

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING EQUALIZED PRODUCTIONS

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Equalized Productions of Arvada, Colorado for receiving the Arvada Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Business of the Year Award.

This year, Equalized Productions—a locally owned, full-service audio-visual and event production company celebrates 25 years in business, marked by an unwavering commitment to quality and exceptional care for every client they serve. Equalized Productions not only successfully navigated significant obstacles, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, but also demonstrated a commitment to its employees by retaining its staff and creating new job opportunities during periods of national layoffs. Even during challenging times, the company remained steadfast in ensuring its team members felt valued, supported, and empowered.

Equalized Productions consistently partners with and supports nonprofit organizations, prioritizes local business engagement, and generously donates their time to assist worthy causes and neighbors in need. While much of this service is performed without seeking recognition, its positive impact is broadly felt throughout the Arvada community.

Every year, this award recognizes a business that provides a superior level of customer service while using ingenuity and innovation to overcome challenges. Equalized Productions' resilience and commitment to both its clients and its employees make them a truly deserving recipient of this recognition.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Equalized Productions for this award and thank them for their commitment to the Arvada community.

HONORING DR. PEGGY HICKS

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Peggy Hicks, founder of the Hicks-Wright Organization, for receiving the Lifetime Achievement award from the Aurora African American Heritage Advisory Board.

Since its founding, the Hicks-Wright Organization has focused on empowering individuals in the Aurora community through education, career development, and mentorship. One of the organization's primary goals is to develop urban leaders who make an impact, equipping them to serve the community and expand the abilities and knowledge of the next generation.

The Hicks-Wright Organization continues to play a substantial role in the development of

the Aurora community. Individuals seeking assistance with securing employment or managing their everyday finances can turn to this organization and expect to receive the support they need. The organization is opening conversations around mental health and creating long-term changes in addressing mental health. These initiatives are vital to helping individuals lead successful and fulfilling lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Dr. Peggy Hicks for her dedication to the Aurora community and for founding the Hicks-Wright Organization. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating her receipt of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Aurora African American Heritage Advisory Board and in honoring her contributions to the community.

HONORING COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR ANGELA ELLIS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Command Sergeant Major Angela Ellis, a distinguished alumna of Mississippi Valley State University, for her historic service and leadership within the Mississippi Army National Guard.

On April 2, 1998, at the age of 17, Command Sergeant Major Ellis enlisted as a Private (E-1). After more than two decades of dedicated service, she achieved a historic milestone when she was promoted to Sergeant Major (E-9), becoming the first female promoted to this rank within the 210th Finance Support Group. She also made history as the first African American female Command Sergeant Major in the State of Mississippi.

Command Sergeant Major Ellis' achievement is especially noteworthy, as fewer than one percent of enlisted soldiers in the Mississippi National Guard attains the rank of Sergeant Major, the highest enlisted rank in the United States Army. Her career reflects sustained excellence, leadership, and commitment to mentoring the next generation of soldiers.

A native of Yazoo City, Command Sergeant Major Ellis is a graduate of Yazoo City High School. She attended Mississippi Valley State University from 1998 to 2002, earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. During her time at the university, she participated in the ROTC program, was a member of the softball team—where she earned All-SWAC honors as a catcher—and also served as a statistician for both the football and basketball programs. She was initiated into the Epsilon Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Command Sergeant Major Ellis began her military career as a Finance Specialist assigned to Headquarters, 210th Finance Battalion. She completed Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Jack-

son, earning the military occupational specialty of 73C, Finance Specialist. She later obtained the 51C Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology Contracting Noncommissioned Officer specialty, further expanding her professional military expertise.

Throughout her career, Command Sergeant Major Ellis has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to leadership development, mentorship, and service. Her career progression reflects the importance of representation and opportunity within the armed services, following in the path of pioneering leaders such as Kamala Harris, who have helped broaden opportunities for women and minorities in leadership roles.

