

ways and invested more hours in leading, organizing, convening, helping, and supporting. He served as president of the Blackford Neighborhood Action Coalition and built an extensive network of relationships with other neighborhood leaders throughout the region. As part of that work, Ken co-founded the successful Responsible Landlord Engagement Initiative, to help neighbors in underserved communities work together to nudge, encourage, and shame landlords to engage in improving their blighted properties. He served on and led the San José Small Business Advisory Task Force, where he advocated for the many immigrant-led small businesses that shape San José's unique character. He led United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County, helping other communities to organize, lift their voices, engage in self-help, and make local democracy work. Ken also served as an ambassador for the San José, Campbell, and Gilroy Chambers of Commerce, participated in his alma mater's Lowell High School Alumni Association, very actively supported Crime Stoppers and the Salvation Army, and advanced education and literacy through the San José Library Commission and the Friends of the Bascom Library. Simply, Ken failed at retirement—colossally.

Those who knew Ken remember his quick wit and easy charm. He told a good joke at any gathering—whether speaking to adults in a classroom or entertaining children in a school garden. Strangers quickly became friends. A few minutes with Ken often meant a smile, a new lesson about composting, and a renewed appreciation for community.

For all he accomplished, Ken's greatest pride was his family and the marriage at the center of it. In 1999, Ken married Linda LeZotte, a longtime, distinguished public servant and former San José City Councilmember and Santa Clara Valley Water District board member. Like so many spouses of elected officials, Ken's support of Linda and her work constituted a very substantial community service of its own. Together, Linda and Ken built a 26-year marriage filled with community engagement, and with travel and fun. Ken was predeceased by his son Joel and is survived by Linda, along with a wide circle of loving family members, nieces, nephews, cousins, and countless friends and volunteers who felt like family.

Whether planting a garden with schoolchildren, mentoring a new volunteer, or sharing a laugh, Ken strengthened our community. Ken said that neighbors are family. Today, our Silicon Valley family mourns the loss of a family member and honors his life of service.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAROLYN VERMONT

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of the indelible Carolyn Vermont of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

As Members of Congress, we spend every day representing constituents to the best of our ability, attempting to balance competing interests, voices, and opinions. Today is a rare day when I know, as it relates to Carolyn Vermont, there is unanimity among those I

have the privilege of representing: she was beloved—for who she was, for how much of herself she was willing to give to her city, for the affection she held for her neighbors, and for her zest for life.

Carolyn devoted her life to serving others, always eager to tackle another structural impediment or injustice which prevented any in her community from flourishing. She helped families achieve stability through homeownership as CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County, fought for racial justice as President of the Bridgeport NAACP, improved safety as chair of Bridgeport's Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention, and promoted education as a trustee for Fairfield University, her alma mater.

Carolyn also served as President of the Bridgeport Rotary Club, was a member of the National Coalition for 100 Black Women, and was involved with the Fairfield Community Foundation and her local chapter of the Urban League. She was an unstoppable force for good in the City of Bridgeport who constantly thought in terms of community.

For all the good she did, Mr. Speaker, I want to impress upon you just how good she was. Spending a moment in Carolyn's presence brought you instant joy, lasting motivation to serve others, and the certainty of taking a selfie together. Hundreds—possibly even thousands—of my constituents have selfies with Carolyn hugging them tightly and smiling ear to ear. I know, since her passing, many of us have scrolled back to those photos to bid our friend farewell.

I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the Vermont family. We in Connecticut owe her an immense debt of gratitude for sharing Carolyn with us. She will not soon be forgotten. Trust that I, along with many others, will be there to carry on her legacy—manifested in the organizations she helped build, the initiatives she led, the people she believed in, and the city she loved.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF A DEDICATED BALTIMOREAN PUBLIC SERVANT, MRS. ELLA HILLEN PIERCE

HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mrs. Ella Hillen Pierce, a devoted civil servant who dedicated herself to the City of Baltimore and its people. Mrs. Ella Hillen Pierce was a long-time employee and respected leader in Baltimore's Bureau of Purchases, and her integrity and professionalism in her many roles will not soon be forgotten. A symbol of resilience and a beloved mentor to many of her colleagues, Mrs. Pierce passed away on January 25, 2026, at the age of 98. She will be deeply missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside her.

