

South Carolina in 1977. Following in his father's footsteps, John spent over four decades shaping Columbia's landscape as a Managing Partner of Baker Commercial Properties (formerly Baker & Baker), where he played a pivotal role in the city's economic and commercial development until his retirement in 2021.

John's true passion, however, was giving back. His commitment to philanthropy started early; in high school, he started volunteering for the March of Dimes and served as Teenage Chair for the Richland County chapter. What began as collecting donations on Columbia street corners evolved into a lifetime of leadership, earning him the Elaine Whitelaw Volunteer Service Award in 2005, the highest honor bestowed by the March of Dimes.

John was a driving force behind major initiatives in education, literacy, healthcare, and Jewish causes. He served two terms as Chairman of the Richland County Public Library Board of Trustees, and following his tenure, RCPL was named Library of the Year (2001) by the American Library Association. In 1999, he founded Step Into Reading, a statewide effort that provided more than 250,000 books to children in need, and he was deeply involved with the Richland County Public Library Foundation, the Richland School District Two Foundation, and the Forest Lake Educational Foundation.

His humanitarian efforts extended through his work with United Way of the Midlands, where he served as Chairman in 2003 and was named Humanitarian of the Year in 2011 for his leadership in early childhood education. He was also involved in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the American Cancer Society, and the American Heart Association.

John's civic engagement in Columbia included leadership roles with the Lexington Medical Center Foundation, the Township Auditorium Board of Trustees, the Federation Center of the Blind, the South Carolina Council on Economic Education, the Columbia Action Council, Columbia Jaycees, Columbia Sertoma Club, and the Central Carolina Community Foundation Board.

John's efforts were recognized with South Carolina's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto in 2002.

His advocacy for Israel was equally significant. He served on the National Campaign Cabinet for Israel Bonds, leading South Carolina's first-ever \$10 million Israel bond purchase in 2002 and securing millions more in subsequent years. John was honored with the Ben Gurion Award (2002) and Yitzhak Rabin Award (2018) from Israel Bonds. He also served on the National Council of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

John was a pillar of Columbia's Jewish community, serving as President of Tree of Life Congregation, an active member of Beth Shalom Synagogue, and an early supporter of Chabad of South Carolina and the Columbia Jewish Day School. He served as Columbia Community Co-Chair of the Jewish National Fund and was active in Jewish Federations of North America.

Anyone who met John knew that his love of baseball and jazz music were as much a part of him as his philanthropic work. In the mid-1980's, he helped organize the annual trip by the Atlanta Braves Caravan where players would visit children in area hospitals and raise money for local charities. A devoted Braves fan and avid collector of baseball memorabilia, he was a longtime supporter of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, where a donated portrait of his dear friend, Hall of Fame pitcher Phil Niekro, remains on display. His passion for jazz music led him to become a

radio DJ later in life, hosting "Jazz in the City with John Baker" on 92.1 FM, where he shared his deep knowledge and appreciation for the genre with listeners across the Midlands.

In 2006, John was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, yet he never let it diminish his spirit, humor, or generosity. He continued working, mentoring, and giving back, inspiring all who knew him with his resilience.

John is survived by his wife of 34 years, Marcie Stern Baker, and their daughter, Gabbi Baker, of New York. He is also survived by his siblings Kenny Baker (Sharon), Frank Baker (Melanie), and Dale Baker, his sister- and brother-in-law Beryle and Pierre Jaffe, and many beloved nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, JoAnn and David Baker, and his sister, Debbie Brookshire.

John's family wishes to express their deep gratitude to his longtime caregivers: John House, Leonard Bailey, Marvin Goodly, Darian Moorner, Chuck Baltimore, and John Hartley, whose unwavering support brought him comfort and dignity in his final years.

John's impact on Columbia and beyond will be felt for generations; not only in the buildings he developed, the institutions he supported, and the programs he helped build, but in the countless lives he touched through his kindness, generosity, and unwavering belief in the power of giving back.

HONORING CHIEF WILLIAM D. LEIGHTY'S SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and give thanks to William D. Leighty for his 36 years in law enforcement, selflessly serving his community.

Lancaster native William Leighty has served in law enforcement across the county. Beginning his career at the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office, he then served as a police officer with New Holland Borough and East Cocalico Township. In 1999, William Leighty became the Chief of Police of Clay Township, where he oversaw the merger of three police departments into the Northern Lancaster County Regional Police Department.

