

Waters' early work. His iconic films, such as *Pink Flamingos*, *Desperate Living*, *Female Trouble* and *Polyester* reveal the unique personalities and plights he encountered during his formative years in and around Baltimore.

Waters achieved mainstream success in 1988, after directing *Hairspray*, a critically acclaimed musical set in racially segregated Baltimore in the 1960s, which explores themes of identity, activism, and biases of all kinds. Mr. Waters' films are renowned for their dedicated fan communities, rooted in his dedication to fostering diversity on the big screen and his history of encouraging individuality amongst fans and peers in the industry.

Beyond his filmmaking prowess, John Waters' influence extends to literature, art, and social commentary. A veritable gay ambassador himself, his artistic adaptations have provided a safe haven for his fans to embrace their creativity and self-expression while showing the world the brilliance contained within the LGBTQ community.

The ethos of Mr. Waters' career is a celebration of the counterculture, and a passionate rejection of the norms within the entertainment industry that restrain artistic peculiarity and originality.

John Waters' star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is a testament to his commitment to pushing the boundaries of creativity—not only through his cinematic achievements, but also in life. He encapsulates what it means to be a Baltimorean, and our city couldn't ask for a better champion.

His career demonstrates how the unlikely of places can give birth to the most extraordinary stories.

Mr. Waters has forever changed the landscape of American cinema with his style, ingenuity, and wit. His films will continue to inspire the next generations of filmmakers while providing an example that shows that what some may describe as outrageous might just lead to a new artistic frontier.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize and salute Mr. John Samuel Waters, Jr., for his unyielding pursuit of humor and originality on the silver screen and for his undying love for the one-of-a-kind city that we both share, Baltimore.

CELEBRATING SPAIN'S NATIONAL DAY 2025

HON. CARLOS A. GIMENEZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 17, 2025

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the people of Spain and millions around the world in celebrating Spain's National Day, known as *Fiesta Nacional de España* (National Day of Spain).

As Co-Chair of the Friends of Spain Caucus, I am proud to honor the deep and enduring bonds between our two nations, bonds rooted in shared history, faith, and friendship.

From the earliest days of our Republic, Spain played a pivotal role in supporting American independence, providing vital aid and recognition to our Founding Fathers in their struggle for liberty. The names of St. Augustine, Pensacola, and San Marcos remind us that Florida's story is inseparable from the Spanish legacy that helped shape our Nation's earliest frontiers.

Spanish influence can be seen in our architecture, our language, our traditions, and the vibrant communities that call South Florida home. Every day, centuries-old ties continue to inspire cultural exchange, economic partnership, and mutual respect between our peoples.

On this National Day of Spain, we celebrate not only the remarkable history of the Spanish nation, but also the shared values of democracy, freedom, and friendship that unite Spain and the United States.

I look forward to strengthening our transatlantic partnership and ensuring that the friendship between our Nations continues to flourish for generations to come.

CONGRATULATING NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 17, 2025

Ms. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, Nicklaus Children's Hospital, formerly known as Miami Children's Hospital until 2015, was founded in 1950 and is South Florida's only free-standing pediatric hospital. Staffed by 850 physicians and more than 500 pediatric subspecialists, Nicklaus is home to the largest pediatric teaching program in the southeastern United States. It is renowned for excellence in all aspects of pediatric medicine, and according to U.S. News & World Report, many of Nicklaus's specialty programs ranking among the best in the Nation since 2008.

The tremendous impact Nicklaus has is not felt in District 27 alone. Nicklaus Children's Health System, the parent organization of Nicklaus Children's Hospital, maintains an extensive network of outpatient and urgent care centers in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties, serving families throughout Florida, the United States, and more than 100 countries.

Not only does Nicklaus maintain an extensive network but it also continues to ensure children and their families have access to the specialized care they need and deserve. Nicklaus offers more than 30 pediatric specialties and operates leading institutes focused on pediatric care, including the Helen and Jacob Shaham Cancer and Blood Disorders Institute, the Brain Institute, the Heart Institute, and the Orthopedic, Sports Medicine, and Spine Institute. And just last year, the Hospital opened the Kenneth C. Griffin Surgical Tower, one of the most innovative pediatric surgical facilities in the United States, ensuring that children and adolescents can receive expert surgical care without leaving Florida.

