

HONORING BOB FUCHS FOR HIS INDUCTION INTO THE DADE COUNTY FARM BUREAU HALL OF HONOR

HON. CARLOS A. GIMENEZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bob Fuchs, a leader in South Florida's agricultural community and a third-generation orchid grower from Homestead, Florida, on his induction into the Dade County Farm Bureau Hall of Honor.

For more than six decades, Mr. Fuchs has dedicated his life to the cultivation, preservation, and advancement of orchids, helping to elevate Miami-Dade County as a global hub for horticultural excellence. From working alongside his grandfather, Mr. Fuchs developed a deep respect for the land and a passion that would shape his life's work.

Mr. Fuchs went on to build that passion into a world-renowned enterprise, R.F. Orchids, while also serving his community as an educator. His contributions to the field extend far beyond our district. Mr. Fuchs has been credited with the discovery of new orchid species in Central and South America and led the American Orchid Society as President.

Mr. Fuchs' achievements have earned him widespread recognition, including induction into the Florida Agriculture Hall of Fame and international honors from leading horticultural institutions.

Mr. Fuchs' story reflects the very best of South Florida, hard work, resilience, and a deep-rooted connection to the land. His lifelong contributions have strengthened our local economy, advanced agricultural science, and inspired generations of growers and conservationists.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ASHLEY HINSON

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mrs. HINSON. Mr. Speaker, due to my attendance at the House Appropriations Committee's markup of the FY27 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, I missed the first vote on April 22, 2026.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 130.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PAUL HEAVENRIDGE

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Paul Heavenridge who passed away on December 10, 2025. Paul devoted his career to improving the quality of life for the community of Petaluma and the extended North Bay.

Paul founded and led Literacyworks, a Petaluma-based nonprofit established to expand literacy for adults and families to provide

dynamic resources and pathways for lifelong learning. Under his stewardship, Literacyworks supported adult learners with practical, research-based tools and partnerships that improved educational access, workforce readiness, and family wellbeing. In 2015, Paul helped launch the Literacyworks Center at Santa Rosa Junior College—a model program providing scholarships and wraparound support for nontraditional and economically disadvantaged students.

Paul's commitment to improving literacy extended beyond Literacyworks. He served as a Sonoma County Library Commissioner to support public libraries and equitable access to reading, learning, and information, characteristics he deemed essential for community health. Through Literacyworks AmeriCorps, Paul also championed statewide library-led literacy initiatives, partnering with the California State Library's California Library Literacy Services to strengthen capacity at libraries throughout the state. These initiatives helped coordinate programming, training, and day-to-day support so local literacy programs could thrive.

Beyond classrooms and computer labs, Paul served his community on the Friends of the Petaluma River board, helping steward a treasured local waterway through conservation, education, and public events.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Heavenridge believed that literacy is a gateway to work, independence, and a fuller life, and he dedicated his career to making that gateway wider for everyone. I respectfully ask that you join me in honoring his extraordinary life and in extending our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and the many learners whose futures were brightened by his work.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF VIVIAN COMEAU, GIRL SCOUT BRONZE CROSS RECIPIENT

HON. HERBERT C. CONAWAY, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Vivian Comeau, a young woman from Trenton, New Jersey. I also recognize her as a recipient of the Girl Scout Bronze Cross, one of the highest honors bestowed by Girl Scouts of the USA.

The Girl Scout Bronze Cross is a national lifesaving decoration bestowed by Girl Scouts in extraordinary circumstances. It recognizes acts of exceptional heroism in which a Girl Scout demonstrates uncommon courage, sound judgment, and selflessness while saving another person's life.

Vivian Comeau embodied courage, confidence and character throughout her life and certainly during her fourteen-years as a Girl Scout with Girl Scouts of Central and Southern New Jersey. She was a dedicated member of Troop 30575, a committed sister to her fellow Girl Scouts, and a young woman whose life reflected service, kindness, and quiet strength. Her participation in Girl Scouting was not defined by accolades or badges, but by her commitment to the Girl Scout promise. She consistently showed up for her troop, her community, and the values she carried with her every day.

Vivian's heroism was demonstrated through her decision to be an organ donor, truly a profound choice that gave others renewed hope and life. Her generosity continues to inspire and comfort many beyond her family and community. Following a national review, Girl Scouts of the USA honored Vivian's selfless spirit with the Bronze Cross, affirming the exceptional courage and compassion of her final act of service.

