

Mr. ALFORD. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor our January Veteran of the Month, Michael "Mike" Tracy.

Mike entered the Air Force Delayed Entry program in 1975 where he reported to basic training, Air Force leadership school, and Air Force Security Police School at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

After graduation, he was placed on orders to the 20th Security Police Squadron RAF Upper Heyford, England, home to the F-111E, NATO, and USAFE nuclear deterrent to the former Soviet Union.

When he returned to the U.S., he maintained his service after being discharged in the inactive reserve. In 1982, Mike rejoined the military as a private in the USAR in Spokane, Washington. He attended drill sergeant school and U.S. Armor School. He served as a preventive medicine specialist in Germany and participated in Operation Desert Storm.

Throughout injuries, surgeries, and reassignments, Mike served his country in many different roles. His final assignment brought him to Missouri at Whiteman Air Force Base in our district.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mike for his dedication and service. We appreciate him, and we are so glad that his journey brought him to the great State of Missouri. We salute him today.

HONORING JANINE'S FLOWERS, SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Mr. ALFORD. Madam Speaker, today, I rise to honor our January small business of the month, Janine's Flowers.

This fantastic business in Camdenton has been serving the lake area with floral artistry through weddings, proms, first dates, and so many other special occasions.

Janine's is a one-stop destination for all floral arrangements, special gifts, tuxedos, event supplies, and much more.

Back in September, Janine's celebrated their 45th anniversary where Janine Bullock, the original owner, shared captivating stories about the humble beginnings of this business.

It is now owned by Cassidy Dickerson, and Janine's Flowers will continue to make special occasions even more special. Janine was thrilled to pass the torch to Cassidy and knows she will build upon the strong foundation that was established.

Madam Speaker, I thank Janine's Flowers for providing Missouri's Fourth Congressional District with the highest quality floral arrangements and event services. I ask Missourians to not forget about Janine's as Valentine's Day is coming up.

Again, I congratulate Janine's Flowers as our January small business of the month.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BRENDA LOVELADY SPAHN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of Brenda Lovelady Spahn, the founder of The Lovelady Center in Birmingham, Alabama, who passed away on December 18, 2024, at the age of 75.

Miss Brenda founded The Lovelady Center in 2004 to rehabilitate women involved in the criminal justice system. Beginning with just seven inmates, the program rapidly grew into what is now the only State-supervised reentry program in Alabama and the largest faith-based recovery facility for women and children in the Nation.

Through the work of The Lovelady Center, Miss Brenda has touched the lives of more than 20,000 women and children, helping them to walk forward with faith-driven hope for the future. Guided by her abiding faith in God and her steadfast belief in the value of human life, Miss Brenda made it her mission to spread empowerment, hope, and redemption among the women she served.

Throughout her extraordinary life, she has received numerous awards and honors, including an honorary degree in humanitarian studies from Tennessee Temple University in 2012.

On a personal note, I am forever grateful for the opportunity I had to partner with Miss Brenda on behalf of the women and children of Jefferson County, Alabama, including the \$2 million investment that we secured for The Lovelady Center in the fiscal year 2023 from the Federal budget.

I will always remember the warm, selfless, and kindhearted nature of Miss Brenda, and above all, her devotion to serving the most vulnerable members of our community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the extraordinary life and legacy of Miss Brenda Lovelady Spahn. May her legacy live on in the many lives that she touched.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. CHARLES STEELE, JR.

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career and achievements of Dr. Charles Steele, Jr., as he celebrates his retirement after 17 years as the president and CEO of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

A true trailblazer, Dr. Steele has an accomplished career in both public service and civil rights advocacy. A native of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, he was elected to the Tuscaloosa City Council in 1985, a position he held for 2 years before being elected to the Alabama State Senate in 1994.

After serving three terms, Dr. Steele stepped down in 2004 to take over as the head of the SCLC. As the organization's president and CEO, Dr. Steele raised over \$10 million and oversaw the groundbreaking of SCLC's new inter-

national headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Steele's reputation has always been one of great purpose and great passion. He is an honorable man, guided by an abiding faith in God and a love of country.

While his retirement will allow him some well-earned rest and time with loved ones, I know that his commitment to service will continue for years to come.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of a grateful Nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the retirement of Dr. Charles Steele, Jr., after 17 years as president and CEO of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF GUADALUPE COUNTY COMMISSIONER GREG SEIDENBERGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALFORD). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Guadalupe County Commissioner Greg Seidenberger on his well-deserved retirement after a lifetime of extraordinary service to our country and community.

Greg began his career with 20 years in the United States Air Force, serving as a command pilot during the Vietnam war and leading the squadron operating out of Seguin Auxiliary. He then served as a pilot for American Airlines for 18 years.

For the past 12 years, Greg has dedicated himself to Guadalupe County as commissioner for precinct 1, transforming the county and ensuring the foundation for a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Commissioner Seidenberger a joyful retirement.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. RIVAS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. RIVAS. Mr. Speaker, just 5 days into my tenure as a Member of the House of Representatives, several large wildfires broke out across Los Angeles County: the Palisades fire, the Eaton fire, and the Hurst fire, which broke out in Sylmar on the northern end of my district.

I was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, and I consider myself incredibly fortunate to represent it in Congress. The valley is a special place to so many people, including my own family, which makes the heartbreak of seeing images of it in danger sting deeper.

□ 1015

I flew home last week as soon as I saw the images of footage coming out of Los Angeles County to be home with my community and be helpful in any way that I could.

I have immense gratitude for the Los Angeles Fire Department, the first responders, and the firefighters who arrived from across the country and from

Mexico who have been working nonstop to put out these fires. I met with community leaders, including the brave men and women of Fire Station 87 in Granada Hills. Due to their bravery, courage, and action in responding to the Hurst fire, they were able to minimize danger and keep our neighbors safe. Our community thanks them.