Mrs. Pierce was a bright and inquisitive child, one of five Hillen siblings who affectionately referred to themselves as the "Fab Five." Following her graduation from high school, she stayed close to her Baltimore roots and pursued a higher education at Catonsville Community College, Howard Univer-

sity, Morgan State College (now Morgan State University), and Johns Hopkins University.

Mrs. Pierce used the skills and qualifications that she gained through her schooling to pursue a barrier-breaking career in public procurement. She began her professional journey as a Purchasing Agent at Morgan State, remaining there for 19 years before becoming the first African American hired as a Buyer in Baltimore's Bureau of Purchases. There, she quickly distinguished herself through her confidence, professionalism, and work ethic, earning the admiration of her colleagues. Rising steadily through the ranks, she ultimately made history in 1987 as the first woman and the first African American to serve as Baltimore City's Purchasing Agent.

In that same year, Mrs. Pierce earned the first of many accolades from her peers in the public procurement industry when she was named the "Buyer of the Year" by the Maryland Public Purchasing Association. In 1999, she earned the National Institute of Government Purchasing's (NIGP) prestigious Albert M. Hall Award, and just 3 years later she was named a Fellow of NIGP. In 2020, at the end of a long and distinguished career, she received NIGP's Inclusion and Diversity Award. The following year, the award was renamed the Ella Pierce Award in her honor, a fitting tribute to her trailblazing career and its lasting impact.

Though her professional accomplishments were numerous, Mrs. Pierce was also deeply devoted to her family and her community. While she had no children of her own, close friends and loved ones were known to call her "Mom," in recognition of her warmth, generosity, and compassion. She loved to travel and took great joy in sharing those experiences with the people she loved.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and legacy of this dedicated public servant. Mrs. Ella Hillen Pierce was a pillar of her community, and she is deeply missed by all those she leaves behind. I offer my sincerest condolences to her nieces and nephews, as well as to her extended family, friends, colleagues, and all those who had the privilege of knowing her.

RECOGNIZING SOPHIE TRAINOR KHANAHMADI

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sophie Trainor Khanahmadi for her service to the 2nd District of Kentucky, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the United States Congress.

A native of Memphis, Tennessee, and graduate of The University of Alabama, Sophie's tenure spans a career of over fifteen years on Capitol Hill. I was blessed to have had her serve in my office for nearly a decade, working her way up from Health Policy Advisor to Legislative Director and Chief of Staff before joining the House Committee on Energy and Commerce as Deputy Staff Director after managing my successful race to become Chairman.

In her current role, Sophie has always been a trusted advisor to the members of the committee and a strong leader for all levels of the

team to further the work of the committee. She brings tenacity, forethought, and a deep policy knowledge that guides both the vision and execution of my work in Congress. Sophie has played a pivotal role in delivering some of the greatest accomplishments of this Congress, such as the Working Families Tax Cuts, which included the most significant entitlement reforms in American history.

For all of her professional talents and legislative accomplishments, above them all, she is truly a wonderful person. I have had the privilege of witnessing some of her greatest life moments outside of work as well, like her marriage to her husband Peter and becoming a mom with the birth of her son Henry a few years ago, and as their family continues to grow.

While I will miss her steady hand at the committee, I am proud of all she has accomplished and I am excited for her and her family as they begin this next new stage of her career.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Sophie for her service to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the committee, the United States Congress, and to our country.

CELEBRATING THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF JORDAN ANTHONY

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate some of the accomplishments of one of the most successful Mississippi student athletes of our time, Mr. Jordan Anthony of Tylertown, Mississippi. Jordan Anthony is a 2022 graduate of Tylertown High School. His collegiate accolades reached great heights while running at the University of Arkansas, where he was recognized as the top student athlete in American collegiate track and field and won the 2025 Bowerman Award, the highest national award for Track and Field. Some of Jordan's other accomplishments include: 2021 Outdoor Nike 100m National Champion; 2021 Adidas Boston Boost High School Games 100m National Champion; 2022 Indoor Nike National 60m and 200m Champion; 2022 Outdoor USA Track and Field under 20 200m Champion; and 2021 to 2022 Gatorade Mississippi Player of the Year. Jordan also holds collegiate records for the 60m (6.47s) and 100 (9.75s) dashes, making him the 9th fastest runner in the world.

After winning the 2025 national championship, Jordan announced that he was officially turning pro in track and field. He is considered a top contender for Team USA in the future Olympic games.

