

HONORING BEN TUCKER, JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable servant, Ben Tucker, Jr.

Mr. Tucker retired from the United States Military after 35 years of distinguished service, attaining the rank of First Sergeant. He is a lifetime member of the NAACP and serves as Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. He is also the First Vice President of the Democratic Executive Committee.

Mr. Tucker is a member of Clover Hill Masonic Lodge No. 13. He is a devoted member of Daughters of Zion Baptist Church, where he sings in the senior choir and serves as a deacon and the treasurer of the Sunday School.

He is a Layman with the Antioch Missionary Baptist Association and serves as a Commissioner for the Adams County Soil & Water Conservation District, District 3. In his spare time, he enjoys being a goat farmer.

He is married to Mrs. Gloria Tucker, and together they are the proud owners of G.J.'s Space Jumps, Inc. Mr. Tucker holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education with a minor in Science from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He also earned a master's degree in Athletic Administration from Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Ben Tucker, Jr. for his extraordinary service and contributions to the Natchez, Mississippi community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DANIEL JAMES SULLIVAN

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Daniel James Sullivan of Chicago—a veteran, a man of deep faith, and above all, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

Daniel served our country during the Korean War, enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1946. Even in uniform, his compassion stood out—once building a false-bottom delivery truck to secretly deliver bread to nuns at a nearby orphanage. That act alone captures who he was: quietly brave, endlessly generous, and guided by compassion, even in uniform.

Daniel brought that same spirit to his family, his church, and his community. He was a devoted parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in the Ravenswood neighborhood of Chicago, where his service was recognized with the Christifideles Award, presented by Cardinal Blase J. Cupich.

A loyal Chicagoan and proud season ticket holder, Daniel cheered for the White Sox, Bears, Blackhawks, and Notre Dame football. But nothing gave him more joy than the time he spent with his six grandchildren. Of his six grandchildren, I had the pleasure of working with Catherine Flannery, who interned in my Washington D.C. office. Daniel's home was a

place where family traditions were made, where patience was endless, and where every grandchild knew they were deeply loved.

Though Daniel never sought the spotlight, he lit up every room he entered—with humor, humility, and grace. His legacy lives on in the family he raised, the faith he lived by, and the quiet example he set every single day.

We remember and honor Daniel Sullivan not just as a veteran, but as the kind of American we should all aspire to be. May his memory be a blessing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone to join me in recognizing Daniel James Sullivan for his service to our country and honoring his legacy.

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE YMCA OF METRO DENVER

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of the YMCA of Metro Denver. This is an extraordinary milestone for an organization that has shaped the lives of countless Coloradans and helped build stronger, healthier, and more connected communities for a century and a half.

The YMCA of Metro Denver was founded in 1875, shortly before Colorado became a state. Since then, the Y has been committed to meeting the needs of a growing and changing city, offering a supportive environment for all who need it.

Over the past 150 years, the YMCA's success has been driven by the people who bring its mission to life, including its members, volunteers, donors, and staff. Every achievement, every milestone, and every moment of progress reflects their dedication, compassion, and belief in the power of community. This anniversary is, above all, a celebration of them.

Guided by its core values of respect, caring, honesty, responsibility, and innovation, the Y continues to evolve to meet the needs of our Mile High community. Their programs are focused on supporting youth development, promoting healthy living, and advancing social responsibility.

It is a place where families find support, where neighbors connect, where children learn and grow, and where people of all ages and backgrounds discover a sense of belonging. Whether through wellness programs, early childhood education, mentoring, swim safety, or community partnerships, the Y is fostering relationships, inspiring achievement, and promoting equity and well-being across our region.

The YMCA of Metro Denver has been woven into the fabric of our community for 150 years. As we celebrate this remarkable anniversary, we honor its proud history and its bright future, one where the YMCA will continue to uplift, empower, and strengthen our community for generations to come.

I congratulate the YMCA of Metro Denver on 150 years of transformative impact and thank all those who have contributed to its enduring mission.

HONORING THE AVE MARIA PARISH CHOIR

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our very own Ave Maria Parish Choir, hand-selected by the White House to participate in a performance in our Nation's Capital. Their performance this week honors not only their flourishing parish, but our entire Southwest Florida community.

From its inception, the Ave Maria Parish Choir—directed with vision and care by Marian Mandy—has embraced a calling to elevate worship through the universal language of sacred music. This ensemble embodies the Parish's commitment to forming hearts, minds, and voices for the glory of God.

