaps Dr. Cooper's most enduring contribution is the revival of the renowned Utica Jubilee Singers. Originally formed in the early 1900s by Dr. William Holtzclaw, founder of Utica Institute, the Jubilee Singers carried forward a tradition of spirituals rooted in the heritage of the Tuskegee model. Inspired by Holtzclaw's book *Black Man's Burden* and the collected works of J. Roseman Johnson (brother to poet James Weldon Johnson). Dr. Cooper reimaged this historic group in 1980. For forty-five years, he was a pillar of Hinds Community College's Utica Campus, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to education, culture, and community.

What began as a small quartet soon grew choir of young men who carried the soul of Mississippi's spiritual legacy across the Nation and abroad, performing everywhere from community gatherings to international stages in Italy. Though their musical range has broadened over time, Dr. Cooper ensured their foundation remained the spirituals that tell the story of faith, struggle, perseverance.

Born and raised in Bolton, Mississippi, Dr. Cooper's love of music began in childhood. Without a piano of his own, he practiced on a wooden apple crate until, by a stroke of generosity, a local family gifted him a piano. That simple act helped set the course of a lifetime. His journey took him from the Bolton Colored School to Tougaloo Prep and Tougaloo College, and later to advanced studies that culminated in a doctorate.

Before joining the Utica faculty in 1972, Dr. Cooper taught at E.T. Hawkins High School in Forest, Mississippi, and later held positions in Scott County and Colorado, where he pursued his doctoral studies. Over the years, he became not only an educator but a cultural bridge, using music to teach discipline, unity, and pride.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Cooper shaped the lives of young people in his hometown of Bolton, offering piano lessons and encouragement during a time when there were few Black pianists in the area. His mentorship opened doors for countless children who might never have otherwise discovered their musical gifts.

His home walls are filled with plaques and awards, yet his truest legacy is found in the lives of those he mentored. Many of his former students, including educators and professional musicians, continue to honor him by keeping the Jubilee spirit alive.

Even after 45 years of service, Dr. Cooper continues to share his gift of music every Sunday at Asbury Methodist Church in Bolton, where he has faithfully played for decades. With humility and grace, he reflects on a life of purpose, service, and song, one that has inspired students throughout Mississippi and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Bobby G. Cooper, an ex-

traordinary Mississippian whose lifelong devotion to education and music has preserved an invaluable cultural legacy for generations to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SHEILA RIGGINS-WHITE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Sheila Riggins-White, who recently passed away at the age of 77. She was a beloved wife, mother and grandmother.

Sheila was born on June 15, 1948, and had deep roots in the City of Fresno. A proud graduate of Fresno State, Sheila made history in 1989 as the first African American to receive the University's Presidential Medal through the Kremen School of Education and Human Development.

Sheila dedicated her life to education, serving as a teacher and mentor to generation of students, educators, and administrators throughout Fresno. Her impact extended far beyond the classroom—she served as President of the PTA and worked to build strong, lasting bridges between schools and families.

She was also a woman of deep faith, serving as an ordained minister at St. Rest Baptist Church, Fresno's most historic Black church, which was founded by her father, the late Dr. Chester Riggins. Her voice, presence, and leadership inspired thousands, both within the congregation and the broader community.

In addition to her service in education and ministry, Sheila was a gifted artist and poet. Her published work, *Mother Africa*, continues to be discussed and celebrated more than three decades after its release. Sheila was preceded in death by her husband, Paul C. White, who dedicated his life to community development as Assistant Executive Director of the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission. Together they raised six children and were blessed with thirteen grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and celebrating the extraordinary life of Sheila Riggins-White. Her legacy as an educator, minister, artist, and matriarch will live on in the countless lives she touched. We extend our deepest condolences, thoughts, and prayers to her family and to all who had the privilege of knowing her.

HONORING JOYCE SKONIECZNY

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Joyce Skonieczny, who faithfully served her community for more than four decades as St. Clair Township Clerk. In recognition of her remarkable dedication, the Township has fittingly named the Township Hall in her honor.

Joyce began her service to the Township on January 15, 1979, as Deputy Clerk under then-Township Clerk Dan Ellis, and was appointed Township Clerk on April 2, 1980. Over