

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF
ELIHU AND CAROLYN BRAYBOY

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate the entrepreneurial legacy of Elihu and Carolyn Brayboy, owners of Chiefs Creole Café. Like a hearty bowl of gumbo, the Brayboy's and their beloved café brought comfort and community to neighbors across the Deuces corridor. Their commitment to preserving and investing in Black-owned businesses remain a pillar of their community advocacy.

Carolyn was born and raised in Blakely, Georgia until in sixth grade, when she moved with her parents to St. Petersburg. Carolyn attended Perkins Elementary, now known as John Hopkins Middle School, Gibbs High School, St. Pete Junior College, and Florida State University, earning a bachelor's degree in business and master's degree in finance and marketing. Her parents were sharecroppers and were often financially strained. After school, she would get dropped off at the cotton field and was told to pick cotton.

Elihu was born and raised in Wahiawā, Hawaii, where his parents were civil servants during Pearl Harbor. His grandparents agreed to raise him until he moved to St. Petersburg in seventh grade to live with his mother. He attended Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Bishop Berry High School, now known as St. Pete Catholic, and Bethune—Cookman University, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration. Elihu's mother was a nurse at the segregated Mercy Hospital. His father was a mortician at Sanchez Funeral Home.

Both Carolyn and Elihu grew up in the height of the Jim Crow Era, where Black residents in St. Petersburg were forced to live in what is now called the Midtown area, just off 22nd Street South. When Elihu was attending Immaculate Conception, right next door to 16th Street Middle School, Carolyn spotted him and asked her friend who he was. They dated all throughout high school and separated in college. They were separated for 10 years during which Elihu moved to Louisiana, before deciding to move back to St. Petersburg and finding out Carolyn was now divorced. They have now been married for 46 years.

The Brayboy's are proudly rooted in their faith. A year after Carolyn Brayboy had been diagnosed with stomach cancer and was recovering, her minister had a message for her from Isaiah, Chapter 61, Verse 4. "You are to restore the ancient ruins, the wasteland and devastation of many generations." It was then; the Brayboy's felt the calling to their service to the Deuces community.

As St. Petersburg changed and gentrification spread throughout the city, the Brayboy's were instrumental in protecting

Black-owned businesses and reviving the 22nd Street South Corridor, a historic African American Business District. In 2014, Elihu and Carolyn Brayboy purchased the Sidney Harden Grocery Store building, the only grocery store serving St. Petersburg's Black community for decades and transformed it to a neighborhood corner diner. Despite the false perceptions of the Deuces and racial bias from lenders who repeatedly denied the Brayboy's business loans, Chiefs Creole Café served customers renowned crawfish, po-boys, rice and beans drawing customers from across the Tampa Bay area for a decade until they closed their doors in 2023. With a large mural on the outside of Louis Armstrong, the vibrancy of Black culture can still be felt without even walking through the café's doors.

Elihu and Carolyn Brayboy were not just culinary connoisseurs, but champions for affordable housing and historic preservation of Black culture and life in South St. Petersburg. In 2008, The Brayboy's purchased the first black-owned commercial laundromat. Following the purchase of the café, the Brayboy's purchased the old Ninth Avenue Service Station in 2021. From service station to a 1,900 sq. ft. commercial space has been divided into three separate affordable units, neighbors are able to call this renovated space their home. The Brayboy's have additionally purchased The Dr. Gilbert H. Leggett Building, a rundown commercial building that belonged to Dr. Gilbert H. Leggett, one of the city's first African American dentists. Additionally, Carolyn looks to expand her garden with flourishing collard greens to alleviate the food desert crisis in South St. Petersburg. Through every season of their life, the Brayboy's have remained steadfast in ensuring all people, regardless of race, deserve to live, work, and play in a healthy, affordable community.

The BrayBoys are proud parents to their children Augustus Aiken, III, Lynae Brayboy and Ramona, who has a servant's heart as large and warm as her parents. She is at the helm of the Deuces farmers market, Sunshine Fresh Market, which hosts local vendors who sell fresh foods, homemade goods and often, local music by Black artists.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my St. Petersburg neighbors, I commend Elihu and Carolyn Brayboy for their determination to preserve Black history while renewing meaningful investments to current residents. In a time where division seeps deep in our community, we must all take a note from the Brayboy's menu of wise lessons: "You can solve a lot of problems if you eat together."

