

memory of Arthur “Duke” Serotte, a legendary coach and mentor whose reach extended far beyond the field. He passed away on April 14, 2025.

For over two decades at Grover Cleveland High School, Coach Serotte led his teams to 160 wins, 12 Harvard Cups, 10 section titles, and 5 Yale Cups, including a 28-game winning streak.

Coach Serotte’s greatest victories were off the field. He wasn’t just focused on winning. He was focused on the well-being of his players. He understood the challenges they faced off the field and made it his mission to create a safe, supportive environment for them.

During football season, Coach Serotte would host game nights at his own home on Fridays, not just for fun, but to keep his players safe, out of trouble, and focused before their big games on Saturday.

Coach Serotte opened his heart and his home to young people who needed more than a coach. They needed a lifeline. Through football, basketball, and track, he instilled discipline, dignity, and hope.

His son Mike said it best. He had a burning passion for helping, coaching, and teaching kids from any part of the country. That passion shaped lives and strengthened our city.

Even after they graduated, former players often came back to visit Coach Serotte. That tells you everything you need to know about the kind of impact he had. His door was always open, and his care didn’t end with the final whistle.

Inducted into the Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame in 2003, Arthur leaves behind not only his sons, Michael and David, and his four beloved grandchildren, but also a generation of men and women whose lives were forever changed by his belief in them.

Western New York is better because of his mentorship. Our Nation is better because of his life and his service to our community. May Coach Serotte rest in peace.

HONORING DR. TED MITCHELL

(Mr. ARRINGTON of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Ted Mitchell, chancellor of the Texas Tech University System for 15 years of dedicated service to Red Raider Nation in the great State of Texas.

I am honored to have worked with Chancellor Mitchell over the years and proud to call him and his wonderful wife, Janet, dear friends. Chancellor Mitchell successfully led Texas Tech University System to new levels of growth, discovery, and educational excellence during his term.

I wish him the very best as he enters a new chapter of his life. We have a great team of regents chaired by my friend Cody Campbell. I am confident they will find the right leader, but they

will have big shoes to fill, no doubt, with Chancellor Mitchell’s departure.

I congratulate Ted. On behalf of the people of west Texas, I thank him for bearing our banner far and wide and modeling what it means to be a true, fearless champion.

God bless west Texas, and long live the Matadors.

HONORING TEXAS FLOOD VICTIMS

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lives lost in the catastrophic floods that struck central Texas over the Fourth of July weekend.

At least 134 lives have been taken, including 27 young girls and counselors at Camp Mystic in Kerr County. This is an unimaginable and heartbreaking loss for these families and for our great State.

I also want to remember constituents from my district whose lives were lost. Tanya Burwick was the epitome of a hardworking West Texan. Wife to Robert, with four children and six grandchildren, she did it all while working for the past 10 years at the Walmart Neighborhood Market in San Angelo, Texas, out of commitment to her family and their future.

Holly Frizzell was also a mother and grandmother. She was married for almost 40 years to her husband, Lane, who was diagnosed with dementia and ultimately passed away. You can imagine the hardships for her in the last years of her marriage to Lane, but she turned that tragedy and struggle into service, becoming a tireless advocate for dementia awareness.

That is who she was, reflecting the very best of our country and certainly west Texas, and that is why it is a major loss to our community.

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Robert Brake and Joni Brake—two people devoted to service, him an Air Force veteran, her a registered nurse—were celebrating the Fourth of July in a campground next to Hunt, Texas, when the flood overtook them. They leave behind three children, five grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren. They, too, will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, Texans, as well as people throughout the country, are mourning this unimaginable tragedy. We should honor them by striving for the same sacrificial love and service that they so powerfully and beautifully demonstrated in their lives.

I would say that Texans are tough for a lot of reasons, but mostly because we believe in the power of prayer and God’s sovereignty and because we depend on Him for our comfort, confidence, and strength. I know Texans are appealing to the Father of compassion and God of all comfort to do what only He can do—what these words and any words could never do—which is provide the divine comfort, peace, and strength that these families need.

