

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### RECOGNIZING ALYSSA REAS

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Alyssa Reas has made through her volunteerism at Gulf Highlands Elementary School. Alyssa stepped onto the campus with big plans to support students. She has seen the value that peer mentors have made in student lives and is determined to help cultivate success on the campus. She has been working diligently to match big brothers and big sisters with students on campus, with 10 success stories to date. It is exciting for students to have someone from their community encouraging them in their educational journey.

It is clear Alyssa Reas has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service. May we all strive to serve our communities with the same dedication and humility.

### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DELIA "DEE" NILA BASILE

#### HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the life of Delia "Dee" Nila Basile, whose spirit, energy and unwavering dedication to her family, community and heritage left an indelible mark on the City of Aurora.

Delia "Dee" Nila Basile was born on April 10, 1950, as a proud member of the Nila family, one of Aurora's earliest Mexican immigrant families. The Nila family arrived in the United States in 1923, and her great-grandfather, Augustine Nila, was among the first to settle in Aurora. Like many immigrants, the Nila family contributed to their new community through hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance. Dee carried that legacy forward with honor and joy, speaking often about her family's role in helping shape Aurora's identity and its immigrant communities.

Dee attended St. Nicholas Grade School and graduated from Madonna High School, both in Aurora. She later earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Northern Illinois University in 2011 at the age of 61—a testament to her determination and belief in lifelong learning.

Dee began her professional path in the hospitality industry, where her charisma made her a standout presence. She later went on to work at Aurora City Hall for 18 years, contributing to many roles and quickly becoming known as one of Aurora's most dedicated public servants. Her energy and presence made her a true ambassador for the city, welcoming all who lived, worked, and visited with her signature smile and enthusiasm.

After her retirement, Dee continued her service through the Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce, where she championed local businesses and continued to work tirelessly to uplift Aurora's cultural vitality. She was a long-time board member of the Aurora Public Library Foundation, where she passionately supported educational access, literacy, and community programming. Throughout her lifetime, Dee volunteered thousands of hours to causes large and small. Whether it was a city celebration, nonprofit event, heritage initiative, or grassroots movement—if something meaningful was happening in Aurora, Dee was there.

Dee was a keeper of history; she worked closely on countless cultural initiatives, ensuring that traditions and stories of the past had a strong, visible place in the present. She was instrumental in founding Aurora's Annual Parade of Nations, a celebration of the city's multicultural identity. In recognition of her unwavering service, the Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board established the Delia Nila Basile Award, presented annually to a resident, organization, or business that exemplifies the leadership, dedication, and cultural pride that Dee personified.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent Aurora and grateful for Delia "Dee" Nila Basile's service to her community. Her presence lit up every room she entered, and her commitment to her city, her family, and her culture left a permanent mark on the people of Aurora. I extend my heartfelt condolences to her family and invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating her extraordinary life.

### CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF WWII VETERAN PRIVATE FIRST CLASS EDGAR CARL WILKE

#### HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the 100th birthday of Private First Class Edgar Carl Wilke, a distinguished World War II veteran and long-time Western New York native born on April 5, 1925. After enlisting in the United States Army in 1943, he answered the call to serve during World War II displaying extraordinary bravery and dedication throughout his service. It is with great pride that we acknowledge this remarkable occasion today and reflect on the legacy of his contributions to both our Nation and our community.

Private First Class Wilke's journey began right here in Buffalo, New York where he attended Buffalo Public School 33 for elementary school and later graduated from South Park High School. After his military service, he furthered his education at the University at Buffalo, marking another chapter of growth and achievement after the war. His academic

and personal successes after returning home speak to the resilience and dedication he has shown throughout his life.

In recognition of his exemplary service, Private First Class Wilke will be receiving several prestigious honors. Among the medals he has earned are the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (with two bronze service stars), World War II Victory Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge 1st Award, Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII, and the Marksman Badge with Rifle Bar. These medals speak to his unwavering dedication and heroism during his service, and they are a fitting tribute to the sacrifices he made for our country.