In her civilian capacity, Command Sergeant Major Ellis serves with the United States Property and Fiscal Office as a contracting officer within the Purchasing and Contracting Division. She remains actively engaged in her community as a member of the Omega Beta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and the National Guard Association of Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Command Sergeant Major Angela Ellis for her exemplary service to our Nation, her groundbreaking achievements, and her continued commitment to leadership, mentorship, and community service.

RECOGNIZING JULIE DAWSON

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Julie Dawson of Arvada, Colorado, for receiving the Arvada Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Community Champion Award.

Julie is the publisher for Best Version Media and is an irreplaceable cornerstone of the Arvada community. Julie champions small business leaders by building powerful connections that turn collaboration into real momentum. Her commitment to our community is exemplified by her monthly networking happy hours, which provide business owners with a valuable platform to build meaningful relationships and access key opportunities and resources. The Community Champion Award honors a person who demonstrates an exceptional commitment to serving the Arvada community, and Julie's dedication to empowering local businesses makes her truly deserving of this recognition.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Julie Dawson on receiving this award and thank her for her contributions to the Arvada community.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

RECOGNIZING RENEE GOINS' 96TH
BIRTHDAY

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 96th birthday of Mrs. Renee Goins. Born on February 2, 1930, in Liverpool, England, Renee is a cherished community member of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Renee first moved to the U.S. in 1966, where she settled down with her first husband, Edward, and their three boys in a house on Coakley Road in Portsmouth. Renee instantly became an active member of the Portsmouth community, working many different jobs and advocating for youth and civil rights.

She started and managed her own business for about three years, then moved on to work at the local IRS office in town, then the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for twenty years, and finally as a housing inspector at Pease Air Force Base until its closing in 1991. After retiring at age 61, Renee worked part time for the New Hampshire Lottery Commission and as an usher at the Music Hall in Portsmouth.

As an active member of the Portsmouth community, Renee established the NAACP library in the former Portsmouth library and helped organize fundraising dances to raise money for NAACP college scholarships for local high school students. The NAACP still gives out these scholarships every year.

Renee was also a close friend of the late Mrs. Vernis M. Jackson, a teacher and local Portsmouth hero, together they helped bring Kwanzaa celebrations to Portsmouth through the Seacoast African American Cultural Center (SAACC). The SAACC, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2025, has been a hub for showcasing the contributions of Black organizations and individuals in the Seacoast community.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's 1st Congressional District, I wish Mrs. Renee Goins a happy 96th birthday and thank her for her leadership and dedicated work to celebrate the achievements of Black Americans of New Hampshire. I hope that she had a wonderful celebration with her family and friends.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF DR. WILLIAM DAVID MYERS

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. William David Myers of Rolla, who passed away on January 26, 2026, at the age of 74, after nearly five decades of devoted service providing quality healthcare to the people of central Missouri.

Dr. Myers was inspired to pursue a career in medicine by his family's example. For generations, his father and uncles practiced medicine in the very region he would one day serve. He graduated from Northeast Missouri State University on a pre-medical track and earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

from the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. In 1976, he began what would become a remarkable career dedicated to caring for tens of thousands of patients.

Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Myers was especially proud of delivering nearly 3,000 babies throughout his career, in a testament to the relationships and trust he built with his patients, some of those children later returned to him as adults to deliver their own children. He built lasting relationships grounded in compassion, humility, and an easygoing sense of humor. Patients and colleagues alike remember his warm manner and steadfast dedication to their well-being.

Beyond his medical practice, Dr. Myers was deeply committed to his community. A former high school athlete, he maintained a lifelong passion for youth sports and generously provided free athletic physicals for local students year after year. He believed in investing not only in the health of his patients, but also in the future of his community.

Dr. Myers was known for placing the needs of others above his own, seeking neither recognition nor accolades. He was generous with both his time and resources, often accepting no more than a dollar—or even a simple drink—from patients who could not afford care. He quietly organized friends and family to anonymously assist patients struggling to pay for treatment or even provide Christmas gifts for their families. As his nephew beautifully said, "He was not materially a rich man, but in spirit, my uncle died the richest man in town."

