

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING SENATOR SARITA
SIMMONS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend an outstanding and dedicated public servant and community activist from Mississippi's Delta region, Senator Sarita Simmons.

Senator Simmons was born in Cleveland, Mississippi, and raised in a family deeply committed to public service. She is the daughter of Willie Lee Simmons, former Mississippi State Senator from the 13th District and current Central District Transportation Commissioner. Her mother, Rosie Simmons, served as the Bolivar County Circuit Clerk and made history as the first African American since Reconstruction to hold that position. From an early age, Senator Simmons was instilled with the values of leadership, perseverance, and service to community.

A proud graduate of Cleveland High School, Class of 1995, Senator Simmons went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Educational Psychology from Alcorn State University in 1999. Following graduation, she moved to Georgia, where she worked in education and behavioral health, dedicating herself to supporting vulnerable populations. Prior to returning home, she was engaged in drug rehabilitation and outreach efforts in Atlanta, helping individuals and families rebuild their lives.

In 2004, Senator Simmons returned to Cleveland to manage her family's soul food restaurant, reaffirming her commitment to the community that shaped her. When her father chose not to seek re-election to Mississippi Senate District 13, encompassing parts of Bolivar, Sunflower, and Tallahatchie Counties, she answered the call to public service. She assumed office on January 7, 2020, becoming the first Black woman to represent the district in the Mississippi State Senate.

Upon her return to the Delta, Senator Simmons recognized a troubling trend: too many of her peers had been compelled to leave the region in search of opportunity elsewhere. Motivated by the Delta's ongoing brain drain, she has focused her efforts on recruiting industry, strengthening public education, supporting educators, and expanding access to affordable healthcare. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Investigate State Offices Committee and on several key committees in the Mississippi Senate.

Beyond her legislative work, Senator Simmons is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, and the Bolivar County Democratic Executive Committee. Through these affiliations, she continues her lifelong mission of civic engagement and community empowerment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the achievements of Senator

Sarita Simmons and in recognizing her unwavering commitment to public service and her tireless efforts to advance education, economic development, and healthcare access in Mississippi. Her leadership embodies the resilience and promises of the Mississippi Delta, and her work continues to inspire those she serves.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS.
KANG YOP PAK WAITERS

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a remarkable woman, Mrs. Kang Yop Pak Waiters, who peacefully transitioned on February 14, 2026, at the blessed age of ninety-one. While titles can describe relationships, they cannot fully capture the love she gave or the family she helped build. Though she was technically my older brother Greg's mother-in-law, in truth she became family to all of us. Not in-law family, but real family.

Our families grew up together in Cut Off, Louisiana. We were friends long before we ever imagined our lives would be intertwined the way they are today. Greg met Carolyn, they fell in love, and just like that, what was once, friendship became something even deeper. One big extended family. And Mrs. Waiters stood right in there with that big smile.

She was the kind of woman whose presence made people feel at home. Her kindness was natural. Her generosity was quiet but constant; and her faith anchored everything she did. Many of us felt special in her presence. Truth be told, I always felt like one of her favorites. I suspect I was not the only one who felt that way. That was simply her gift.

Mrs. Waiters was born on March 11, 1934, in Kyonggido, Korea, to the late Nam Dak Pak and Sun-Yee Kang Cumon. From those humble beginnings grew a life defined by strength, grace, and an unshakable devotion to the people she loved. She carried with her the wisdom of her heritage and the warmth of a spirit that welcomed everyone who crossed her path.

She was united in marriage to her beloved husband, James Anthony Waiters, Jr., who preceded her in death. Together they built a family that reflects the very best of love, perseverance, and commitment.

She was a proud grandmother to Norman Randall, III and his wife Sade; Neal Randall; Jamar Waiters and his wife Brittney; her heavenly angel China Christiaan Carter; Christopher Carter; Jade Hall; India Kilgore and her husband John; Hennessy Brown, Jasmin Waiters; James Waiters, IV; Tejah Waiters; and Spencer Waiters.

She was also blessed with a beautiful legacy of great-grandchildren whose lives carry her spirit forward: Baylan Randall; Liam Ran-

dall; Ramaj Waiters; Cayden Waiters; Carter Waiters; Marley Waiters; Larry Smith, III; Camron Smith, Savannah Ray Carter; Ahsan Muhammad; Kyro Baptiste, Miquel Kilgore; Jakiah Kilgore; Camden Kilgore; Gianna Kilgore; Qwest Pichon; Qace Brown; and Elias Waiters.