I beseech my fellow Americans and my Members on both sides of the aisle, join us in prayer and asking God to do

what only He can do to lift these families up, to keep them strong and together through this every step of the way.

May God bless our great country. May God comfort these families. Go, west Texas.

TRAGIC STORMS IN TEXAS

(Ms. JOHNSON of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to mourn the loss of so many lives across Texas. We lost the hope of our future, so many children, so many beautiful girls, who just went to camp to have a good time, to bond with their friends, and to have that time that we all cherish from our memories of our own childhood.

Too many lives have been lost. We have the responsibility as members of government to have a look at why, what happened, what could we do better, and how can we make sure that things like this never, ever, ever happen again.

What we know, unfortunately, is that partisan politics had a role. Republicans have historically denied the ongoing effects of climate change and what is happening in our country.

Over the last decade, we have had more and more intense storms, unexpected, throughout the entire country, but surely in Texas. We have had freezes that have killed hundreds of people, and now we had a 1-in-100-year catastrophic rainstorm that produced horrific floods and tragic loss of life.

What happened in this policy is that Republicans at every level of government in our State failed the people of Texas. At the local level, they refused to have support grants from the Biden administration that would have put in place critical sirens and warning equipment that would have warned these kids at this camp to get out, flee, and seek higher ground.

What we know is that communities that accepted these resources, they all survived. The warnings worked. This community didn’t want to accept help from a Democrat, and now we have hundreds of people who are dead.

Requests were made from the State to help, ultimately, and our Governor denied requests three times for over a million dollars each time that they would have, again, tried to provide warning equipment, again failing.

Now what we have in our Federal Government is FEMA. FEMA is designed to be there as a last resort for communities when these unimaginable tragedies strike. FEMA trains and provides our first responders, the first line of defense, the people that go in and risk their lives at a time when it is most dangerous. They can’t do it alone, and FEMA provides critical training, resources, and supplementation.

FEMA is designed to have an immediate response within a minimum of 15

hours. However, under President Trump and his canceling of FEMA, defunding FEMA, firing FEMA employees, terminating hundreds of FEMA employees, it was over 72 hours before critical resources were brought into Texas. Mr. Speaker, 72 hours is critical when you are floating in a river and you need help. In these situations, 72 hours make the difference between life and death, and Trump and our Federal Government failed.

After Katrina, we saw how inadequate FEMA can be sometimes. We saw the disaster of government when it didn't work. Congress put in place some measures to repeal and increase FEMA. One of those was you have to hire an experienced administrator of FEMA, somebody who knows what they are doing, because this isn't a time to play around. This administration hired as the director of FEMA somebody who never even knew whether or not a hurricane season existed, somebody who has no experience in this area.

Homeland Security Secretary Noem put in place measures, cost-cutting measures, that catastrophically impacted what the response was in this situation. Phone calls were never answered. The day after this flood happened, she canceled the contracts of the people who answer the phone when you call for help. That is not the response that this government needs, and we have to do better.

I am calling upon my Republican colleagues, I am calling upon everyone in this Congress to have us come together because these tragedies don't just affect Texas. They can affect all of us. Weather is violent, fierce, and deadly, and it is indiscriminate about where it strikes, but we have the ability to fix it. I call on my colleagues to come together. Let's make it better and let's make sure that these tragedies don't happen again.

HONORING ISMAEL GARCIA'S BRAVE SERVICE

(Ms. DE LA CRUZ of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the brave service of McAllen Police Officer Ismael Garcia during the horrific attack on the McAllen Border Patrol facility last week.

When an active shooter opened fire, Officer Garcia did not hesitate to jump into action. He willingly put himself in harm's way to protect his brothers and sisters in blue and green. In the face of danger, he displayed valor, sacrifice, and selflessness.

When I visited him in recovery, he expressed pride in taking the bullet to protect others. Officer Garcia served our Nation for 4 years in the Marine Corps, earning the Combat Action Ribbon for his bravery. For nearly a decade since, he has continued to answer the call of duty as a McAllen police of-

ficer, and we wish him a speedy recovery.

