

HONORING THE SERVICE OF  
COLONEL MARK C. JOHNSON

**HON. DORIS O. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 3, 2025*

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor Colonel Mark C. Johnson for his exemplary and distinguished 30 years of service to our Nation. A native of Sacramento, California, Colonel Johnson has represented the great state of California and the city of Sacramento with honor, dedication, and distinction throughout his remarkable military career.

Colonel Johnson is a graduate of the United States Military Academy, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering and commissioned as an Aviation Officer. He also holds advanced degrees in National Security from the United States Naval War College and the United States Army War College. Throughout his career, Colonel Johnson has served with unparalleled distinction in a variety of command and staff positions, demonstrating his expertise and leadership across the Joint, interagency, and special operations communities.

His command assignments include leading the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division; the 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment (Assault); B Company, 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne); and B Company, 1st Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment (Assault). Colonel Johnson's staff assignments are equally impressive, including serving as Chief of Staff for the Office of the Chief, Legislative Liaison; Director of Aviation for U.S. Army Forces Command; and as a Strategic Planner for U.S. Special Operations Command, among many others.

Colonel Johnson has deployed in support of numerous national security and civil support operations, including Operation Joint Endeavour, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Atlantic Resolve, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Operation Freedom's Sentinel. His leadership extended to critical domestic operations, where he commanded aviation task forces supporting Defense Support to Civil Authorities for Hurricanes Florence and Michael, as well as southwest border security operations.

For his service, Colonel Johnson has received numerous awards and decorations, including the Legion of Merit (2), Bronze Star (2), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2), Meritorious Service Medal (5), Air Medal (3), and others. He also earned the Combat Action Badge, Master Aviator Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and the Army Staff Identification Badge. As a testament to his skill, he holds qualification ratings in the OH-58, UH-60, MH-60, CH-47, and MH-47 helicopters.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Colonel Johnson for his selfless dedication, unwavering leadership, and steadfast commitment to our country. As he concludes his 30 years of honorable service, I extend my deepest gratitude to him, his wife, Becky, and their children, Jake and Sarah, for their sacrifices and contributions to the strength and security of our Nation. I wish them all the best as they embark on the next chapter of their lives, and I know that Colonel

Johnson will continue to be an inspiration and source of pride for California, Sacramento, and our entire Nation.

RECOGNIZING VIRGINIA'S FOURTH  
DISTRICT BLACK HISTORY  
MONTH ESSAY CONTEST—1ST  
PLACE HIGH SCHOOL WINNER,  
TANVI PALAVALAS

**HON. JENNIFER L. MCCLELLAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 3, 2025*

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following essay from Virginia's Fourth District Black History Month Essay Contest—1st Place High School contest winner, Tanvi Palavalas.

When Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg first wore his Army uniform during World War II, he stepped into a military that saw his skin color before his capabilities. Today, as a woman of color preparing to serve, I see in his journey not just history, but a torch lighting my own path forward. From an enlisted soldier in a segregated Army to becoming the first Black officer to earn the rank of lieutenant general, Gregg didn't just climb the ranks, he fundamentally redefined what was possible.

In the unforgiving landscape of 1940's America, Gregg's early military career could have been defined by the limitations others sought to impose. During the Vietnam War, his innovative supply chain systems didn't just move materials—they saved lives. His mastery of military logistics proved that excellence and leadership flow from capability, not ancestry. For those of us who still face skepticism about our place in military leadership, his technical brilliance offers a powerful reminder that competence speaks louder than prejudice.

The Army's unprecedented decision to name Fort Gregg-Adams after him in April 2023, making him the first living Black leader to receive such an honor, carries special resonance for those of us following in his wake. In replacing the name of a Confederate general with that of Black excellence embodied, the Army didn't just change a sign; it declared that the future belongs to those who can lead, regardless of their background. Until his passing in August 2024, Gregg's living presence at ceremonies and military events reminded us that such transformation isn't ancient history but an ongoing journey we continue today.

But Gregg's most powerful legacy lies not in the barriers he broke, but in the doors he kept open behind him. As a mentor and leader, he understood that his success meant little if it didn't create opportunities for others. His leadership style, combining uncompromising standards with deep empathy, showed that bringing one's whole self to military service strengthens rather than weakens the force. For women of color like me, preparing to enter a military still grappling with inclusion, his example offers both inspiration and instruction: excellence is our armor, competence our sword.

The systems Gregg built for military logistics mirror the pathways he forged for future leaders, both designed to ensure essential resources reach those who need them when they need them most. Today, as I prepare to don my own uniform, I understand that I'm not just pursuing a career but that I'm continuing a mission he began. His success proved that the military is strengthened, not compromised, by diverse leadership. The re-

spect he commanded showed that authority flows from character and capability, not color or gender.

