

promoting Christian values through lively services and events for those in Northern Michigan.

Founded in 1875, Bay View Association has since played an integral role in the Petoskey area. The organization has evolved into a vibrant community dedicated to cultural and educational enrichment and spiritual growth. Bay View boasts over 337 acres of land, encompassing more than 30 public buildings and 440 cottages. This feat earned Bay View the designation of a National Historic Landmark by the National Parks Service in 1987.

For 150 years, the list of services that Bay View Association offers, have expanded substantially. Bay View is renowned for its exceptional religious services, educational lectures, summer programs, and so much more. The distinguished Music Bay View Music Festival stands as the country's longest-running collegiate music festival. Bay View Association's commitment to lifelong learning is also evident through its robust educational program, which offers courses in history, literature, religion, and the arts.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Bay View Association for 150 outstanding years of service to the Northern Michigan community. I'd like to thank Bay View for their continued commitment to education, the arts, and spiritual enrichment, and I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GEORGE LESTER

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of George Lester, who passed away on January 31st at the age of 85. Mr. Lester is regarded as one of the most important business leaders and community advocates in the Martinsville-Henry County region of Southside Virginia.

On April 4, 1939, Mr. Lester was born. His father, of the same name, raised his son and the rest of his family in the Martinsville area. Mr. Lester graduated from Martinsville High School before attending college at North Carolina State University.

In 1963, Mr. Lester started working full-time for the family business.

Working hard and dedicating great amounts of time towards the family business, Mr. Lester eventually took over the business. He became president in 1974. Following this rise to a monumental role, Mr. Lester reorganized the business as the Lester Group, and diversified the business. New deals included work with lumber manufacturing, real estate and retail store development, among other endeavors.

Because of Mr. Lester's leadership, the Lester Group promoted strong economic growth in the region. This growth contributed to robust job creation and business development. His tenure lasted until 2018, when he retired from the Lester Group.

Another significant idea by Mr. Lester resulted in the founding of an influential committee that advocated for a future highway connecting Roanoke, Virginia, and Greensboro, North Carolina. The modern-day I-73 corridor greatly benefited from the creative

and authentic thinking of leaders like Mr. Lester.

Appreciated by many in the community, Mr. Lester dedicated a lot of time to different local projects. He served as chairman of the local United Way, the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce and the separate Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation. In recognition of his work on the Chamber, he received the Heck Ford Award, the Chamber's highest honor. A charitable and thoughtful man, Mr. Lester gave land for civic causes and also donated to charitable organizations. Numerous community leaders and officials credit Mr. Lester for his positive impact on the region.

Mr. Lester is survived by his wife, Lee; daughters, Elizabeth Walsh of Lynchburg, Virginia, Ann Papadakis of Melbourne, Australia, and Sara Jedelsky, of Monroe, North Carolina; stepdaughter, Tracy Turlington of Barboursville, Virginia; mother-in-law, Ina Richmond; 11 grandchildren, and many other family members.

Mr. Lester was an exceptional business entrepreneur and community member. The Martinsville-Henry County region are incredibly grateful for his powerful leadership and influential support. He will be missed by many, including his family, his community and myself.

HONORING VANESSA L. GIBSON FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor and celebrate Vanessa L. Gibson, the 14th Bronx Borough President, in recognition of her exemplary leadership, dedication to public service, and unwavering commitment to the people of the Bronx. As we celebrate Women's History Month, we reflect on the incredible achievements of women like Ms. Gibson, who continue to shape and inspire our communities with their hard work and determination.

A proud native New Yorker, Ms. Gibson's journey in public service began while she was still a student at the University at Albany, when she joined the New York State Assembly Intern Program in 2001. There, she was assigned to work with then-Assemblywoman Aurelia Greene, where she quickly demonstrated her passion for legislative work and serving her community. From that moment, Ms. Gibson knew that public service would be her life's calling.

Upon graduating, Ms. Gibson transitioned to the role of Legislative Aide and later became the District Manager of Assemblywoman Greene's Bronx office. As District Manager, she played a vital role in ensuring effective administrative services and constituent outreach. After Assemblywoman Greene's resignation in 2009, Ms. Gibson ran in a special election for the 77th Assembly District, winning the seat and making a powerful mark on the state legislature.

During her two terms in the New York State Assembly, Ms. Gibson was a dedicated advocate for the issues that matter most to the Bronx. Her tireless work on education, afford-

able housing, public safety, and criminal justice reform earned her respect from her colleagues and the community alike. In 2013, she ran for a seat on the New York City Council, was elected, and quickly became known as a leader in the fight for tenant protections, alternatives to incarceration, enhanced police training, and criminal justice reform.

One of her landmark achievements as a Council Member was her collaboration with then-Council Member Mark Levine to pass the Right to Counsel legislation in 2017, which ensures free legal representation for low-income tenants facing eviction. Additionally, she championed the development of a ten-year food strategy for New York City, which addresses food deserts and promotes access to healthy, sustainable food options for all New Yorkers. It was my immense honor to have served alongside Ms. Gibson in the New York City Council.

In 2020, Ms. Gibson announced her candidacy for Bronx Borough President, presenting a bold vision for the future of the borough. With a focus on public safety, food equity, housing insecurity, health and wellness, gender equity, and support for the LGBTQIA+ community, Ms. Gibson's campaign resonated deeply with Bronx residents. After winning both the primary and general elections, she made history as the first woman and the first African American to be elected as Bronx Borough President.

As Borough President, Ms. Gibson has continued her lifelong work of advocating for equitable opportunities and improving the quality of life for all Bronxites. Her leadership is transforming the borough, with a focus on community-centered initiatives that empower residents, strengthen neighborhoods, and create sustainable economic growth.

It is with great admiration and respect that I honor Vanessa L. Gibson for her trailblazing accomplishments, her dedication to justice, and her unwavering commitment to the Bronx. Ms. Gibson exemplifies the power of public service and the profound impact that women can have on shaping our communities and our future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. WILLIAM R. TIMMONS IV

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Mr. TIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I was on the phone with a constituent and missed the first vote of the series. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 63.

HONORING THE LEGACY AND STRENGTH OF LAUREN SMALL

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Lauren Paige Small, whose courage in the face of cancer will continue to inspire countless individuals.

Lauren Small was born on August 1, 1994, to her caring parents, Kevin and Tuesday in

Bakersfield, California. She was an engaged student at both Olive Drive Elementary and Norris Middle School, with hobbies including music, horseback riding, tennis, swimming, wakeboarding, skiing, and eating her favorite food—mashed potatoes. Though many people fear riding or simply mounting a horse, Lauren fearlessly pranced and galloped on her cherished horse, Nickel Citation Nickie, winning Rookie of the Year, Champion Walk/Job, and placing in the top ten finalists at the 2005 Bakersfield Open Horse Show.

She won these awards and pursued these hobbies while she fought an intense battle with cancer, one to which she would unfortunately succumb on December 1, 2005. Though cancer had cruelly afflicted Lauren since 2003, she shocked her doctors, parents, and peers with her continued joy in life. Even as she endured the pains of chemotherapy and other health related challenges, she remained positive and continued to pursue her passion for horseback riding.

While Lauren is no longer with us, her drive and enthusiasm in her final years remain in the memories of all those who knew her. Lauren is survived by her parents, her brother, Kyle, great aunt, her grandparents, aunts, uncles, great uncles, and cousins, all of whom continue to deeply love and miss her.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me as we remember the undaunted life of Lauren Small and carry on her legacy of upholding strength.