Though Mrs. Waiters never measured her life by wealth, she lived richly in the things that truly matter. Her home was filled with laughter, guidance, and unconditional love. Around her table, family gathered to share not only meals but memories. Her kitchen reflected the beautiful blending of cultures that defined her life: kimchi and bulgogi alongside gumbo; oyster dressing; mirliton; and bread pudding. That table was not just where people ate. It was where family was strengthened.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved husband, and her granddaughter, China Christiaan Carter, my very precious niece. Yet the love she poured into her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and extended family ensures that her legacy will live on for generations.

Mrs. Kang Yop Pak Waiters lived a life of quiet strength, deep faith, and extraordinary love. Her story reminds us that family is not only what we are born into, but what we build together through kindness, loyalty, and shared life.

For my family and for so many others, she was a blessing. Her life was a treasure. Her memory will remain in our hearts forever. May she rest in eternal peace.

RECOGNIZING BARON STROOP AS
A "MONTANA INNOVATOR" FOR
THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

HON. TROY DOWNING

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Mr. DOWNING. Mr. Speaker, in honor of America's 250th birthday, I rise to recognize exceptional individuals who embody the spirit of our great state and Nation.

This February, I am proud to highlight Montana's rich mining history and recognize a man who devoted his life to its preservation: Baron Stroop.

Baron worked as a drag line operator at Rosebud Mine in Colstrip, Montana. In a job that demanded grit, skill, and long hours, Baron showed up every day with a relentless work ethic and a great pride in producing the energy that powers our communities.

Last year, we lost Baron far too soon. He represented the backbone of eastern Montana—hardworking, dependable, and humble—and lived his life with the same sense of freedom and strength that defines the Treasure State.

Baron leaves behind three daughters, including Zoey, who serves on my team as a field representative in our Billings office.

His legacy lives on not only through his family but in the example he set. He worked hard,

• 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.

loved deeply, and served his community fiercely.

It is my honor to recognize his life and count him among eleven other individuals who represent everything that it means to be a Montanan.

HONORING MRS. LAURA MCKIE
FOR HER ENDLESS SERVICE TO
OUR COMMUNITY

HON. EUGENE SIMON VINDMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Mr. VINDMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Mrs. Laura McKie, a proud constituent of Woodbridge, Virginia as she celebrates her 90th birthday on March 21, 2026. For years, Mrs. McKie has been a leader of our community, advocating for education and women's rights.

Mrs. McKie has had a distinguished career, earning a degree in cultural anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis followed by a master's degree from Harvard University. After graduating she went on to serve as Director of Education at the Smithsonian's National Museum of National History. In that role, she was responsible for the Insect Zoo, Discovery Room, Marine Ecosystems Exhibit, and the Naturalist Center including a staff of two dozen museum professionals and 300 docents.

During her tenure, Mrs. McKie was also in charge of creating educational materials and guides for exhibitions, as well as several large-format films, and video productions. She served as the museum's accessibility coordinator, managing the implementation of fully accessible audio tours and ensuring that the museum's resources could be enjoyed by all visitors.

After retiring, Mrs. McKie didn't just stop there; she continued her dedication to public service. Most notably, she volunteered to develop and direct the Lucy Burns Museum at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, Virginia, which documents the 91-year history of the prison that housed inmates from the District of Columbia. She curated the exhibitions highlighting the 1917 imprisonment, brutal treatment, and hunger strikes of suffragists like Lucy Burns and Alice Paul. Through her leadership, the museum tells the powerful story of the women of the National Women's Party and preserves the legacy of those who demanded the right to vote.

In March 2020, Mrs. McKie received a special proclamation from the Fairfax County Commission for Women honoring her as a "Valiant Woman of the Vote" for her devoted work in bringing the Lucy Burns Museum to life and contributions to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Laura McKie on her remarkable life of service and leadership, and in wishing her a very happy 90th birthday.

HONORING THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF HARRY FLEISHER COLLINS, JR.

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and public service of Harry Fleisher Collins, Jr., who passed away on March 1, 2026, at the age of 74.