Additionally, Nicklaus has a top-of-the-line emergency transportation fleet. The Hospital's LifeFlight Critical Care Transport Program, which includes six ambulances, two helicopters, and fixed-wing jets equipped for pediatric and neonatal patients, saves nearly 4,000 infants and children annually across Florida, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

From Miami to the Panhandle, from the Panhandle to Central and South America, from Central and South America to the Caribbean, Nicklaus is a world-class institution that

has provided care to so many for decades. On the occasion of its 75th anniversary, I want to congratulate Nicklaus Children's Hospital and commend its continued commitment to advancing pediatric health care for children and families in Miami, throughout the country, and across the world.

HONORING PAUL ECKSTEIN

HON. GREG STANTON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 17, 2025

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Paul Eckstein, a giant in Arizona law and a stalwart public servant, on the remarkable occasion of his 60th work anniversary at Perkins Coie LLP.

Paul worked on many consequential legal disputes in Arizona history that shaped the state's legal and civic landscape. He brought a rare combination of trial skill, appellate judgment, and moral clarity. Time and again, he shows Arizonans that the law can correct course and restore trust.

As lead counsel for the Arizona House of Representatives in the 1988 impeachment of Governor Evan Mecham, he tried the case with rigor and restraint—cross-examining the governor, arguing the evidence, and reminding Arizona that no one is above the law. The Senate's verdict confirmed the point, and renewed public faith that our Constitution has teeth when it must.

Early in Paul's career, he represented Navajo leader Tom Shirley in *Shirley v. Superior Court*, securing a decision that affirmed Native American citizens living on reservations are fully entitled to hold public office in Arizona. He defended voter-driven reform by helping ensure Clean Elections reached the ballot. He stood up for independent redistricting when it mattered most, supporting the reinstatement of the Independent Redistricting Commission's chair. And he defended Arizona's merit-based judgeship selection, fending off efforts to politicize the bench. Across these battles runs a common thread: Paul used the law to safeguard the people's voice and the independence of our courts.

What sets Paul apart is not only what he has done, but how he has done it. He takes the lawyer's oath seriously—so seriously that he chooses principle over convenience, even when it costs him. He demands candor. He proves, by example, that zealous advocacy and impeccable ethics go hand in hand.

Paul's extraordinary impact extends well beyond the courtroom. He taught constitutional law at Arizona State University, and his students now serve across our state. At his alma mater, Pomona College, he and his wife, Florence "Flo" Eckstein, endowed a scholarship for refugee and forcibly displaced students, opening doors for those whose lives were upended by conflict or catastrophe.

Paul served for decades on the board of Phoenix Children's Hospital, including as Board Chair. At Arizona State University, the Flo Eckstein Endowment supports students focused on children, youth, and families, and the Albert & Liese Eckstein Scholar-in-Residence brings leading voices in Jewish studies to our community each year. For more than three decades, the Ecksteins stewarded the Jewish

News of Greater Phoenix, preserving a vital forum for community life and donating archives that keep history alive. Their philanthropy is practical and personal: it meets people where they are and lifts them up.

Paul also lives his values through pro bono work. He stands with those without a voice and no means—most recently as part of a team recognized by the federal court for advancing a prisoner civil-rights case to trial. He has served with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, lending Arizona's steady voice to the cause of equal justice.

Mr. Speaker, Arizona is a better place because of Paul Eckstein. He has defended our Constitution in court and in public life; he has protected fair elections and independent courts; he has fought for a free press and for equal justice; and he has invested his time, talent, and treasure to care for children, and educate the next generation.

On behalf of the people of Arizona, I congratulate Paul on 60 years of distinguished service at Perkins Coie. I thank him for his example of courage and integrity, and I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating a lawyer, teacher, and citizen whose life's work has strengthened our state.

RECOGNIZING COLONEL JOHN BATTISTA AIROLA, USMC, RETIRED, WITH A CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 17, 2025

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to present retired USMC Colonel John Battista Airola, of Huntsville, Texas, with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His servant's life reflects the hard work and dedication that exemplifies the best of our Nation's values.

Colonel Airola entered active duty at Quantico, Virginia in August of 1955 at twenty-one years of age and served with honor and heroism during the Vietnam War with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions of the Marine Corps. His service instilled not only a sense of pride in his four children but led them all to the call of duty serving as officers in multiple branches of our Nation's military.

Colonel Airola served 9 years in foreign service to our Nation with significant combat earning the following: Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Stars, Bronze Star Medal with combat V, National Defense Service Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with palm, Vietnam Campaign Medal with device, Navy Commendation Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Pistol Expert (15th Award), Rifle Sharpshooter and Legion of Merit dated May 4, 1987.