In 2017, Chief Leighty returned to New Holland law enforcement as their Chief of Police. During his tenure, he built positive community relationships through his partnerships with local nonprofits and by organizing events like National Night Out.

Once again, I want to thank Chief Leighty for his invaluable career serving and protecting Lancaster County communities. I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER MAURICE BYRD

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Maurice Byrd of the Frankfort Police Department for being awarded the 2024 Medal of Merit Citation for his bravery while responding to a structure fire.

Once Officer Byrd and Officer Guevara arrived at the scene of the fire, they immediately took action to rescue a mentally disabled female trapped inside the burning structure. After finding the front door was unsafe to enter, they went to the rear of the structure and scaled a fence to reach the victim. With Officer Guevara supporting Officer Byrd, they executed a critical rescue operation by reaching through a smoke-filled window to remove the trapped female from the building moments before the structure was completely engulfed. Through successfully executing this critical rescue operation, Officer Byrd showcased great bravery in the face of distress. Their actions demonstrate the utmost professionalism and capability beyond day-to-day requirements.

Officer Byrd voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that Officer Byrd will continue to serve as an exemplary role model for law enforcement officers across the 1st Congressional District and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF JANA BRIGHT MCGINNIS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Jana McGinnis as Head Coach for the Jacksonville State University softball team.

Jana, a native of Spring Garden, Alabama, spent 31 years as the head coach of the Jax State softball team. She retired with a 1,038-607 career and the all-time 30th most wins among Division I coaches. That record number wins are the eighth-most-all-time by a Division I coach at the same institution and give her more games won than any coach in the university's history. Jana was a two-time All-Gulf South Conference guard in basketball at Jax State. She holds the school's career and single season assists records. After graduation, she started coaching at Cherokee County High School and within two years brought home a state title.

In 1994, she took over as head coach of the softball team at Jax State winning the Trans America Athletic Conference title in her third season and advanced to the 1996 NCAA Regional. It was the first conference title for Jax State at the Division I level in any sport.

Jana spent most of her career in the Ohio Valley Conference winning regular season or tournament championships in 11 of her 17 seasons in OVC and won both in the same season three times. She has also been named OVC Coach of the Year, a conference-record six times. The Jacksonville State University softball complex has been named Jana McGinnis Field to recognize her success over the years.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Jana on her retirement and thanking her for her dedication and service to Jacksonville State. I congratulate Jana.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF JEFF HILBORN

HON. PETE STAUBER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to an extraordinary citizen from Minnesota's 8th Congressional district. After 45 years in the broadcasting business, Jeff Hilborn is retiring.

Jeff spent the first 22 years of his career in Kansas and South Dakota before making the Brainerd Lakes Area his home in 1992. Here in Brainerd, Jeff served in several management roles at KLIZ-FM The Power Loon before becoming the manager of six radio station groups for Hubbard Broadcasting.

Jeff and his wife Michelle raised their three children in Brainerd and have been integral members of their community for the last 32 years.

Jeff has dedicated himself to the people of the Brainerd Lakes Area by serving on the Board of Directors for the Brainerd Sports Boosters and the Sunrise Sertoma Club.

He also served as a committee member for the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce "Destination Downtown" initiative and worked on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Broadcasters Association.

Jeff is retiring but his legacy will not soon be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to work alongside him.

On behalf of the 8th Congressional District of Minnesota, I would like to thank Jeff for his commitment to our community and congratulate him on a job well done.

HONORING FORT GRATIOT TOWNSHIP FIRE CHIEF MICHAEL FRONIMOS

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep admiration and respect to honor Chief Michael F. Fronimos, a dedicated public servant who has devoted over 35 years to the firefighting profession across multiple states. As we celebrate his first year as Fire Chief of the Fort Gratiot Charter Township Fire Department, it is fitting to reflect on his transformative leadership, steadfast service, and remarkable contributions to public safety and community well-being.

