

Citizen Medal in 2021, Excellence in Community Service in 2016, Texas Daughters of the American Revolution Outstanding DAR Service to Veterans in 2017, and the Arts Council Northeast Shining Star award for volunteer leadership service to the community.

I thank Dr. Katie Simpson for her unwavering commitment to serving others. Her devotion to our North Texas community is appreciated and continues to inspire those around her.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPH BONGARZONE'S RETIREMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE AFTER 37 YEARS

**HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 21, 2025*

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor a dedicated constituent Mr. Joseph Bongarzone, a distinguished Letter Carrier with the United States Postal Service, retiring after a 37-year career dedicated to serving the community of Hatboro, Pennsylvania.

Joseph embarked on his journey with the United States Postal Service on February 14, 1987, beginning as a clerk in Southampton, Pennsylvania. After nearly a year of service in that role, he transitioned to the Hatboro facility, where he would remain for the rest of his career, steadfastly delivering mail and upholding the principles of dedication, diligence, and service.

Coming from a family with a deep-rooted tradition in the Postal Service, Joseph was honored to follow in the footsteps of his father, Joseph, and his two brothers, Paul and Jeff. His career was defined by an unwavering commitment to his duties, demonstrating an exemplary work ethic that inspired colleagues and endeared him to the residents he served. Regardless of inclement weather or personal hardship, Joseph's dedication never faltered—his presence was a certainty, ensuring that his community received their mail with the efficiency and reliability that only a true public servant could provide.

In recognition of his outstanding service and commitment to safety, Joseph was honored with the prestigious Million Mile Award from the United States Postal Service—a testament to his exceptional record of accident-free performance and dedication to excellence. This honor is reserved for those who have exemplified the highest standards of professionalism and care in their service.

As Joseph officially retired on February 28, 2025, we take this moment to extend our deepest gratitude for his decades of dedication and service to the people of Hatboro. His legacy stands as a shining example of what it means to be a committed public servant, and his contributions to the United States Postal Service will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the remarkable career of Joseph Bongarzone and wishing him a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement. May his legacy of integrity, commitment, and service continue to inspire future generations of postal workers.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. LAMAR BRAXTON, SR.

**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 the life and remarkable legacy of Dr. Lamar Braxton, Sr.

Lamar Braxton, Sr. was born in Red Lick, Mississippi, on May 30, 1934. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in 1967 from Alcorn State University, served his country in the United States Army, and later completed his Master's in History from Tennessee State University. Dr. Braxton was a devoted member of East Mt. Olive Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon. He was married to the late Lee J. Braxton and was the father of Lamar Braxton, Jr.

Dr. Braxton's professional journey was marked by dedication to community service. Initially preparing to begin his doctoral studies, he was asked to serve as the Director of the newly formed Adams-Jefferson Improvement Corporation (AJFC), a community organization serving residents of a two-county area. What was intended to be a temporary assignment ultimately lasted almost 42 years, with Dr. Braxton serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the AJFC Community Action Agency. During his tenure, he grew increasingly aware of the vital role education plays in shaping the futures of young people. His unwavering commitment to empowering individuals and promoting sustainable development left a lasting imprint on both our organization and the communities we serve.

Dr. Braxton was a trailblazer in many ways. He organized one of Mississippi's first computer training schools on the campus of Natchez College. His "Computer Camp" offered training to 40 youths from Southwest Mississippi each summer, providing them with an advantage that helped them compete on a national scale. Furthermore, Dr. Braxton was instrumental in bringing the national Head Start program to Southwest Mississippi, establishing centers across the region and providing early childhood education to thousands of our citizens.

As a visionary leader, Dr. Braxton's passion and dedication to community development positively impacted countless lives. His innovative spirit and tireless efforts played a key role in shaping AJFC into a respected organization that continues to champion community action and development. Dr. Braxton inspired many with his wisdom, kindness, and steadfast belief in the potential of others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the late, Dr. Lamar Braxton, for his extraordinary contributions to our community. We will continue to reflect on his enduring legacy, which will continue to inspire future generations.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT AND SERVICE OF BILL WHITNEY

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 21, 2025*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate Bill Whitney as he

retires from the Contra Costa Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO. Throughout his life, Bill has been a dedicated and tireless advocate for working people. His legacy of service, advocacy, and leadership will continue to inspire us for years to come.

Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Bill's early years were spent working on his family farm alongside his three brothers. After his family relocated to Walnut Creek, California, Bill attended Ygnacio Valley High School and went on to earn a degree in Zoology from the University of California, Davis. Bill's commitment to service was evident from his collegiate years, where he was deeply involved in sports and extracurricular activities, including Boy Scouts, Key Club, and his fraternity, Theta Xi.

Bill began his career in service after moving to Benicia in 1977. He was a proud member of the Lions Club, Rotary Benicia Historical Society, and the Chamber of Commerce. Bill also served on the Benicia City Council from 1999 to 2007, where he tirelessly advocated for his community.