It is my great privilege to recognize Dr. Myers' extraordinary career and his unwavering service to the people of Missouri before the United States House of Representatives. His life stands as a powerful example of compassion, humility, and selfless dedication to others.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF JO ANN BLAND

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of Ms. Jo Ann Bland, who passed away on February 19, 2026, at the age of 72.

Jo Ann was born on July 29, 1953, in Selma, Alabama, to the late Alfred Charles Blackmon and Ludie Wright Blackmon. True to her Selma roots, Jo Ann dedicated her life to the struggle for civil rights and voting rights. As an active member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, she joined The Movement at a remarkably young age, and at just 11 years old, she was one of the youngest participants in the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery.

Despite the violence she witnessed on Bloody Sunday, her courage did not end on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. By the time she reached her early teens, Jo Ann had been arrested at least 13 times for participating in civil rights demonstrations, guided by her fearless and unwavering resolve for justice. That same resolve extended into the classroom where Jo Ann, alongside six other courageous students, integrated Selma's A.G. Parrish High School,

opening doors of opportunity for countless children to follow in her footsteps. After graduating, she attended the College of Staten Island in New York and proudly served in the United States Army.

After being discharged from the Army, Jo Ann returned to Alabama, where she sought to educate others on Selma's role in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1989, she co-founded the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute, and in 2007, she founded Journeys for the Soul, a tour agency dedicated to teaching visitors from around the world the true history of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma.

In 2001, alongside Kimberly Smitherman, Jo Ann began purchasing parcels of land adjacent to the site where civil rights and voting rights activists gathered on Bloody Sunday. Through their combined efforts, the land was developed into Foot Soldiers Park, which stands as a memorial to the countless everyday people who marched, bled, and even died in pursuit of civil and voting rights for all, ensuring that their legacy would continue to inspire future generations.

Jo Ann is preceded in death by her parents, Alfred Charles Blackmon and Ludie Wright Blackmon; her grandmother, Sylvia Johnson; her sisters, Jackie Maxey and Lynda Lowery; and her brother, Al Blackmon. She is survived by her son, Antonio Bowie, Sr.; her granddaughter, Jasmyn Bowie; her grandsons, Antonio Bowie, Jr., Samuel Bowie, and Jordan Bowie; her surviving sisters, Sadie Moss, Mary Myles, and Mary Hudson; her special sister, Frances Bowie; her special daughter, Kimberly Smitherman; her special son, Demetrius Callens; her special granddaughters, Ja'kira Simmons and Charmekia Moore; her special nephew, Tony Blackmon; her special grandchildren, James Henderson and Samuel Flagg; her special great-grandchild, Jaxston Boyd; her goddaughter, Randy (Renee) Garrett; her god-granddaughters, Riley, Raven, and Ruby Garnett; her god great-granddaughter, Ziporah Rene' Stroud; her sister-in-law, Beverly Blackmon; her special friends, Queen Ramsey and Tracy Arnold; the dedicated staff and volunteers of Foot Soldiers Park, who became family and carried her vision alongside her; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members, and lifelong friends.

On a personal note, I am forever grateful for the sacrifices made by Jo Ann Bland in the name of equality and justice. I know that I get to walk the halls of Congress as Alabama's first Black congresswoman because of her courage, resilience, and dedication. Her life is a testament to the power of ordinary Americans to achieve extraordinary social change, and her contributions to the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Movements serve as an inspiration for future generations. In 2024, it was a privilege to bring Jo Ann as my special guest to President Biden's State of the Union Address, and upon her passing, I was honored to pay tribute to her on the floor of the House of Representatives. I will miss her wisdom and friendship. On behalf of Alabama's 7th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the extraordinary life and legacy of Ms. Jo Ann Bland for her contributions to the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Movements and her decades of exemplary service to our nation in our fight for liberty, equality, and justice for all.

May she Rest in Power.