

Dr. Smith's dedication to lifelong learning led her to the University of Mississippi, where she earned multiple degrees: a Master of Education in Educational Psychology (1993), a Master in Curriculum & Instruction (1995), a Master of Arts in Higher Education (1998), and a Specialist Degree in Higher Education (2021). Additionally, through a co-program with the University of Carolina, she obtained a Doctorate in Christian Counseling Psychology and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Bellhaven University.

During her tenure at Finch-Henry, Dr. Smith forged partnerships with Quitman, Desoto, and North Panola School Districts, expanding vocational training opportunities for students.

Beyond her professional career, Dr. Smith is an accomplished writer. Her article, *The Smells of Christmas*, was featured in *Batesville Magazine*, and she has also been highlighted in *Delta Magazine* and *Mahogany*. She has completed a manuscript for her book, *Things Remembered, Lessons Learned*, which she anticipates publishing this year.

Dr. Smith is deeply committed to her community, living by the motto: "I stand in the shadows and push others into the light." She actively supports local Breast Cancer Awareness initiatives, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and her family's project, *Wrapped in Warmth*. Inspired by her nephew's victorious battle against cancer, her family annually collects snacks and blankets for patients at the West Cancer Clinic in Memphis, Tennessee, and Baptist Memorial Hospital in Oxford, Mississippi.

Her dedication extends through numerous organizations, including Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Panola County Foster Care Review Board, the Panola County NAACP, the West Tennessee and Mississippi Women's Home and Overseas Society, the Assembly of Christian Educators, and IVETA. She is also a Certified Licensed Social Worker (LSW), serving her community with unwavering passion.

Dr. Smith is a devoted member of Pope Chapel AME Zion Church. She is the loving wife of Jessie Smith, Jr., a proud mother to Jordan and Sky Smith, and a cherished grandmother to Dylan and Eli Smith.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Cordella Shegog Smith for her dedication to serving this great state and country.

CELEBRATING CSD VIKINGS BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM BECOMING THE MARYLAND 1A STATE CHAMPIONS FOR THE 2024-25 SEASON

HON. ANDY HARRIS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Mr. HARRIS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize the Cambridge-South Dorchester Vikings Boys' Basketball Team on becoming the Maryland 1A State Champions for the 2024–2025 season.

On March 14, 2025, the Vikings secured a thrilling 36–33 overtime victory against The SEED School at the University of Maryland's Xfinity Center, marking their first state title since 1996.

The Vikings demonstrated exceptional skill and determination throughout their championship run, finishing the season with an impressive 26–2 overall record. Their path to the championship included hard-fought victories over Pocomoke, Snow Hill, and Fort Hill in the playoffs.

In the state final, senior guard Sterling Perkins made the game-winning shot with just 0.4 seconds left in overtime. Koby Ennals led the team with 16 points, while Perkins contributed 15 points, 6 rebounds, and 3 steals.

Head Coach Sean Tucker's leadership was instrumental in guiding the team to this historic achievement. His message to the team going into overtime: All you have to do is win by one, exemplifies the Vikings' grit and determination.

This championship is not just a victory for the team, but for the entire Cambridge-South Dorchester community. It serves as an inspiration to future generations of student-athletes and showcases the power of perseverance and teamwork.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the CSD Vikings Boys' Basketball Team for their outstanding accomplishment. Their dedication, sportsmanship, and resilience in capturing the Maryland 1A State Championship have brought pride to their school, their families, and the entire East-Shore of Maryland.

I thank them for making us proud.

SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF APRIL 2025 AS NATIONAL NATIVE PLANT MONTH

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my House colleagues to join Congressman Joe Neguse of Colorado and me in recognizing the critical importance of the native plants of our country by cosponsoring our resolution designating the month of April as Native Plant Month.

Native plants are not just a vital part of our natural landscape; they are integral to the environmental health of our Nation. From supporting biodiversity to enhancing local ecosystems, native plants play a crucial role in promoting sustainability and resilience in our environment. They provide critical habitats for wildlife, including pollinators like bees and butterflies, which are essential for agricultural productivity. They also help reduce our reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, prevent soil erosion and improve water quality. Beyond their environmental benefits, native plants are foundational to the cultural heritage of many indigenous communities, who have long depended on these plants for food, medicine, shelter and spiritual practices.