The transformation of military culture is far from perfection, but Gregg showed us how to advance it—through impeccable service, unwavering determination, and a commitment to bringing others forward. As I prepare to begin my own military journey, I carry with me not just my dreams, but the torch Lt. Gen. Gregg lit decades ago. In his honor, and for those who will follow, I intend to carry it forward, lighting the way for others as he did for me.

THE HAWAII NATIVE SPECIES  
CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY  
ACT

**HON. ED CASE**

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 3, 2025*

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my Hawaii Native Species Conservation and Recovery Act, a critical piece of legislation to protect and preserve the unique and irreplaceable native plant and animal species of our precious and endangered Hawaii. I am introducing this bill in conjunction with my Hawaii colleague, Senator BRIAN SCHATZ.

Our Hawaii is one of the most biologically unique and diverse places on the planet. The islands are home to over 10,000 native species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world, making Hawaii an extraordinary natural treasure unparalleled in biological diversity. From the endangered Hawaiian monk seal, one of the few seal species that thrives in tropical waters, to the endemic 'alala (Hawaiian crow), a bird with deep cultural and ecological significance, Hawaii's native wildlife plays a crucial role in maintaining the health of its ecosystems. The striking silversword plant, which grows only on the volcanic slopes of Hawaii's highlands, is another example of the island's extraordinary flora, having evolved to withstand harsh, isolated conditions.

These species, and so many others, also represent an irreplaceable part of Hawaii's heritage, not only contributing to the islands' ecological integrity but also holding cultural and spiritual value for Native Hawaiians. The unique biodiversity found in Hawaii is not only a source of pride for its people but also a global treasure that must be preserved for future generations.

A growing crisis driven by a range of interconnected threats to our native species is unfolding in Hawaii. Habitat destruction has significantly reduced the space where native plants and animals can thrive. Forests, wetlands and coastal ecosystems—critical habitats for native species—are being cleared or degraded, leaving these species increasingly vulnerable. As these ecosystems are altered or destroyed, the species that depend on them are at risk of extinction.

In addition to habitat loss, Hawaii's native species are also facing the impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels, higher temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns are already beginning to alter the habitats and food sources that these species rely on. For example, higher temperatures push native species to higher altitudes, leaving them with increasingly limited habitats. These environmental changes further stress the islands' delicate

ecosystems and compound the challenges posed by invasive species and diseases. The combination of habitat loss and climate change has created an urgent need for coordinated conservation efforts to ensure the survival of Hawaii's extraordinary biodiversity.

Another major threat to Hawaii's native species is the introduction and spread of invasive species. Non-native plants, animals and insects, whether intentionally or accidentally introduced, have caused significant ecological damage. Invasive species such as the mongoose, rats and predatory insects have decimated native bird populations. Invasive plants like the fireweed and strawberry guava overwhelm native vegetation, altering habitats and disrupting the food chain. These invaders not only outcompete native species for resources but also introduce diseases, further endangering the delicate balance of Hawaii's ecosystems. Effective control of invasive species is crucial for the long-term survival of Hawaii's native flora and fauna.

Together, these interconnected threats create a complex and urgent challenge for the conservation of Hawaii's native species, making coordinated, science-based efforts more critical than ever.

To address these pressing challenges, our Hawaii Native Species Conservation and Recovery Act proposes a competitive grant program to support the conservation and recovery of these species. This grant program will provide vital funding to local organizations, government entities and academic institutions to develop and implement science-based, coordinated conservation strategies that protect Hawaii's native species. This includes efforts to prevent the spread of invasive species, restore critical habitats and engage communities in the conservation process.

These communities of interest include the Native Hawaiians, who stewarded our natural resources successfully through generations pre-contact as a matter of both kuleana (responsibility) and survival. By providing a pathway for collaboration across local, state and federal stakeholders, this bill empowers Native Hawaiian communities to actively participate in the recovery of their native species. It also recognizes the critical role of Native Hawaiian organizations, many of which possess traditional ecological knowledge that is vital for successful conservation outcomes.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill that will help secure the future of Hawaii's native species for generations to come. By working together, we can protect one of the world's most exceptional natural environments and ensure its remarkable biodiversity remains a source of pride and inspiration for all.

HONORING NORMA FERRIZ DE  
MASSARO

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 3, 2025*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Norma Ferriz de Massaro. I have named Ms. Ferriz de Massaro as the California 4th District's Woman of the Year for Napa County because of her excellent work in our community. This

honor recognizes women who have made important contributions to California's 4th Congressional District in Arts and Culture, Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurship and Innovation or Community Service.

Born in Mexico City, Ms. Ferriz de Massaro immigrated to the United States in 2007 and became a naturalized citizen in 2013. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where she was awarded the prestigious Medalla Gabino Barreda for academic excellence. She went on to earn a master's degree in public administration with an emphasis in Nonprofit Organization Administration from the University of Washington. Ms. Ferriz de Massaro was also the recipient of the Fulbright-García Robles Scholarship and the MacArthur-Ford-Hewlett Scholarship during her studies. She further expanded her expertise by earning an Associate Degree in Accounting from Napa Valley College and achieving certification as an Advanced Certified Nonprofit Accounting Professional.