Jordan Anthony has exemplified the highest standards of excellence and earned the respect and admiration of his peers, colleagues, and the broader community. He has brought honor and distinction to Tylertown, Walthall County, and the entire State of Mississippi. I am honored to recognize his accomplishments and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING CW5 RICHARD "VAN" COOK

HON. MATT VAN EPPS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mr. VAN EPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize CW5 Richard "Van" Cook for his extraordinary service, steadfast leadership, and unwavering commitment to the United States Army and our Nation.

Born on January 18, 1972, in Somerset, Kentucky, CW5 Cook graduated from Pulaski County High School in 1990 and enlisted in the Army that September. He began his career as a 19E M60A3 Armor Crewman and later served as a 76J Medical Supply Specialist, with assignments at Aberdeen Proving Ground, in Korea, and with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

After earning his Green Beret in 1998, he joined the storied 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Serving in 3rd Battalion, he operated as both a junior and senior Engineer Sergeant on multiple Special Forces Operational Detachments—Alpha and later as an Assistant Operations Sergeant on a Special Forces Operational Detachment—Bravo. During this period, he deployed repeatedly in support of Theater Security Cooperation missions and combat operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After completing Warrant Officer Candidate School and the Special Forces Warrant Officer Basic Course, he transitioned to the warrant officer ranks in 2005 and returned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group. There, he served as Assistant Detachment Commander, Detachment Commander, and Company Operations Warrant Officer, conducting eight deployments in support of combat operations, including Operation New Dawn.

His experience later carried into the institutional Army, where he served with the 1st Special Warfare Training Group at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, helping train the next generation of Special Forces soldiers. He subsequently returned to 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group and deployed twice in support of Operation Inherent Resolve before serving as the Special Forces Branch Career Manager at Human Resources Command. From April 2022 to May 2025, he served as the Command CW5 Warrant Officer of the 5th Special Forces Group, the senior warrant officer advisor for one of the Army's most storied formations.

CW5 Cook holds a Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences from Troy University and has completed extensive military education, including Airborne, Air Assault, Jumpmaster, and advanced special operations courses.

He is proudly supported by his wife, Tabitha; their three sons, Richie, Clay, and Colby; their daughters-in-law, Victoria and Hunter; and their two grandchildren, Tripp and Ford.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring his remarkable career and in thanking him and his family for their sacrifice and service.

CONGRATULATING COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR DARROLD D. DEGUNIA ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE

HON. DON BACON

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Command Sergeant Major Darrold D. DeGunia on his retirement from the United States Army Reserve.

His career began in 1986 after enlisting in the Army from Crawford, Nebraska. CSM DeGunia served our country honorably for 34 years, culminating in his service as the Command Sergeant Major of the 472nd Chemical Battalion in Chicago, Illinois. CSM DeGunia's leadership positively impacted the lives of countless servicemembers.

I am certain that his dedication and achievement will have a lasting impact on the Army's ability to fight and win our Nation's wars.

Upon retirement, CSM DeGunia is recognized for his distinguished service and exemplary performance of duty, reflecting the highest tradition of the United States of America.

CSM DeGunia is married to Heather-Lea DeGunia and they have three children: Steven, Brittany, and Jacob.

CSM DeGunia will simultaneously retire from his civilian career as a Wage Leader at the Army Reserve Area Maintenance Support Activity 35 in Elkhorn, Nebraska, after 23 years.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate his commitment to service in the Army and his country.

RECOGNIZING COMMISSIONER KARLENE MAXWELL-WILLIAMS

HON. SHEILA CHERFILUS-McCORMICK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCormick. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Commissioner Karlene Maxwell-Williams of Lauderdale Lakes, Florida, and include in the RECORD the following proclamation in her honor:

Whereas, Commissioner Karlene Maxwell-Williams, originally from Kingston, Jamaica, immigrated to the United States as a teenager and has since made Lauderdale Lakes, Florida her home for over two decades; and

Whereas, Commissioner Maxwell-Williams exemplifies the values of perseverance, dedication, and service, having worked for 15 years with the Florida Department of Revenue in Child Support Enforcement, founded her own Mediation and Divorce business, and currently serving as a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator and volunteer judge for the Broward County Teen Court; and

Whereas, Commissioner Maxwell-Williams is a Department of Justice Accredited Representative and Citizenship Coordinator for the Florida Immigrant Coalition, providing immigration legal services and organizing citizenship drives to empower new Americans; and

Whereas, she has devoted herself to community service through mentorship, feeding programs for the homeless, youth initiatives,