The Ave Maria community itself provides the rich foundation from which this choir and its ministries have grown. Since its establishment in 2007, between Naples and Fort Lauderdale, Ave Maria has become a spiritual home for countless Catholics who have sought a community like this one. In the heart of Collier County, the town reflects a way of life centered on faith, family, and fellowship. Children ride bicycles to the parochial school, neighbors walk to the grocery store, and the iconic parish church stands as the community's centerpiece. Across the street, Ave Maria University brings youthful energy and academic pursuit. With the Gulf Coast beaches to the west and the vibrant cities of Miami and Fort Lauderdale to the east, Ave Maria is as connected as it is serene.

This parish community's hospitality extends far beyond its sanctuary walls. Ave Maria Parish has always warmly welcomed newcomers and long-time residents alike. Through its ministries, activities, and open invitations to explore parish life, Ave Maria continues to gather people seeking deeper communion with God and neighbor.

As we celebrate the contributions of the Ave Maria Parish Choir and the broader community they represent, we recognize a church alive with faith, service, and song. It is an honor to acknowledge their devotion and talent today, and I look forward to witnessing the continued impact they will have on the lives of countless more.

HONORING THE LIFE OF REV. EREND DR. J. ALFRED SMITH, SR.

HON. LATEEFAH SIMON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Ms. SIMON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a long-time leader of the Oakland faith community, Rev. Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Sr., who passed away on September 19, 2025, at the age of 94.

Dr. Smith was born on May 19, 1931, in Kansas City, Missouri. He began preaching in 1948, his first year after graduating high school. Dr. Smith went on to receive a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Western Baptist College, a Bachelor of Divinity

and Master of Theology in Church and Community from the Missouri School of Religion, a Master's in American Church History from the American Baptist Seminary of the West, and a Doctor of Ministry from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Smith became the senior pastor at Allen Temple Baptist Church in 1971. In that position, he expanded the church's membership from 500 to 4,500. He placed a particular emphasis on ministering to underserved communities, especially those in East Oakland. His ministry always had a firm foundation in advocacy and social justice. Dr. Smith used his voice and his pulpit to uplift the poor, the downtrodden, and the left behind, bringing the concerns of his congregation to the attention of local leaders and fighting for positive change.

But Dr. Smith was not only a giant in the City of Oakland. His powerful oratory and spiritual leadership was recognized across the country and around the world. Dr. Smith was elected president of the Progressive Baptist State Convention of California in 1979, and in 1986 he became president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention. In 1989, he delivered powerful testimony before the United Nations, denouncing the evils of Apartheid South Africa. He was twice recognized by Ebony magazine as one of the "Most Influential Black Americans" and was named one of its "15 Greatest Black Preachers." He lectured at Cambridge, Oxford, and Baylor University and was professor emeritus of preaching and church ministries at the Berkeley School of Theology. Throughout his distinguished career, he wrote 16 books.

Dr. Smith was a friend and guide to all those he met, no matter their position. He took time to listen and speak to all those who sought his guidance, always abiding by one of his personal mottos: "I wish I could make it plain." He made no efforts to attract renown and yet became one of the most influential and well-known Black pastors and activists of his generation.

Dr. Smith is survived by his beloved wife, Reverend Bernestine Farley, his five children, Amy, James, Jr., Ronald Craig, Shri, and Anthony, as well as his fourteen grandchildren and sixteen great-grandchildren.

Dr. Smith was a trail blazer and personal inspiration. I am deeply grateful for his decades of service to my community. His loss is felt profoundly by the many people whose lives he touched.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT
"BOB" FOSTER

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Mr. LIEU. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Robert "Bob" Foster, a great public servant who passed away on November 30, 2025. Bob had a distinguished career in public service holding roles as a Senior California State Legislative Aide, a State University Official, and later as Mayor of Long Beach, California.

Bob was born in 1947 in Brooklyn, New York, and after being taught by his father, Ben, he took up a trade installing carpets in

New York City. He was a hard worker who learned to work fast installing carpets in homes in the city, working alongside his father. Bob made the trek across the country to attend San Jose State University and through college he continued working in the flooring business to support his education.

