

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

her distinguished 44-year career, she worked under ten supervisors—from Bob Ellery, who hired her, to her son-in-law Mike Boulter, under whom she retired on November 19, 2024.

Joyce also witnessed and supported significant growth and development in the Township, including the construction of residential neighborhoods, such as Blue River Gardens, River Ridge, River Pointe Estates, Diamond Meadows, and Golfside, as well as commercial developments like the Mobil Gas Station, Love's on Wadhams Road, and the Dollar General stores on Gratiot and Range Roads. She also saw the expansion of the Township's water and sewer district from a single corridor along River Road to the many subdivisions that exist today.

Beyond her official duties, Joyce devoted herself to building community spirit. Beginning in the early 1980s and continuing until 2020, she organized and hosted a monthly senior luncheon at the Township Hall, held on the third Tuesday of each month. This cherished tradition brought neighbors together for food, fellowship, and friendship.

After 44 years of service, Joyce retired with the respect and gratitude of her community. She leaves behind a legacy of professionalism, kindness, and steadfast commitment to public service. In retirement, she continues to enjoy reading and cherishing time with family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Joyce Skonieczny for her many years of outstanding service and dedication to her community. Her name, now permanently affixed to the Township Hall, will continue to inspire future generations of public servants.

REMEMBERING DANNY BUCKMAN

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the life of Danny Buckman.

A native of Lebanon, Kentucky, Danny Buckman was born on February 2, 1954, to Robert "Bobby" Ray and Mary "Pauline" Buckman. Danny was a lifelong farmer in Marion County who truly loved what he did—growing corn, soybeans, and tobacco, and raising hogs and beef cattle. Farming wasn't just his work; it was a way of life he took great pride in.

He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather who found great joy in his family. Danny and his wife of 39 years, Sheliah, raised six children—Emily, Olivia, Ben, Katie, Laura, and Elizabeth—and were blessed with two grandchildren, Mia and Finley Ray.

Danny was a man of quiet faith and deep roots, a lifelong member of Our Lady of the Hills Catholic Church in Finley, Kentucky. Friends and family often said the same simple and powerful sentiment: "Danny was a good man." One friend put it best—"He may have been a small man, but he was a big man when you needed him to be."

On August 27, 2025, Danny Buckman passed away at the age of 71. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, children, grandchildren, and all those who loved him as we remember and celebrate a life so well lived.

RECOGNIZING TIM HAUSER AS THE CHAMPION OF THE WEEK FOR OHIO'S 13TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. EMILIA STRONG SYKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tim Hauser as the Champion of the Week for Ohio's 13th Congressional District.

Tim was recently named the Veteran of the Year by the Veterans Service Commission of Summit County. He is a Gulf War veteran and founder of the Veterans Assurance Network, which provides advocacy, support, education, services, and resources to veterans and their families.

In 1982, Tim joined the U.S. Air Force, where he was deployed to Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm. There, he was exposed to toxic burn pits and oil well fires purposely set by Iraqi forces.

The Department of Defense estimates 3.5 million service members were exposed to toxic burn pits during their time serving abroad. Exposure to burn pits and other toxic airborne substances has been linked to serious health effects, including certain cancers.

Tim worked closely with federal lawmakers to help get the PACT Act signed into law. This landmark law expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.

Tim is also passionate about veteran suicide prevention, and even helped advocate for September 22 to be recognized as Veteran Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day in Ohio.

With this award, and all the hard work that came before it, Tim is a shining example of why Ohio's 13th Congressional District is known as the "Birthplace of Champions." He has certainly made our community proud.

HONORING THE LIFE OF STEVE DAN MAGARIAN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember the life of Steve Dan Magarian, a devoted father, friend, and public servant, who passed away on September 22, 2025, at the age of 82.

Born in Fresno California, on October 13, 1942, Steve was the son of Dan and Alice Magarian and grew up, steeped in the values of hard work, service, and community. He graduated from Roosevelt High School and went on to earn both his bachelor's and master's degrees with distinction from California State University, Fresno.

Steve's early career was altered by a motor vehicle accident that ended his pursuit of military aviation in the United States Air Force. Instead, he returned home and rejoined the grocery business, becoming a store manager in his twenties. But it was his role as a reserve deputy with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office that would change the trajectory of his life.

In 1968, he became a full-time deputy sheriff, beginning a career in law enforcement that

would span more than three decades. He served numerous assignments, including jail, courts, patrol, and steadily rose through the ranks. In 1986, Steve was elected as Fresno County's 23rd sheriff, taking office in 1987. He was reelected twice, unopposed, and served until his retirement in 1999.

Under Sheriff Magarian's leadership, the department secured several milestones, including the construction of the Main Jail and North Annex Jail, the creation of the Air Support Unit, and the implementation of one of the Nation's first computerized field reporting systems. He also spearheaded the formation of the Multi-Agency Gang Enforcement Consortium (MAGEC).

After retiring from law enforcement, Steve continued to serve the community as a professor at California State University, Fresno, teaching part time for 20 years and shaping the next generation of law enforcement professionals with a focus on ethics and integrity, which were his characteristic traits.

He also served as Chief of Investigations for the Fresno County District Attorney's Office, and most recently, as a Trustee of the Fresno Sheriff's Memorial Foundation, where he helped lead efforts to honor fallen officers with a permanent memorial.

Steve Magarian was deeply devoted to his family. He is survived by his wife Joanne, his daughters Erica Magarian and Gina (Brian) Blodgett, and his cherished grandsons, Brandon and Brayden. He was preceded in death by his parents, Dan and Alice, and his sister, Delores Merlo.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Steve Dan Magarian for his extraordinary service to the people of Fresno County and the state of California. May his life continue to inspire future generations to lead with courage, integrity, and unwavering commitment to public service and community.

RECOGNIZING THE DECATUR TELEPHONE COMPANY

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of small-town business owners and the impact they have on local communities and to honor the Bailey family and their locally-run Telephone business.

In 1945, newlyweds William D. "Bill" Bailey and Louise Robinson Bailey returned to Bill's hometown of Decatur and purchased the Decatur Telephone Company. For eighty years Decatur Telephone Company has served the East Mississippi community with connectivity. They have gone from the original 7 individual phones in 1945 to laying fiber-optic cable today for a fully digitalized system privately owned in rural Mississippi. The Baileys have made a massive impact on their local community through their active participation in local groups, their church, and their support for their employees. Mr. Bailey passed away in 2015, and Mrs. Bailey continued in daily assistance of the operation of the company until her passing in 2018.

Today, their daughter Dr. Esther Bailey Smith keeps the Decatur Telephone Company