After returning home, Private First Class Wilke married his beloved wife, Joan, and their partnership was the foundation of his life. Joan's memory and their shared love remain a cherished part of his legacy. As a proud family patriarch, he has been a loving uncle to three nephews and two nieces, and he also embraced the role of stepfather to two children, who brought additional joy to his life. Through his stepchildren, he has been blessed with grandchildren, further enriching his life and legacy. He has remained deeply connected to his family, community, and fellow veterans. To this day, he continues to live in his childhood home, a symbol of his enduring connection to his hometown and the values that have shaped him. His faith has been a steady anchor, providing strength and peace, while life's simple joys, like enjoying a beer each day, reflect his gratitude and appreciation for balance.

Today, we celebrate Private First Class Edgar Carl Wilke's 100th birthday. His life is a testament to resilience, unwavering devotion, and exceptional service to both his country and his community. His lifelong dedication has set a remarkable standard for all of us, and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations. Please join me in thanking Private First Class Wilke for his long and meritorious service to our Nation and community, and in wishing him a very happy 100th birthday with many more to come.

### RECOGNIZING ANN WILKINSON

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions that Ann Wilkinson has made through her work with Seniors in Service—Retired Senior Volunteer Program in Pasco County. This group of 245 volunteers, spread across Pasco County, work tirelessly with a shared goal of making their community shine, dedicating 24,210 hours to addressing critical needs in food support, companionship, disaster relief, and mentorship. By establishing partnerships with

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

25 local Pasco County organizations, RSVP Pasco connects volunteers to critical areas of need. Volunteers support food pantries, like Our Lady Queen of Peace, St. Vincent DePaul and Shady Hills Mission Chapel. They work to ensure families in high-need areas receive essential resources. At Good Samaritan Health Clinic, RSVP volunteers assist with patient intake and front desk duties, while at BayCare, they recruit participants for the Health Buddies program to enhance senior well-being. Recently, RSVP Pasco partnered with Solo Moms to empower single mothers and with the American Cancer Society to help patients access life-saving treatments. Each partnership reflects the program's commitment to addressing diverse community challenges with tailored support. Led by Ann, the leadership team within RSVP Pasco has also been a driving force behind its success. Ambassadors have taken on vital roles in recruitment, outreach, and event planning. When the CARES Senior Center closure displaced 25 volunteers, RSVP Pasco worked diligently to connect them with new opportunities, ensuring their passion for service was not lost. Similarly, at Grace's Food Pantry, Ambassadors stepped in to address staffing shortages, ensuring continuity in service. Their proactive approach has strengthened the program's ability to adapt and grow. RSVP Pasco demonstrates the transformative power of volunteerism. From hurricane recovery to improving healthcare and food security, the program embodies resilience, compassion, and connection. This remarkable program truly exemplifies the spirit of service and is a shining example of what can be achieved when a community comes together to make a difference.

It is clear Ann Wilkinson has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service. May we all strive to serve our communities with the same dedication and humility.

#### CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. WARREN NICHOLS

**HON. RANDY K. WEBER, SR.**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 24, 2025*

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize an extraordinary leader, a dedicated public servant, and a pillar of our community—Dr. Warren Nichols, who is retiring after years of transformative leadership as President of College of the Mainland.

Since taking the helm at College of the Mainland in 2017, Dr. Nichols has done what strong leaders do, he's rolled up his sleeves, put students first, and delivered results.

A first-generation college student and former police officer from Arlington, Texas, Dr. Nichols embodies the American dream. He climbed the ladder of higher education through grit, service, and vision. From law enforcement to leadership, he's remained focused on helping others rise, too.

Under his tenure, College of the Mainland has seen historic growth—not just in enrollment, but in opportunity. He led COM to become the first college in Texas to fully implement a corequisite program, helping underprepared students complete their English and math requirements faster and more effectively.

That's results-driven education, and that's exactly what we need more of in this country.

Dr. Nichols also championed the Guided Pathways to Success initiative, ensuring students stay on track toward meaningful goals—associate degrees, workforce certificates, and transfers to four-year universities. That's the kind of strategic, student-focused thinking that sets College of the Mainland apart.

But it doesn't stop there.