I also visited one of the evacuation centers at the Ritchie Valens Recreation Center to learn more about how staff and volunteers have been working around the clock to help those who were forced to evacuate.

I visited the burn sites of the Hurst and Eaton fires, where I was able to assess the damage firsthand and tried to get a better understanding of what Federal resources would be needed to help communities rebuild.

Throughout the week, I was in contact with the Federal Government, including the White House and FEMA, where I was able to advocate for the Federal support necessary to keep constituents safe during the emergency.

My congressional colleagues and I are focused on making sure our constituents and our communities have what they need to get through and recover from this emergency without any conditions.

This isn't about party or politics, and I am proud to have joined both of our Senators and 46 other bipartisan Members of California's congressional delegation in urging President Biden to sign a major disaster declaration so that the Federal Government can provide public assistance, individual assistance, and direct Federal assistance to our communities.

We are grateful that President Biden quickly signed the declaration, and my hope is that President-elect Trump will continue to provide resources so our constituents can immediately access the funds and resources that they need to rebuild their lives.

These fires are the costliest in California's history, and they are impacting everyone, regardless of income or party. Lives and livelihoods have been lost, and many more continue to be in danger. We want our constituents to know that disaster assistance is available and will be available to them. This assistance may include rental payments for temporary housing for those who lost their homes, grants for home repairs, unemployment payments for workers who have lost their job because of the fires, and crisis counseling for those who have been traumatized by this disaster.

Additionally, FEMA disaster assistance may be able to help those who have lost a home regardless if they were uninsured, had insurance, or underinsured. Visit disasterassistance.gov to get started.

My office is also ready to help those who have been impacted by the fires. If my constituents need assistance, I encourage them to reach out to my office, and we will be able to start advocating on their behalf to get the Federal resources that they need.

The San Fernando Valley is home, and I am honored to represent my home in Congress. That is why I am committed to working with our local, State, and Federal officials to make sure our community has the resources that it needs to rebuild stronger. Our community is strong and resilient, and we will help each other come back from this disaster.

CONGRATULATING A. MICHAEL HICKOX ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contributions of A. Michael Hickox and his retirement as the property appraiser for Nassau County, Florida.

For 12 years, Mike has been an amazing public servant, committed to fairness and customer service. Let's be honest, Madam Speaker, being a property appraiser is probably one of the toughest jobs around, but Mike has done it well, skillfully, and leaves the office in a much better place.

While he was leading, Mike also served as the president of the Florida Association of Property Appraisers and then served on the boards of the Nassau Education Foundation and the Nassau County Economic Development Board.

To put it simply, Madam Speaker, Mike has spent his career serving others. Mike may not be our property appraiser anymore, but I know he is not done. I can't wait to see what he does next.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in congratulating Mike on a job well done. Go get 'em, Mike.

HONORING ROMULUS COUNCILWOMAN VIRGINIA WILLIAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I honor the incredible life and legacy of Romulus Councilwoman Virginia Williams, who unexpectedly passed away. She has left a void in our community and in our hearts.

Councilwoman Williams was a relentless advocate for our families, ensuring that no one in our community lacked basic necessities. Her work with organizations like Forgotten Harvest and her creating her own organization because of her passion for organizing food drives, holiday giveaways, and joyful community events embodied her unwavering love for the city of Romulus and our families.

She was committed to always lifting up her neighbors, often going above and beyond to bring hope and resources to those in need. Her dedication reminds us all that even the smallest acts of kindness can build stronger, more connected communities.

Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she has touched. We are forever grateful for her service. I thank her family for sharing her with all of us and allowing us to honor her. My deepest condolences go out to them and all her loved ones during this difficult time.

Rest in peace, Councilwoman Williams.

HONORING DEARBORN MAYOR JACK O'REILLY, JR.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I honor the life of former Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly, Jr. Our community lost an extraordinary leader whose dedication to public service shaped the city of Dearborn and our communities in Michigan forever.

Mayor O'Reilly served as the president of Dearborn City Council for nearly two decades and served a 15-year tenure as Dearborn's sixth mayor.

I still remember my first meeting with him when he was a council president during the time I was a young law student. Mayor O'Reilly was so patient in teaching me about how some community programs were successful while others struggled. He was a champion for workforce development. His patience and his depth of knowledge and willingness to teach me and so many others left a lasting impression, I know, on me.

I would have never thought that I would have the honor to be able to represent him here in the United States Congress. Mayor O'Reilly's kindness and thoughtful approach to leadership embodied what it truly means to be a public servant.

I thank Mayor O'Reilly, Jr.'s family for sharing him with all of us. I know it wasn't easy. My thoughts are with his family, his loved ones, and all who were fortunate enough to know him.

His legacy will continue to inspire future generations not only in Dearborn but throughout southeastern Michigan and beyond.

CONGRATULATING ABDUL "AL" HAIDOUS ON HIS RETIREMENT

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I recognize Wayne County Commissioner Abdul "Al" Haidous for his more than 40 years of public service to the city of Wayne and Wayne County and congratulate him on his retirement.

We lovingly call him Al. He was born in Lebanon and came to the city of Wayne five decades ago. He made a name for himself in the community, running Al's Friendly Market with the help of his wife, Mary, who I love dearly, for 35 years.

As the first Arab-American mayor in Wayne County, his leadership paved the way for future leaders and was an inspiration to so many of us. In 2014, he was elected to the Wayne County Commission. For 14 years, he served our residents with dedication and resilience, always focusing on bringing people together.

I thank Commissioner Haidous for his decades of public service. His legacy will continue to inspire our community in years to come. Please join