May God bless Officer Garcia, our law enforcement, first responders, and the Border Patrol. I thank Officer Garcia for his bravery and courage.

THANKING DR. JAMES C. LEE

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Dr. James C. Lee of Seguin for his lifetime of service and dedication to the well-being of his fellow Texans.

Originally born in Houston, Dr. Lee made Seguin his home in the late 1970s. For nearly three decades, he cared for patients of all ages and served as a founding member, treasurer, and finance chair of the Guadalupe Regional Medical Foundation.

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Mr. Speaker, he served on the medical center's governing board as chairman and on the MHMR board, helping those with disabilities and mental health needs access support.

Beloved by both patients and staff, Dr. Lee's presence will be dearly missed. His work to help community members access their healthcare will live on.

Outside of his work in the medical field, he was a devout Catholic, president of the Seguin Area Chamber of Commerce, a 50-year member of the Knights of Columbus, and a 30-year member of the Rotary Club of Seguin.

Dr. Lee's legacy is remembered by his wife, Janice; his 4 daughters, Crystal, Cynthia, Catherine, and Carol; and his 10 grandchildren.

CELEBRATING CENTRALIA'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

(Ms. PEREZ of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the city of Centralia's 150th anniversary.

My grandpa still talks with a glint in his eye about saving up milk bottle caps during the war to go watch movies at the Centralia Fox Theatre.

Centralia is what we all dream of as the center of the country. Though not perfect, it is honest, vibrant, and furiously proud of its heritage. There is a correct ordering of pride based on real skill and deep neighborliness. We have a relationship to our land and water of stewardship and necessity, not just exploitation or recreation.

If my colleagues haven't made it, there is an excellent shop class and State-winning athletics. Their community college is one of the longest in existence in our State with some of the brightest and kindest students I have met. The Mexican food at La Tarasca is unrivaled.

We stand in gratitude to all the folks who have put their life's work into stewarding this incredible community and town, ensuring and modeling for the country what is worth fighting for and fighting over.

HONORING SKILLSUSA

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, many of us mourn the cultural shift in our country toward an identity that is oriented around what we can buy and flash on social media.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep pride in the 90 students representing 15 high schools in my district who placed in the statewide SkillsUSA competition. These are young people who believe and manifest deep cultural regard for making things, doing things, and being captains of their own ship.

My husband actually placed in auto tech for SkillsUSA in high school in Oregon. It is still one of his proudest life accomplishments, and I know it will be for many of these students, too.

I believe that every child who works hard should have the opportunity to be the smartest kid in their school at some point in the day. I applaud SkillsUSA for ensuring that kids who are gifted in the trades, whether it is carpentry, baking, robotics, or my favorite, auto tech, have the chance to be proud of who they are and have their skills recognized and honored.

We congratulate everyone who placed in Washington State's SkillsUSA competition. I am so proud of them. I know the community is, too. Their work is central to the reinvigoration of economic self-determination and agency in America.

CELEBRATING CENTRALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT'S CHIEF FOR A DAY ROMAN WAGNER

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Roman Wagner, a 6-year-old from Adina with leukemia, who became Centralia Police Department's Chief for a Day.

There are 18 law enforcement agencies who take part in Chief for a Day, which honors the bravery, resilience, and spirit of kids who are living with chronic diseases and illnesses.

I know that good kids don't come from nowhere and that it is long work to raise a fighter who believes in public service. I thank law enforcement agencies who have advanced the long work of building safe and strong communities.

To Roman, I hope the power doesn't go to his head. I hope he doesn't actually go to the playground and arrest his big brother at school.

Whether he chooses to pursue a career as a zookeeper or a police officer, I want him to know he is valued and that some of our bravest civil servants stand with him wherever life leads him.

HONORING NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH FINALS RODEO PARTICIPANTS BROOKLYNN BELL AND JACE HARRIS

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two teens from southwest Washington who recently competed in the National Junior High Finals Rodeo.

Brooklynn Bell, a 14-year-old from Rainier, finished in second place for breakaway roping. Bell, along with her horse, Shirley, became the first roper from Washington State to place in the top two in the last 10 years.