In my home state of Hawaii, our *kuleana* (responsibility) is to care for over 1,400 native plant species, nearly 90 percent of which are endemic, meaning they are found nowhere else on Earth. These plants are not only critical to the islands' biodiversity but also serve as living treasures that reflect the resilience and adaptation of life in an isolated, often harsh environment. The plants that thrive in Hawaii's diverse ecosystems—ranging from

rainforests and drylands to volcanic craters and coastal areas—have adapted in remarkable ways to the unique conditions of the islands. They play an essential role in maintaining the delicate balance of these ecosystems, providing food, shelter and crucial support for the diverse wildlife that depends on them, such as native birds, insects and other species that are also found nowhere else in the world.

Beyond their ecological value, native plants in Hawaii hold profound cultural and historical significance for Native Hawaiian communities. For centuries, Hawaiians have relied on these plants for a variety of essential purposes, including as staple foods like taro (*kalo*) and breadfruit (*'ulu*), which were central to their diet and agricultural system. These plants also provided medicinal benefits, with species like *'a'ali'i* (hophbush) and *māmaki* (*pipturus*) integral to the holistic health practices of Native Hawaiians. Additionally, many plants were used to create tools, clothing and materials for daily life. The fibers of *hala* (*pandanus*) and *kī* (*cordyline*) were woven into mats, baskets and garments, while the wood of native trees like *koa* was essential for building canoes and homes. These practices reflect the deep, sustainable connection that Native Hawaiians have long had with their land, or *'āina*, underscoring the importance of preserving these plants for both ecological and cultural continuity.

However, the survival of these plants is increasingly threatened by invasive species, habitat destruction and the shifting environmental conditions brought on by climate change. The native flora of Hawaii and other parts of our Nation face constant pressure from non-native plants that crowd out indigenous species, diminishing the richness of our ecosystems. Additionally, extreme weather events, rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns continue to jeopardize the health and viability of these plants.

If we are to preserve the irreplaceable native plants that have evolved over millennia, it is critical that we take action to protect them. Recognizing April as Native Plant Month will not only provide an opportunity to celebrate the diverse and invaluable plants across our country but also help raise awareness about the challenges they face. By designating this month, we can shine a spotlight on the importance of native plants in maintaining the ecological balance of our communities and encourage the public to take steps to protect and conserve these species.

As we face the ongoing challenges of habitat loss and invasive species, it is more important than ever that we recognize the role that native plants play in sustaining the health of our ecosystems. We must act now to raise awareness, promote conservation efforts and educate future generations about the importance of preserving these plants for the benefit of our Nation's biodiversity and cultural heritage.

I encourage all my colleagues to support this important initiative. Mr. Speaker, I ask for your cosponsorship of this resolution and for your partnership in raising awareness about the conservation and appreciation of native plants across our great Nation. Together, we can make a lasting difference.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
SHANNON STARZYK

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Shannon Starzyk for her years of tireless service and unwavering dedication to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. As she retires from her role at the Contra Costa Family Justice Center, I would like to commend Shannon for her extraordinary contributions to justice, advocacy, and support for the most vulnerable in our community.

Throughout her career, Shannon has been a fierce advocate for those seeking safety and justice. Her leadership has been critical in providing comprehensive services that empower survivors and guide them toward healing. She has worked closely with law enforcement, social service providers, legal professionals, and community organizations to build a collaborative network dedicated to breaking the cycle of violence.

Shannon's compassion and determination have directly impacted countless lives. Whether through policy advocacy, crisis intervention, or program development, she has continually prioritized the needs of survivors, ensuring they have access to legal assistance, emergency shelter, counseling, and long-term support. Her dedication to intersectional and trauma-informed care has set a high standard for victim advocacy and community-driven solutions.

As Shannon embarks on this next chapter, we celebrate the incredible impact she has had in our community. I am confident that her influence will continue to shape the work of the Contra Costa Family Justice Center and the broader movement to end violence in our communities.

Please join me in extending our deepest gratitude to Shannon Starzyk for her years of devoted service.

HONORING PHILLIP WEST

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary leader, Mr. Phillip West, whose impact on Mississippi and the Nation continues to inspire generations. As a trailblazer in public service and a champion of civil rights, Mr. West has exemplified the very best of leadership and commitment to his community.

