

HONORING COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History month with gratitude for the life of Commander Eunice Butts, her service to our country and Tampa Bay community. Commander Butts volunteered to serve America and shattered glass ceilings as an African American woman in the U.S. Air Force and National Guard during the Vietnam War. She served with courage, empathy and a love of country that continues to drive her work with service members to this day.

Born and raised in Tampa, Ms. Butts graduated from Middleton High School and was the first student to sing opera. Exploring her talent for singing and performing, she continued her education at Gibbs Junior College with a scholarship for music.

Following the first deployment of United States ground troops in Vietnam in 1965, Ms. Butts describes walking down the street and seeing the infamous "I want you" war poster that would effectively change the course of her life and begin her service epoch. Ms. Butts always dreamed of helping and opening doors for others, aware of the oppression that came before her and continued during her early life. Immediately walking in the recruitment center and enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, Ms. Butts knew she was ready to patriotically serve her country and uphold the legacy of Black women in the military. Her instinct to serve rang true and 16 years later, Ms. Butts left active duty and settled in Montgomery, Alabama.

Ms. Butts is the proud mother of two sons and a daughter, Edward, Robert and Franjerner. She is also the grandmother of three children, Benjamin, Zori and Latrice.

As a true public servant, Ms. Butts sought other ways to serve her country and found that the Air Force Reserves were looking for Black women. She continued her service in the Air Force Reserves, Alabama National Guard and in the American Legion for an additional 25 years.

Ms. Butts' beliefs were rooted in the sentiment of giving and showing love to all, especially unsung heroes. In the 1970s, Ms. Butts returned to Tampa where she served in the American Legion with World War II Veteran Willie Mae Williams, where they evangelized the pivotal role that women played in the military. When Ms. Williams passed, Ms. Butts answered the call of letting the world know the untold story of female veterans. Ms. Butts moved through the ranks of the American Legion and is the first African American female to serve as the American Legion Department State of Florida Commander.

Continuing to heal the wounds of Vietnam veterans, Ms. Butts believes that every day, Americans should pray and take under their wings, all the veterans who have served in our military. She often reminded her peers that many have been wounded, if not mentally, then physically, or both. Ms. Butts gave the gift of compassion to her partners in veteran service organizations and preached that service members need our shoulders to lean on for support and love.

Commander Butts bravely volunteered to fight and defend a country that did not always

protect and defend Black women, yet she never wavered in her full devotion to America and liberty and justice for all. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the patriotic Tampa Bay community, I thank Eunice Butts for her 39 and counting years of work to her fellow service members, veterans and their loved ones. Joining the legacy of women who inspired her, Ms. Butts life's work will be a foundation and benefaction for young, Black women everywhere, especially those who choose to defend and protect our Nation. She has effectively nurtured and opened doors for her fellow service members all while passing on the valiant stories of female veterans who our Nation will be forever grateful for.

HONORING THE LIFETIME SERVICE OF JAMES SHORE AND HIS BATTLE WITH CANCER

HON. ADDISON P. McDOWELL

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. McDOWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who has committed his life to public service and who deserves our appreciation and support.

For more than three decades, James Shore has served his country and his community. His service began in 1989 when he enlisted with the United States Marine Corps. For four years, James served in some of the most challenging and dangerous regions in the world: from Somalia in the Horn of Africa to the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm. His time in the Marine Corps was recognized with numerous awards for his bravery, leadership, and dedication.

James completed his military service in 1993, but his service to his community was just beginning. He started a career in law enforcement, where he earned recognition for his commitment to the safety of his community and the well-being of his colleagues. He took a leadership role in the Fraternal Order of Police by helping to establish the Davidson County Lodge 97, where he served as President until 2020.

In 2020, James again demonstrated his commitment to public service when he took a seat on the Davidson County Commission. As a County Commissioner, he made significant contributions to the county's justice and public safety while expanding his public service by taking part in the National Association of Counties and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

In 2023, James was honored with the M.H. "Jack" Brock Outstanding County Commissioner Award for spearheading Operation Green Light for Veterans, an initiative to raise awareness and support for veterans in North Carolina.