Ms. Ferriz de Massaro has been a pillar of the Napa Valley community for nearly two decades. She currently serves as the Finance and Operations Director for the Up Valley Family Centers of Napa County, where she has been a dedicated staff member for the past 17 years, strengthening programs that provide vital support to local families. She has also been an active member of numerous civic and nonprofit organizations, including Soroptimist International St. Helena Sunrise, the St. Helena Star Editorial Board, the St. Helena Library Committee, the St. Helena Library Foundation, the St. Helena Multicultural Committee, and the Napa Valley Community Foundation's Community Programs and Grants Committee. Her leadership in these organizations has helped make our community more inclusive. Additionally, Ms. Ferriz de Massaro led a Girl Scout Troop in St. Helena for 12 years, mentoring Latina girls and providing them with opportunities for growth, leadership, and joy.

Her dedication to public service was recognized in 2019 when she was named St. Helena Citizen of the Year. She further deepened her engagement with community leadership as a participant in the 2020 Leadership Napa Valley program, gaining insight into the inner workings of local governance.

Ms. Ferriz de Massaro is widely known for her enthusiasm, positivity, and ability to bring people together. Whether through social media, community outreach, or personal connections, she works tirelessly to link individuals with resources, foster collaboration, and turn good ideas into great initiatives. She embodies the words of Mr. Rogers: "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Ms. Ferriz de Massaro is one of those helpers, always ready to support others with her energy and optimism.

Beyond her professional and civic contributions, Ms. Ferriz de Massaro and her husband, Evan Massaro share a love for adventure. Each year, they embark on multi-week cycling or trekking journeys, embracing exploration both at home and abroad. Her passion for life and community shines through in everything she does.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Ferriz de Massaro for her remarkable service and dedication to our Napa Valley community. Through her leadership, advocacy, and unwavering commitment to inclusion and empowerment, she

has left an indelible impact on those around her. It is fitting and proper that I honor her here today.

EULOGY BY SAM IACOBELLIS FOR  
DOROTHY CHRISTIANA

**HON. JOHN B. LARSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 3, 2025*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to include in the RECORD the Eulogy of Dorothy Christiana, delivered at her funeral by her grandson, Sam Iacobellis. Her granddaughter Nina Bloom provided the prayers of her passing and was followed by Sam, whose eloquence, tone, humor, with compassionate care captured a truly remarkable woman and the family she raised. I have had the privilege of knowing the Christiana family for over sixty years. The farm on 1215 Silver Lane was a magical and welcoming place made so by Dorothy's cooking and her delightful daughters, Linda, Patty, and Karen, always the center of her life, and the man to whom she was devoted—Carman F. Christiana. Carman ran the iconic family farm in East Hartford, thus carrying on a tradition and farming skill he acquired throughout his life, along with the woman who loved and cared for him deeply.

The story of Dorothy and her family, her husband Carman, her daughters, Linda, Patty, and Karen, is a story of love for the ages captured with eloquence by her grandson, Sam Iacobellis.

Thank you all for being here today as we celebrate a truly extraordinary life.

To know her was to love her. My grandmother went by many names in her dynamic 97 years.

Dotty. Dot. Aunt Dot. Mrs. Christiana. Mother Dear. Ma. Gram. Great Grammie.

But to me, Dorothy Christiana was always Dee Dee. Born on the 17th Day of the 7th month in the year 1927 in Manchester, Connecticut. She was the youngest of three children to Frank & Letitia Irwin. A graduate of Manchester High School's Class of 1945. Active in planning class reunions, which, appropriately, were always at the Manchester Country Club. Dee Dee loved her hometown.

Whether it was regaling stories about working at a local movie theater, parading down Main Street with her family and friends after the Allies were victorious in the Second World War, never missing a Memorial Day parade where she would always point out her brother Ernie's Boy Scout troop or her long-time Sherwood Circle neighbor, Frank, behind the wheel of an 8th Utilities District fire truck, or holding court next to my parent's fireplace on Thanksgiving Day with the familiar refrain of, "There are the runners," as soon as the Road Racers returned, Dee Dee just loved Manchester. That love will be forever eternalized, as she will be laid to rest just a few miles from where she entered the world, next to her parents, her brother Ernie, and her beloved husband, Carman.

It is also appropriate that we are here today, in East Hartford, the place where my grandmother met her love, Carman, and started a family. The divine serendipity of a faulty bus on Silver Lane where two strangers met and set off a series of events that led to nearly all of us being together today. That divine serendipity also led to three daughters: Linda, Patty, and Karen. Three