RECOGNIZING KATRINA LATURNO

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the extraordinary con-

tributions of one of my constituents, Katrina Laturno, a dedicated volunteer with the Citrus County Fair Association. Ms. Laturno serves on the Board of Directors of the Fair and is an active member of the Livestock Committee. She is deeply engaged in the community on behalf of the Fair and has demonstrated exceptional commitment to its success. Through her initiative and leadership, she has written and presented grants to various organizations, helping the Fair secure additional funding to promote, enhance, and expand its programs. Ms. Laturno has gone above and beyond in her service to the Fair and the Fair Board, generously giving her time, expertise, and persistence to see these grants through from concept to completion. Her efforts have strengthened the Fair and ensured it remains a vibrant and meaningful tradition for our community. It is for these reasons that we are proud to nominate her for this award. Mr. Speaker, part of what makes our nation so great is the willingness of ordinary Americans to selflessly give back to their communities. Volunteerism is a cornerstone of our society and a vital thread in the fabric that unites us. Ms. Laturno embodies this spirit of service in every sense.

It is clear that Katrina Laturno has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am deeply grateful for her dedication and service. I am proud to honor her accomplishments by recognizing her as a 2026 Hero Among Us for Florida's 12th Congressional District.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF MRS. GRACE HALL MILLER

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise with profound sorrow and deep gratitude to honor the life of Grace Hall Miller of Baker County, Georgia—a woman of courage, conviction, and relentless compassion—who passed away on March 13, 2026, at the age of 93. A homegoing service to celebrate her remarkable life will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the Thankful Missionary Baptist Church in Baker County, Georgia.

Born July 21, 1932, in Baker County, Mrs. Miller was the youngest of six children of JoeNathan and Nannie Arnett Hall. She was reared in the faith and fellowship of Thankful Baptist Church, where her father served as a deacon and where she would meet her lifelong partner, Hosea Miller, Sr. Together they became pioneers of civic courage—the first Black citizens in Baker County to register to vote—and raised a family rooted in love and purpose: five daughters and a son.

Mrs. Miller's life was tested by the twin cruelties of personal loss and public injustice. In March 1965, a white farmer shot her husband at point-blank range in a dispute over cattle; ten days later Hosea died of his wounds. The

• 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.

all-white grand juries that followed refused to bring the killer to account. Rather than bend beneath that injustice, Mrs. Miller found strength. She remained a widow and single parent, and she answered grief with unyielding activism.

Her home became a sanctuary and a strategy center for the struggle for civil rights. She opened her doors for meetings after mass gatherings and voter registration drives, offering shelter to organizers and hope to neighbors. She endured threats—a cross burned on her front lawn—and she responded not with retreat but with resolve, calling neighbors to stand guard and protect her family. She taught her children, by deed and example, that dignity demands both courage and fortitude.

Mrs. Miller's activism extended into institutions long closed to people of color. When a school superintendent tried to intimidate her daughter Deborah, Grace Miller confronted him in his office—and from that stand she launched a campaign that culminated in her election to the Baker County School Board. For 36 years she served on that board, not for prestige, but to open doors for children, to insist on fairness, and to shepherd a community toward a better, more just future. Several of her daughters integrated local schools and endured jail and hardship for the cause. Mrs. Miller's quiet, fierce leadership made such sacrifices bearable and meaningful.

She worked to provide for her family, holding clerical jobs at Newton Manufacturing Company and the Jones Ecological Center at Ichauway, all while bearing the responsibilities of head of household. She celebrated every victory for her children: she watched with pride as her son rose to the rank of lieutenant in the Albany Police Department even while she continued to press for accountability and trust between law enforcement and the community.

Grace's life of service continued into her later years. She testified to the truth when her daughter Shirley—a national civil-rights figure—was wrongly accused in 2009, standing publicly for justice and for her family. She lived to see two roads in Baker County named in her honor—small, permanent signs of a life that rerouted the course of a county's conscience.

Her honors and recognitions could not encompass the full measure of her influence. Grace Miller leaves a legacy embodied in the lives she steadied, the children who learned to read and to hope in classrooms she fought to desegregate, and the generations who now pass safely through doors she helped open.

Mrs. Miller is survived by her six devoted children—Shirley Miller Sherrod; Nannie Mae Miller Jones; Sandra Miller Jones; Rubertha Miller Hall; Deborah Miller Walker; and Rev. Hosea Miller, Jr.—as well as 15 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. We remember, too, her late husband Hosea and her parents, Joe Nathan and Nannie Arnett Hall.