In October 2024, James was diagnosed with cancer, and he is expected to complete his treatment on February 6, 2025. Throughout this fight, James has inspired others with his perseverance and commitment to his family and his community. I thank James for his three decades of service. My thoughts and prayers are with him as he navigates this battle against cancer.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT TODD SMITHER

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lieutenant Todd Smither of the Frankfort Police Department for being awarded the 2024 Medal of Valor for his bravery demonstrated while responding to a critical situation within Franklin County.

During a high-risk pursuit with an armed suspect who had barricaded himself in a vehicle following a multi-jurisdictional pursuit, Lieutenant Smither demonstrated excellent leadership by quickly developing and implementing a tactical plan to resolve the situation effectively. Additionally, along with Sergeant Presley, they worked to de-escalate a potentially lethal situation successfully.

Under Lieutenant Smither's directions, his fellow officers were able to provide adequate support, which led to safeguarding human life. His actions and exceptional teamwork skills allowed for a peaceful resolution for all involved.

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

HONORING HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF DEPUTY CHIEF MARK HOOPER

HON. CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I use today to commemorate and recognize Hamilton County Sheriff Deputy Chief Mark Hooper on his retirement on February 18, 2025.

Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement Mark Hooper was officially promoted to the rank of Deputy Chief on June 25, 2024. With forty years of service at the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Chief Hooper oversees the day-to-day operations of Law Enforcement Services which include Uniformed Services, Investigative Services, Judicial Security Services, School Resource Deputy Unit, and Special Operations.

Throughout his notable career, Chief Hooper has held roles in Uniformed Services, Investigative Services, and Narcotics and Special Investigations, rising from Patrol Deputy to Captain. Notable achievements include founding the nationally recognized Pharmacy Alert Program and leading initiatives like the integration and expansion of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) throughout the department's operations. In 2016, he oversaw the training and the deployment of Naloxone to Hamilton County deputies, which was one of the first agencies in Tennessee to provide this capability. In 2017, he led the initiative in tracking heroin and fentanyl overdoses in Hamilton County and the pursuit and prosecution of traffickers.

Since his promotion to Captain in 2018, Chief Hooper has been a driving force in the adoption of new technology within the Sheriff's Office. He has championed the use of body-worn cameras, data analytics, the creation of our Crime Intelligence and Analyst Unit (CIAU), and enhanced communication systems.

Born and raised in Whitwell, Tennessee, Chief Hooper is a 2014 graduate of the University of Tennessee Southern Command & Leadership Academy. He is married to Mrs. Stacy Enloe Hooper and together they have a son, Reeves.

I am honored to recognize Chief Hooper for his many years of dedicated service to the residents of Hamilton County, Tennessee and congratulate him on his retirement.

HONORING CARRIE HURST

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate a change agent, community leader and lifelong Tampa Bay advocate, Carrie Jean Lofton Hurst.

Mrs. Hurst was born and raised in Tampa, Florida, as the youngest of six children. She graduated from Tampa Bay Technical High School in 1977, where she met Robert Hurst, Sr. Afterwards, they became engaged but pursued different paths—Mrs. Hurst's mother had always championed education as a priority, so Mrs. Hurst attended Hillsborough Community College (HCC) and Mr. Hurst started his military career. She worked in the library as a student assistant while pursuing her associate's degree, which she earned in 1979.

Mrs. Hurst delayed completing her university studies to marry and join her husband on assignment.

Soon after relocating and starting a family, Mrs. Hurst started at the library on base at Fort Stewart, Georgia, where they were stationed. She fell in love with the library and learned the skills she needed. Her husband was then reassigned overseas, and she went home to Tampa to await his return.

Back in Tampa, she obtained employment again at HCC's library, where she remained for 18 years as a library technical assistant. During her time there, her love of the work rekindled her desire to further her education, so she worked full-time by day and attended classes by night. She completed her bachelor's degree in 1998 from St. Leo University and then earned her master's degree with honors in 2000 from the University of South Florida.

Mrs. Hurst started her career at Tampa Hillsborough Public Library in 2000 at the 78th Street Library then at the Ybor City Branch Library. In 2008, she became branch manager of the Seminole Heights Library and guided the modernization of the popular library. In 2015, Mrs. Hurst came back to the Ybor City location to now lead it as the new Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Library, named after a prominent Civil Rights leader.