Mr. Whitney is a true champion for working people. He is a proud member of three unions: The Retail Clerks Union, the Inland Boatmen Union, and the United Association of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry. Throughout his career, Bill has played a pivotal role in advancing workers' rights, improving workplace conditions, and ensuring fairer wages for workers.

Bill's leadership and advocacy have expanded economic opportunities for working families and improved the lives of countless workers and their families. His advocacy for working people has left an indelible mark on the labor movement in California and beyond.

On behalf of California's 8th Congressional District, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Bill Whitney on his well-deserved retirement. Mr. Whitney's years of service have left a lasting legacy and significantly enhanced the lives of countless working people.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF STAFF SERGEANT OMAR ALONZO RAMIRO

**HON. J. LUIS CORREA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 21, 2025*

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Staff Sergeant Omar Alonzo Ramiro and recognize his service to our Nation.

Staff Sergeant Ramiro demonstrated a deep sense of dedication to his community from an early age. Before enlisting, he graduated from Servite High School and worked at St. Catherine's Academy in Anaheim, an institution with a proud history of shaping young leaders. In 2009, he answered the call to serve our country and enlisted in the United States Army, embarking on a military career that would take him across the world in defense of our values.

Throughout his enlistment, Staff Sergeant Ramiro demonstrated exceptional courage and resilience. As a Motor Transport Operator, an Airborne soldier, and a Psychological Operations specialist, he played a vital role in military and diplomatic operations while deployed to Afghanistan and serving across Europe and Africa. Even after sustaining a serious injury in

2019, he persevered through multiple surgeries and rigorous rehabilitation to support our armed forces and allies overseas. His unwavering dedication reflects the resilient spirit of our servicemembers.

As he transitions into civilian life, Staff Sergeant Ramiro leaves behind a legacy of commitment and sacrifice. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from American Military University, he plans to start the next chapter of his life in Williamsville, Illinois, alongside his wife Rachel, and their two sons, Mason and Nolan. Though his time in uniform may be ending, I have no doubt his passion for giving back to his community will continue.

For his outstanding service, Staff Sergeant Ramiro has been awarded numerous commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, five Army Commendation Medals, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, and the Parachutist Badge. These honors are a testament to his dedication, bravery, and contributions to our country.

Our Nation is stronger because of the service and sacrifices of men and women like Staff Sergeant Ramiro. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring his service, bravery, and enduring commitment to our country.

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HONORING GREATER MT. PLEASANT  
MISSIONARY BAPTIST  
CHURCH

**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 one of the oldest Afri-

can American churches in the State of Mississippi—Greater Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. This historic church exemplifies what can be achieved through faith, perseverance, and a steadfast commitment to service.

Founded in 1851 in Edwards, Mississippi, Mt. Pleasant M.B. Church has a rich history that reflects the resilience and devotion of its community. Established under a bush arbor tree by a group of dedicated men, the church quickly became a beacon of hope and a center for spiritual growth. A significant moment in its early history came when a great flood of the Big Black River prevented some members from attending services. In response, those members branched out and formed Sand Hill M.B. Church, further expanding the church's legacy.

Despite challenges, Mt. Pleasant M.B. Church remained steadfast. On January 10, 1868, trustees Bro. Charlie Hunter and Bro. Fenton Shelton purchased two acres of land and constructed the church's first sanctuary. Further growth followed on December 16, 1904, when, under the leadership of Rev. John Lewis the church acquired an additional 40x120 acres. Over the years, the congregation was shepherded by many great leaders, including Rev. Willie Hardy, Jr., and Rev. Matthew Canada.

On August 1, 1992, Mt. Pleasant M.B. Church was blessed with Rev. Joseph Boone as its head pastor, a role in which he faithfully served for over 30 years. Under his leadership, the church grew not only as a place of worship but also as a center of fellowship and community support. In 1998, the church constructed the Richardson-Rozell Fellowship Hall, providing a space for gatherings, meals,

and events that fostered love, unity, and service.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Mt. Pleasant M.B. Church expanded its reach through ministries and programs dedicated to honoring God and uplifting the community. On February 27, 2005, Rev. Darrell Brown was ordained and served as youth minister before becoming Assistant Pastor. That same year, the Angels of Praise, led by Kimberly Rolling-Jones, made their debut, further enriching the church's worship experience.

In a bold step of faith, the congregation rebranded and officially became Greater Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church on March 10, 2022. This change reflected both its expanding congregation and its commitment to incorporating modern worship practices while preserving its historic traditions.

Today, Greater Mt. Pleasant M.B. Church stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of its founders and the generations who followed. It remains a vital part of the Edwards community, fostering faith, hope, love, and service while continuing to honor its rich heritage. The church not only preserves its past but also looks to the future, inspiring new generations in their spiritual journeys.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Greater Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church for its remarkable history, longevity, and unwavering dedication to its community.