Chief Fronimos's first year as Fire Chief has been nothing short of extraordinary. He has turned around the morale of the Department, increasing volunteer staffing by nearly 50 percent, and has implemented groundbreaking initiatives to ensure the safety and efficiency of his team. Under his leadership, the Department acquired new life safety equipment and overhauled an aging apparatus fleet to meet NFPA guidelines, drastically improving readiness and compliance. Chief Fronimos has also introduced a new incident management system and scene accountability program, setting a higher standard for firefighter safety and

reducing risks of injuries and line-of-duty deaths.

His efforts to enhance training, promote mental health, and foster a positive work environment have created a culture of excellence within the Department. Beyond his internal impact, Chief Fronimos has strengthened Fort Gratiot's community risk reduction efforts and cultivated partnerships with countywide stakeholders, garnering recognition from federal agencies. His record-breaking open house drew unprecedented community engagement, showcasing his commitment to involving and inspiring the public.

Chief Fronimos's influence extends far beyond his Department. Twice elected as President of the National Information Officers Association, he has demonstrated exemplary leadership on a national level, sharing his expertise and advocating for transparency, communication, and collaboration in public safety.

Beyond his professional achievements, Chief Fronimos is a devoted father to his incredible young son, Mickey. His dedication to his family, his integrity, and his unwavering commitment to service are the foundations of his life.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Michael F. Fronimos's 35 years of service are a testament to his extraordinary dedication, innovation, and leadership. His first year as Fire Chief has profoundly transformed the Fort Gratiot Charter Township Fire Department and strengthened the community it serves.

RECOGNIZING MCCrackEN COUNTY BICENTENNIAL

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize McCracken County on the celebration of their Bicentennial. McCracken County is an integral part of Kentucky's 1st Congressional District, full of rich history and wonderful people. McCracken County, along with the City of Paducah, has been central to Western Kentucky's identity and growth for two centuries.

McCracken County has a proud history of contributing to the communities' rich economic, artistic, and cultural development.

The waterways of McCracken County play a pivotal role in the county's story, serving as a strategic hub for inland waterway industries. They continue to attract businesses to contribute significantly to local revenue through job creation, tourism, and business operations.

I am proud to represent the good people of McCracken County in Congress and look forward to seeing even more prosperous years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF COLONEL ANTHONY J. CLOUD

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of Colo-

nel Anthony J. Cloud. Colonel Cloud assumed the duties of Chief of Staff, Alabama Army National Guard on January 15, 2023. In his previous assignment Colonel Cloud served as the Deputy Chief of Staff Operations, Joint Force Headquarters.

Colonel Cloud began his military career as a Combat Engineer in the Alabama Army National Guard. Colonel Cloud received his commission in 1996 from the Alabama Military Academy, Officer Candidate School. Commissioned as an Engineer Officer, Colonel Cloud held various leadership and staff positions that made a significant impact on the ALARNG Engineer and Chemical community. He is a graduate of the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, The Chemical Advanced Course, Airborne School, the Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College. Command assignments include: Commander, HHD, 145th Chemical Battalion, 31st Chemical Brigade, ALARNG, Commander, 151st Chemical Battalion, 31st Chemical Brigade, ALARNG and Commander 31st Chemical Brigade.

Key staff assignments include Deputy Chief of Staff Personnel ALARNG, Deputy G3 ALARNG, Executive Officer/Administrative Officer for the 62nd Troop Command, Plans, Programs, and Environmental Division Chief, and Mobilization Plans Officer, Joint Force Headquarters; Engineer Platoon Leader, Battalion Operations Officer, 145th Engineer Battalion, 31st Armored Brigade, ALARNG; Executive Officer and TAC Officer in 2nd Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 200th Regiment, ALARNG; Executive Officer, 1203rd Engineer Battalion, 20th Engineer Brigade, Iraq.

Colonel Cloud holds a B.A. in Marketing from the University of Alabama and a Masters of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army National Guard Components Achievement Medal with 2 Bronze Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star Device, Iraq Campaign Medal with Bronze Star Device, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hourglass Device and Mobilization Device, Army Service Ribbon, Army Overseas Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Distinguished Service Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Commendation Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Veterans Service Ribbon with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Alabama National Guard National Emergency Service Ribbon with 9-11 Device, Alabama Special Service Ribbon, Alabama National Guard Faithful Service Medal with 1 Silver and 2 Bronze St. Andrews Cross Devices, Alabama National Guard Basic Training Ribbon, and the Parachutist Badge.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Colonel Cloud, and thanking him for his service. Congratulations.