Being selected to open and lead this library would become Mrs. Hurst's greatest professional challenge and role, as this is no ordi-

nary library. The Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Public Library is one of only two African American research libraries in the entire state of Florida. This library is near historical Central Avenue that once served as the hub of Black businesses, Black entertainment and culture for more than 100 years. The library encompasses a visual focus and collection focused on African American life and history. Mrs. Hurst was instrumental in developing initiatives that support access to information and history of this culture and history. She developed community presentations and collaborations, and her efforts were supported by the Library Administration, the Ada T. Payne Friends of the Urban Libraries, the Robert Saunders Foundation and community partners and participants.

"Free and accessible information is a human right and a necessary part of the pathway to equality." Mrs. Hurst yearns to share her knowledge and experience with others. She admires the spirit of service and egalitarianism inherent in librarianship. Librarians seek challenges and continue learning for themselves, to promote and enable the acquisition of knowledge of others and uphold libraries as institutions for betterment, all the things that Mrs. Hurst dedicated herself to.

Libraries have continued to evolve in the age of technology and in the face of the rapid change in the way that information is collected, distributed and preserved. It was compelling to her that access to information and technology could help lay the cultural groundwork for creating social change. Mrs. Hurst embraced this change and mobilized within her community, bringing members of her community to the library for informational and cultural activities. Mrs. Hurst sought to work in urban libraries where she could identify, engage and motivate people wherever they were in their lives. Her desire to assist, encourage and inspire others to use the resources of the library to rise above their circumstances helped to create a strong network of partnerships to touch and transform lives of many.

Mrs. Hurst is also a Charter Member of the Tampa Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a Member of the NAACP Hillsborough County branch and the Beta Phi Mu, International Library Honor Society. In her retirement, she continues to assist in creating community initiatives and she motivates others by reminding them to: "Keep striving, reach for your dreams. It's all attainable. Just put one foot in front of the other."

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am honored to recognize the outstanding accomplishments, leadership and service of Mrs. Carrie Jean Lofton Hurst, who stands as a shining example of the tremendous impact of hard work, nurturing others and providing service to the community to encourage others to reach their highest potential.

RECOGNIZING THE SLCC CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. BURGESS OWENS

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding achievements of the Salt Lake Community College Cross Country

Program—a testament to the determination, resilience, and spirit of Utah's student-athletes.

In Richmond, Virginia, at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Cross Country Championships, the SLCC Bruins made history by sweeping both the men's and women's races, capturing national titles on both sides. This remarkable accomplishment speaks to the extraordinary talent and dedication of the student-athletes and coaching staff.

The women's team claimed its second consecutive national championship, dominating the field and finishing 46 points ahead of their closest competitors. Their impressive victory continued just two days later, as they claimed first place in the NJCAA Half Marathon National Championship—a historic feat for SLCC and a significant milestone in women's athletics at the college.

On the men's side, the Bruins secured second place in the NJCAA Half Marathon National Championship, demonstrating their competitive edge and depth of talent.

These achievements would not have been possible without the leadership of Head Coach Isaac Wood, who was named NJCAA National Coach of the Year, along with Assistant Coaches Kelsey Gilbert, Alden Carlson, and Tom Gruenewald. Athletic Director Kevin Dustin has also been instrumental in fostering a culture of excellence at SLCC.

Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee and a former athlete myself, I know firsthand the importance of athletic programs in shaping character and building future leaders. The success of the Salt Lake Community College Cross Country Program is not just a win for Utah, but an inspiration for aspiring athletes everywhere.

I applaud the SLCC Cross Country Program for their extraordinary accomplishments, and I look forward to seeing their continued success in the years to come. Their hard work, resilience, and sportsmanship embody the best of what it means to be a Bruin.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER BYRON REDMON

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Byron Redmon of the Frankfort Police Department on being awarded the 2024 Medal of Valor for his bravery demonstrated while responding to a critical situation within Franklin County.

During a high-risk pursuit with an armed suspect who had barricaded himself in a vehicle following a multi-jurisdictional pursuit, Officer Redmon provided critical tactical support throughout the duration of the event, allowing for a synchronized response that led to the suspect's safe apprehension.

Throughout this critical situation, Officer Redmon provided crucial support contributing to the resolution. His actions and exceptional teamwork skills allowed for a peaceful resolution for all involved.

Officer Redmon voluntarily performed extraordinary acts of bravery. His actions went above and beyond and have made him deserving of this fine honor. I am confident that