After graduating in 1969, Bob was hired by the California State Senate where he worked on the Public Utilities, Transit, and Energy Committee. He took to the role so quickly that he was promoted to Chief of Staff of the Committee a year later. During his time working in the State Senate, Bob helped develop the first statewide energy standards, which would eventually create the California Energy Commission. After years in the legislature, Foster went to work at Southern California Edison, a utility company, eventually rising to the role of President of the Company in 2002.

Given his experience as a state university graduate and policy leader, Bob was appointed by former Governor Pete Wilson to serve as a member of the California State University Board of Trustees. While serving as a trustee, Bob taught briefly in the Department of Political Science at his alma mater, San Jose State. He used his experience as a policy leader and energy policy expert to help mentor students in his time teaching, passing on his knowledge just as his father did for him.

In 2006, Bob was elected as Mayor of the City of Long Beach and led the city through the tumult of the Great Recession. During that time, Mayor Foster helped the city tackle a budget deficit, helped the city reduce crime and tackled traffic and pollution challenges for the major city. Bob helped worked with the City of Long Beach and Habitat for Humanity on the Mayor's Build House, a home that was given to a low-income family in the city. Later, the city would rename its Civic Chambers in honor of Mayor Foster, a testament to the legacy of service he left serving Long Beach residents.

Though he retired from public service, Bob and his family never stopped doing what they could to serve those in need. Bob opened a program teaching architecture, construction and engineering skills at the ACE Academy at Jordan High School. He and his wife also created the James Foster Endowed Scholarship at Long Beach State University to honor their son and help students in need. Bob's goal was always to help teach and mentor those coming up in the world and to help those in need.

Bob is survived by his wife, Nancy, one of his two sons and three grandchildren. May his legacy of service continue to inspire the communities that he served.

HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY
OF LAURA SPADACCINO

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a remarkable milestone in the life of a truly beloved member of our community, Mrs. Laura Spadaccino of Bristol Borough, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who this month joyfully celebrates her 100th birthday.

Born on December 15, 1925, to Italian immigrant parents, Salvatore and Josephine

Tardino, Laura entered this world during the hardships of the Great Depression. From the very beginning, her life has been a testament to resilience, family, and the enduring American spirit. Bristol Borough has always been her home with the borough's heart, its history, and its people woven into the story of her extraordinary life.

In 1958, Laura married the love of her life, Almerindo "Al" Spadaccino. Together, they shared 43 beautiful years of marriage until his passing in 2001. They raised three wonderful children, Joann, Joyce, and Bob. Laura's family has continued to grow, now blessed with eight grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren, with another soon to arrive. Each generation carries forward her strength, her traditions, and above all, her boundless love.

Laura's joy has always been found in relationships. Especially with her two lifelong friends, Gloria Fink and Mary Pierro. Their sisterhood spanned more than nine decades, filled with weekly card games, spontaneous trips to the casino, and endless shared laughter. Their friendship is a shining example of loyalty, joy, and enduring connection.

A devout Catholic, Laura has been a pillar of St. Ann's Church, faithfully participating in the annual summer festival and supporting parish life in countless ways. She also served her country during World War II while working at Kaiser-Fleetwings Corporation. She was doing her part to support our service members overseas fighting the Axis Power to free Europe. Yet many in Bristol Borough remember her best from her years working at her brother's restaurant, Tardino's. After his passing, she and her friends Betty Napoli and Lois Bartol carried on his legacy, running the beloved local eatery they named "The Golden Girls".

What truly sets Laura apart is her youthful spirit. Age has never defined her. Even in later years, she could be found joyfully playing goalie, remarkably, still in her high heels during a game of street hockey with her grandchildren or hopping on the back of a quad for a ride filled with laughter and adventure. Her great-grandchildren treasure every moment with her, and her home remains a place where stories, food, and love are always flowing.

Today, Laura is blessed. Not only with a large and loving family but with neighbors and friends who care deeply for her. The richness of her life is found in the relationships she has nurtured, and in the joy she so generously shares with everyone around her.

Mr. Speaker, the secret to Laura's longevity may very well be simple: love, laughter, and a life grounded in gratitude.

It is my profound honor to recognize and celebrate this extraordinary woman, whose journey began in poverty but has grown into a legacy rich in warmth, joy, and community.

Happy 100th Birthday to Laura. On behalf of the United States House of Representatives and the 1st Congressional District of Pennsylvania, I want her to know that she is cherished, appreciated, and deeply loved.

May God continue to bless her in the years ahead.