Dr. Nichols successfully led not one, but two major bond referendums, totaling over \$400 million—no small feat after previous attempts had failed for years. That funding has revitalized the COM campus, resulting in state-of-the-art facilities like the STEAM and Allied Health Building, the Industrial Careers Building, and many more. These aren't just buildings—these are launch pads for future welders, nurses, engineers, and entrepreneurs.

He's also been laser-focused on workforce development—a cornerstone of economic freedom and American prosperity. By strengthening partnerships with local industry, Dr. Nichols has created pathways for students to graduate with skills that matter, jobs that pay well, and futures they can count on.

Before his time at COM, Dr. Nichols served as Vice Chancellor of Community Colleges for the Tennessee Board of Regents and President of Volunteer State Community College. Whether in Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, or beyond, his impact has always been the same—profound and lasting.

He's also given generously of his time to the Texas City community, serving on the Rotary Club and as Past Chair of the Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce. It's no surprise he was honored with the Rising Star Award, because his leadership has truly been a guiding light.

Dr. Nichols' legacy at College of the Mainland will endure for generations. He has built more than buildings—he has built lives, futures, and opportunity for thousands of Texans.

On behalf of the people of Texas' 14th Congressional District and this great Nation—we say: job well done, Dr. Nichols. We wish him a well-earned retirement, and thank him for proving that with vision and values, anything is possible.

God bless Dr. Nichols, and God bless Texas.

#### CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF DR. DON DUGI

**HON. MORGAN MCGARVEY**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 24, 2025*

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Dr. Don Dugi, a professor of political science at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, and to congratulate him on his retirement after a remarkable 50-year career dedicated to educating and empowering students.

Dr. Dugi's teaching journey began in his youth, when he helped his teachers in a small rural school in Texas. He pursued higher education at St. Mary's University, earning bachelor's and master's degrees. Fifty years ago, in 1975, he joined Transylvania University, the oldest school west of the Allegheny moun-

tains, founded in 1780. Over the following decades, Dr. Dugi became known for his commitment to high academic standards and his unwavering support for his students.

In 2003, he was recognized for this dedication and was named Kentucky Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Dr. Dugi inspired students aspiring to enter the legal profession. He conducted intensive workshops to prepare students for the Law School Admission Test and the law school application process, resulting in Transylvania students gaining admission to top law schools, including Harvard, Stanford, Duke, Columbia, and the University of Kentucky. Thanks to Dr. Dugi, every student that Transylvania recommends to law school is accepted.

Dr. Dugi has taught and mentored countless students throughout his years, many of whom have graduated and built successful careers as lawyers and judges. He led the way for students who have dedicated their lives to the rule of law and fighting for justice, including several who now serve as federal and state judges thanks to his mentorship.

Dr. Dugi's legacy is his deep commitment to student success. His contributions have left an indelible mark on countless lives, and his retirement marks the end of an era at Transylvania University.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues, and every student who has been taught by him, to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to Dr. Don Dugi for his outstanding service to Transylvania University and the Commonwealth of Kentucky and his enduring impact on students' lives.

#### RECOGNIZING RON TILLEY OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

**HON. TIM BURCHETT**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 24, 2025*

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Ron Tilley for his seventy plus years of ministry and service to East Tennessee. I've seen some pretty impressive resumes in my time, but none may be as impressive as Brother Ron's.

Sharing my love for cars, Ron owned Tilley Lane Chrysler Dodge Dealership in Lenoir City where his business became a pillar of the community. In addition to owning a beloved local business, he is also a legend in sports as he was inducted into the Lenoir City Sports Hall of Fame. He was also an original member of the Kingsman Quartet.

If you ask Ron, all of this pales in comparison to his walk with Christ. In 1947, Ron was saved at the Broadway Baptist Church in Maryville, Tennessee. He then went on to live a Christ-centered life serving as the music director for a number of churches and Christian organizations throughout East Tennessee. Since August of 2014, Ron has served as the Minister of Music at Calvary Baptist Church, where he is now retiring after seven decades of service.

I thank Ron for being a role model, friend to all, and most importantly a good steward of Christ. While he may be retiring, I have no doubt that he will continue his service to his community.