Throughout his distinguished military career, he completed Recruit Training in 1955, then moved on into Infantry Combat Training later that year. In 1956, he completed the ANGLICO Basic Course (ABC) followed by Officer Candidate School and subsequent Basic School in 1957. Carrying on with additional training, he completed Duties of a Motor Transport (MT) Officer and Embarkation Duties in 1958. By 1965, he completed additional

training that included Jr. Landing Force Plan Staff II and Nuclear Weapons Orientation. As the war in Vietnam heated up, he completed Amphibious Warfare training in 1968 and the Senior Officer Preventative Maintenance Course by 1972 and later the Instructors Orientation Course in 1975.

After his 32-year career in the Marine Corps, Colonel Airola transitioned his service over to the HEARTS Veterans Museum from its inception. His countless hours of volunteering, setting up museum displays, participating in parades, and educating the visitors and children is nothing short of amazing. Up until the summer of 2025, at the age of 91, John came in to volunteer every Saturday and even when he couldn't attend regularly, he still financially supported the mission of HEARTS.

Colonel Airola is an exceptional candidate for this Commendation. His leadership is paramount and has furthered the mission of HEARTS Museum over the years by starting the local Marine Corps Birthday Celebration each year, helped foster the early days of HEARTS and served on its board of directors for many years advocating for his fellow veterans in addition to his support for the local Marine Corps League, Toys for Tots and Semper Fi Fund. It is this advocacy and impact which lead him to be tapped to serve on the inaugural Congressional Veterans Commendation committee for East Texas.

Colonel Airola has made it his mission to continue to educate our visitors and the children about the pride in service to our country and our Nation's military history. The Colonel is history; the Colonel is an exceptional American Soldier. It is with this level of love of country and his beloved United States Marine Corps and all of its glory and strength that I proudly commend retired USMC Colonel John Battista Airola of Huntsville, Texas to his friends, family, and colleagues, and salute his service to the Marines, his country and Walker County by awarding him the 2025 Congressional Veteran Commendation.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AURORA ACTIONAIRES

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 17, 2025

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Aurora Actionaires, a remarkable milestone for an organization that has stood as a beacon of service, leadership, and community empowerment in Aurora, Illinois, for half a century.

Since its founding in 1975, when three friends, Donna Williams, Martha Hickling, and Caroline Johnson, met at Hoi Peng Restaurant in Aurora on New Year's Eve, 1974, and decided to form a social club, the Aurora Actionaires has consistently demonstrated what committed civic engagement can achieve. What began with a group of eighteen enthusiastic friends wanting a better community quickly evolved into a force for service and empowerment under their guiding motto: We Care . . . We Act . . . We Serve.

Over these five decades, the Aurora Actionaires have lived that motto through their tireless dedication to education, community

development, youth mentorship, and numerous charitable endeavors across the region. They have awarded more than \$200,000 in scholarships to high school seniors and provided assistance to college students in need. They have hosted workshops for parents and students on completing scholarship and financial aid applications and supported eighth-grade graduates attending the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy's SEAMS Summer Enrichment Program, helping young people pursue academic excellence and opportunity.

On their golden anniversary, we reflect on the many lives touched, the students who would not have pursued higher education without their support, families whose neighborhoods have been strengthened through their volunteerism, and civic institutions that have benefited from their leadership and investment. The Aurora Actionaires have built bridges across generations, across neighborhoods, and across divides and have always modeled the belief that progress is shared when we lift others.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have the Aurora Actionaires as part of Illinois' 11th Congressional District. They have demonstrated what it means to transform compassion into action and service into lasting impact, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them on their golden anniversary and thank them for their unwavering dedication to building a stronger, more vibrant community for all.

HONORING THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLUE WATER HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

HON. LISA C. MCCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 17, 2025

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 35th Anniversary of Blue Water Habitat for Humanity, a remarkable organization serving the people of St. Clair and Sanilac Counties with integrity, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to strengthening our communities through the power of homeownership.

Founded on the belief that every individual deserves a safe, decent, and affordable place to live, Blue Water Habitat for Humanity has never given away homes—it has built opportunities. Through its "hand-up, not a handout" model, it has empowered hardworking families to achieve independence by requiring sweat equity, responsible financial preparation, and a sustainable mortgage. This principled approach has helped countless families put down roots and build brighter futures.

Blue Water Habitat is a community institution. It is locally funded, locally operated, and deeply invested in the well-being of the people it serves. While affiliated with Habitat for Humanity International and Habitat Michigan, every dollar donated stays right here, supporting neighbors and revitalizing neighborhoods across Port Huron, St. Clair, and Sanilac County.

Beyond new home construction, Blue Water Habitat provides critical home repair programs, ensuring seniors, veterans, and families facing hardship can maintain safe living conditions. Its ReStore, run largely by volunteers, diverts