Mr. Collins is well remembered for his service to the community of Christiansburg, Virginia. He served on the Christiansburg Town Council for four years. His leadership is credited for the development of Christiansburg's Huckleberry Park. Following his passing, the Town of Christiansburg lowered its flags to half-staff to honor Collins' service.

The local Republican Party in Montgomery County believed in Mr. Collins' leadership. Local Republican Party officials, who were impressed by Mr. Collins' strong record in public office and his commitment to electing Republican candidates for local offices, selected Mr. Collins to be Chairman of the Montgomery County Republican Party.

As the survivor of a double-lung transplant, Mr. Collins devoted significant time to the Lung Transplant Foundation. He served as the CEO, worked tirelessly to support the Foundation's initiatives and advocated for those needing help.

Mr. Collins is survived by his loving wife, Sherri; his sister, Valerie Myers and her husband Steve Myers; his daughter, Kristin Sells and her husband Aaron Sells; his sons, Zach Collins and wife Miranda Collins, Brock Collins and wife Becky Collins, and Ryan Collins and wife Brittney Cockram; and his stepsons, Austin Huff and wife Sydney Huff, and Colin Huff. He was a proud grandfather to 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild, all of whom were the light of his life.

I enjoyed working with Mr. Collins and considered him a friend. I join the Christiansburg, Virginia community in mourning the loss of a public servant, community advocate and respected man. Mr. Collins' community work should inspire other local officials in Montgomery County and the greater New River Valley.

HONORING KATHRYN YURKANIN

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor an exceptional public servant and partner to Congress, Kathryn Yurkanin, Principal Deputy Chief, Legislative Liaison, as she retires after 41 years of dedicated service to our Nation.

Kathryn's remarkable career includes 20 years of honorable service in the United States Army. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, she began as a Transportation Officer and later transitioned to serve as an Acquisition Officer, ultimately retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Near the culmination of her military career, she expanded her service into the policy arena as a Congress-

sional Fellow for Congressman Silvestre Reyes. From there, she went on to hold numerous critical leadership roles, including Congressional Budget Liaison Officer, Acting Director of the Acquisition Policy and Oversight Directorate, and Director of Congressional Affairs for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, among many other distinguished assignments. Ms. Yurkanin earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Criminal Justice from Mount Saint Mary's University, a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College, and a Master of Business Administration from George Mason University. Her academic achievements reflect the same discipline, commitment, and pursuit of excellence that have defined her professional life.

As Principal Deputy Chief, Legislative Liaison for the Department of the Army, Kathryn has provided steady leadership, thoughtful guidance, and seamless coordination for the daily operations of the Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison. Across changing administrations, shifting priorities, and complex legislative challenges, she has remained principled, dependable, and unwavering in her commitment to service. In every role she has held, she has embodied integrity, professionalism, and an enduring devotion to the mission of the institution she has served.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Kathryn Yurkanin for her selfless dedication, unyielding leadership, and steadfast commitment to our country. As she concludes her 41 years of honorable service, I extend my deepest gratitude to Kathryn for her sacrifices and contributions to the strength and security of our Nation. I wish her all the best as she embarks on the next chapter of her life, and I know that Ms. Yurkanin will continue to be an inspiration.

HONORING ROBIN JULIANO

HON. KATHERINE M. CLARK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the extraordinary public service of my Policy Director, Robin Juliano, as she completes her latest tour of duty on Capitol Hill.

I know I am joined by both Members and staff, across the House and Senate, in my immense gratitude for this incomparable maestro of the legislative process—who has spent her career mobilizing the powers of this institution to deliver for American families.

I am in awe of Robin's talent and intellect, her generosity and kindness, and her unshakable belief in our capacity to build a more perfect union for our children.

That belief fueled a journey that has taken her to the White House and both chambers of Congress: getting her start with the legendary Barbara Mikulski; waging appropriations fights alongside Tom Harkin, Nita Lowey, and ROSA DELAURO; and advising the President of the United States on his National Economic Council. Robin's leadership on Team Clark has left a lasting impact and legacy of service.

Robin is so beloved throughout this institution, and we will miss her dearly. On behalf of everyone here in the People's House, I offer my deepest thanks and best wishes to Robin, Ben, Oliver, and Elise.