Mrs. Miller's life stands as a testament to moral courage: the courage to keep faith when institutions fail; the courage to raise children in the face of violence; the courage to turn a home into a headquarters for justice. She taught by example that one person's steadiness can alter the arc of a community. For her service—as a mother, as an activist, as a school board member, and as a keeper of conscience for Baker County—we offer our deepest gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife Vivian, and the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's 2nd Congressional District in honoring the memory of Mrs. Grace Hall Miller, to celebrate a life spent on the side of justice, and to extend our condolences to her family. May her legacy continue to inspire those who work to make our Nation ever truer to its promise.

HONORING GYPSY GALLARDO

HON. KATHY CASTOR

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Thursday, March 19, 2026

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to honor a captivating storyteller, entrepreneur and economic changemaker, Gypsy Gallardo. Ms. Gallardo devoted herself to leadership and advocacy for equitable economic, social, and political empowerment to benefit all Americans particularly Tampa Bay Area neighbors.

Gallardo persevered through family substance abuse that tragically claimed the life of her mother. Following her mother's passing, Gallardo moved in with her grandparents in South Florida, eventually settling with her dad in St. Petersburg, and attending Gibbs High School. Feeling like a fish out of water, Gallardo left St. Petersburg right before graduation to live in Ohio, ultimately to end up in Kentucky at 19, homeless, alone and pregnant.

Through resilience and determination, Gallardo forged a new path forward. At night, she worked at the Kentucky State University Admissions Office while taking classes. Gallardo graduated from Kentucky State University, earning a bachelor's degree in English and Philosophy. Continuing her education, Gallardo completed a master's degree in public policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

In 1997, Gallardo once again returned to St. Petersburg, bringing her experience to the table as an asset. Her commitment to advancing Black communities has remained unwavering through her professional work and community leadership. In 2005, Gallardo founded *The Power Broker Magazine*, a publication that highlights opportunities and challenges in underserved communities. Gallardo's outlet provides a space for economic opportunity accessible to all, with a strong pulse on community activity. *Power Broker Magazine* is a force, reaching approximately 10,000 African American readers each month.

Beyond her magazine, Gallardo is a household name in St. Petersburg and across the Tampa Bay area. She has been an integral part of the revitalization of St. Petersburg's Black businesses and culture in the Deuces and throughout the city. In 2021, Gallardo led the City of St. Petersburg and a University of South Florida research team in a study of the relationship between racism and infrastructure inequities. As a staunch advocate for affordable housing and the preservation of Black culture and opportunity in St. Petersburg, Gallardo has worked to ensure our neighbors' pocketbooks are protected and that Black contractors are prioritized in projects such as Midtown's Tangerine Plaza, Sankofa, the Historic Gas Plant District, and the Deuces.

Gallardo's work reaches every corner of Tampa Bay communities. She serves as the CEO of Urban Market Analytics, chairs the NAACP Statewide Economic Development Committee, co-chairs the PACT countywide violence and education advocacy organization, and regularly organizes networking events for Black business owners and leaders. She has also led extensive voter registration and mobilization efforts within the African American community, using her platform to amplify voices both locally and across the region.

With a public servant's heart and a deep passion for progress, Gallardo credits her achievements and effective advocacy to her lived experiences. Through poverty and wealth, success and hardships, she never lost sight of the importance of a united community and collective humanity. Gallardo believes the Tampa Bay area is on a path to becoming a nationally influential African American region and reminds us to always work together, no matter where we come from or what we look like. Gallardo is a mother of four, including two nephews she helped raise, and remains deeply rooted in family and community.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my St. Petersburg neighbors, I thank Gypsy Gallardo for her selfless work in our communities. Gallardo is a living testament to what you can do for your country and your neighbors. Through her leadership, perseverance, and commitment to justice and opportunity, Gypsy Gallardo is a powerful shining light every day in the Tampa Bay area.

RECOGNIZING JESSICA SCALISE

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jessica Scalise, Child Advocate and Victim Services Coordinator at You Thrive Children's Advocacy Center, for her extraordinary dedication to child abuse victims and their families. Through unwavering compassion and professionalism, Ms. Scalise ensures that children feel safe, heard, and supported during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. From the moment families enter the Center, she provides calm, steady guidance and helps young survivors navigate complex investigative and judicial processes with confidence and dignity. Using a trauma-informed approach, Jessica works closely with multidisciplinary partners to prioritize the emotional well-being of every child. She also attends court hearings and depositions to provide reassurance and stability, ensuring that children and caregivers never face these challenging experiences alone.

Her tireless advocacy, empathy, and steadfast commitment have made a meaningful difference in the lives of countless families. Through her service, she fosters healing, resilience, and hope.

For these reasons, I am proud to honor Jessica Scalise for her outstanding contributions to our community and recognize her as a 2026 Hero Among Us for Florida's 12th Congressional District.