Mr. West made history as the first African American mayor of Natchez, Mississippi, serving from 2004 to 2008. During his tenure, he worked tirelessly to foster unity, drive economic development, and promote progress in a city deeply rooted in history. His leadership was defined by a vision of inclusivity and equity, as he sought to bridge divides and create opportunities for all residents of Natchez.

Beyond his role as mayor, Mr. West's contributions to Mississippi extend across decades of public service. As a state legislator

and community advocate, he has been a steadfast champion of policies aimed at improving education, expanding healthcare access, and increasing economic opportunities for underserved populations. His unwavering dedication to uplifting historically marginalized communities has left a lasting mark on the state.

Mr. West's legacy is deeply intertwined with his dedication to preserving the rich history of African Americans in Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Phillip West for his dedication and tenacity to serving his community and desire to be an example for all.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF CAPTAIN ROBERTO CHITO
SAMANIEGO

HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay homage to the life and legacy of U.S. Army Captain Roberto "Chito" Samaniego, the first KIA servicemember from El Paso in the Vietnam war.

Captain Samaniego was an El Paso native and Jefferson High School alumni, who served his country as a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam war. He was assigned to the 52nd Aviation Battalion, 119th Company.

On June 19, 1965, Captain Samaniego was a copilot on one of the two UH-1B Helicopters conducting supply transports from Kon Tum to Dak Sut, Vietnam. When entering Dak Sut Valley, both air crews were hit by enemy fire 300 feet above land and plummeted to ground exploding on impact with no surviving crew members. Mr. Speaker, 209 El Pasoan service members would later lose their lives in the Vietnam conflict.

I recognize and express my eternal gratitude for veterans like Captain Samaniego; for the courage, bravery, and sacrifice to fight for our country. I also commemorate the families of service members, who have fought and continued to fight, as their sacrifices are beyond measure.

On March 29, 2025, we will honor the lives of the Vietnam war heroes in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

HONORING SERGEANT DAVID
LOREDO'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. SYLVIA R. GARCIA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero—Sergeant David Loredó—who turns 100 this month. Born on March 20, 1925, in Sinton, Texas, on the Gulf Coast, David's life embodies the grit, sacrifice, and unwavering spirit of our nation.

Like so many of his generation, he knew hardship early, picking cotton as a child and learning resilience with every bushel. But fate had bigger plans. His hands, once worn by farm work and concrete, soon carried a rifle

and a radio. His feet, once dusted with Texas soil, marched through the jungles of the South Pacific.

On March 17, 1945, leading a reconnaissance mission in the Philippines, David was shot alongside his scout. His first thought? That he'd never see his mother again. But he had time—and prayer—on his side. Back home, his mother took advantage of churches staying open 24/7, putting in extra hours praying for his safe return. And return he did.

For his service, David received the Purple Heart, Silver Star, Bronze Arrowhead, Good Conduct Medal, and multiple campaign honors. After his discharge at Fort Bliss, he came home to Houston, found steady work, and—thanks to the GI Bill—discovered his true craft: watch repair. The same patience that saw him through war now helped him master time itself.

A century later, David's story reminds us that faith and determination can carry a man across oceans, through war, and into a life of purpose. Today, we honor not just his years, but the lessons he leaves us: service, resilience, and the precious gift of time well spent.

Happy 100th to Sergeant Loredó. The watch keeper keeps on ticking.

HARLEM HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL
FIELD NAMED AFTER LEG-
ENDARY COACH JIMMIE LEWIS

HON. RICK W. ALLEN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate legendary Coach Jimmie Lewis, whose name will now be displayed at the Harlem High School baseball field for years and years to come. Coach Lewis has been the dedicated leader of the Harlem High School baseball program for decades, securing eight state titles and over 900 impressive wins—the 3rd highest in Georgia High School Association history. This is no small feat, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this honor.

However, Jimmie Lewis is far more than a coach in this community and at Harlem High School. He is a family man, a role model, a teacher, and a molder of men who has devoted his life to ensuring young students learn the skills and lessons necessary to be successful not only on the baseball field, but in life.

I am honored to help Coach Lewis celebrate this occasion and the positive, lifelong impact he has had on so many lives. Congratulations to Coach Lewis. Go Bulldogs.

HONORING SER BOXLEY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 21, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ser Boxley, an extraordinary historian, advocate, and guardian of African American heritage, whose unwavering dedication to preserving history has made a lasting impact on Mississippi and the Nation.