Vivian Comeau's life reminds us that heroism often lies in thoughtful decisions made with generosity and concern for others. Through her actions, she showed that leadership is measured by the lives touched through courage and care, not only by titles or recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I join the residents of New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District, the Girl Scout community, and all who are inspired by Vivian's life, in honoring Vivian Comeau, Girl Scout Bronze Cross recipient. Her legacy of service, courage, and character will endure, and she will be remembered for the difference she made in others' lives.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF DR. BARBARA BIGSBY BOYD

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Dr. Barbara Bigsby Boyd. Dr. Boyd was elected in 1994 to the Alabama House of Representatives for the 32nd District covering portions of Calhoun and Talladega Counties. She has served as the Democratic Caucus Vice Chair and a member of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators.

Dr. Boyd was born in Anniston, Alabama, on January 31, 1937. She attended Cobb High School and received her B.A. Degree in French and English from Miles College, her M.A. in Supervision and Curriculum Development, and her Ed.D. in Instructional Leadership and Reading from the University of Alabama.

Dr. Boyd spent 45 years in education serving in both public and private education in secondary, two-year and four-year colleges including Jacksonville State University, Gadsden State Community College, and Miles College.

Dr. Boyd is a member of the Trustee Board of Murray Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, a life member of the NAACP, as well as the Alabama New South Coalition and Dorcas Art and Social Club. She is also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Phi Delta Kappa, and Kappa Delta Pi. Her committees in the State House include Children and Senior Advocacy, County and Municipal Government, Rules and State Government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary career of Dr. Boyd and wish her the very best in her retirement. I thank her for her service to the state of Alabama.

RECOGNIZING MATHEWS
MUSEUM'S MAY FAIRE

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mathews Museum in Mathews County, Virginia, as it proudly sponsors the County's annual spring festival, May Faire, to be held May 2, 2026, and May 3, 2026. Now in its seventh year under the Museum's stewardship, this year's celebration is especially significant as it honors our Nation's 250th Anniversary.

Founded nearly 14 years ago, the Mathews Museum has grown steadily in both size and stature, becoming an integral part of the County's cultural and economic vitality. Guided by a dedicated Board of local residents, the Museum is committed to preserving, exploring, and sharing the rich history of Mathews County, ensuring that its stories remain vibrant for future generations.

Through the collection and preservation of books, documents, artifacts, and cultural objects, the Museum brings the County's past to life. Its exhibits and educational programs offer residents and visitors alike a deeper understanding of Mathews County and highlight the important role the Commonwealth of Virginia has played in our Nation's history. Each year, May Faire invites attendees to explore a different aspect of the County's heritage. This year's focus highlights the area's rural way of life, its people, traditions, and enduring stories.

Festivities on the historic Court Green will include traditional May Pole dances, musical entertainment, an archaeological dig led by the Fairfield Foundation, and a children's area featuring live animals, games, and hands-on activities. Inside the Museum, new exhibits will further engage and inspire. Among them are the Hunley General Store and a developing diorama of the Battle of Cricket Hill. Guests can also explore the history of the Indigenous peoples who lived in the Mathews area through original artifacts, a hands-on touch table, and a hand-carved dugout canoe.

I commend the citizens of Mathews County for their dedication to preserving their history and sharing it with the public. Their efforts enrich not only their community but also the Commonwealth of Virginia and our Nation as a whole.

RECOGNIZING THE 14TH PASTORAL
ANNIVERSARY OF REVEREND
JOHNNY H. FLAKES, III

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heart overflowing—full of gratitude, memories, and deep affection—to celebrate the 14th pastoral anniversary of Reverend Dr. Johnny H. Flakes, III, a faithful servant of God, a tireless community champion, and a dear friend I have known for many years. An event to celebrate his ministry and stewardship will be held on Sunday, April 26, 2026, at The Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia.

I grew in my faith for over two decades as a member of Fourth Street under the preaching and steady hand of his father, Rev. Dr. J.H. Flakes, Jr., and from those sanctuary pews I watched a young Johnny Flakes, III first learn to love the church, the Word, and the people of Fourth Street. To see him now, shepherding the same flock with humility, wisdom, and joy, moves me in ways words hardly capture. He carries forward a legacy of faith that shaped an entire community.

His life is a tapestry woven with deep learning and undying service. From Tuskegee's gridiron to Ole Miss classrooms of theology and Mercer's halls of ministry formation, his scholarship has always been in service to the flock. But it is in the everyday work, counseling a grieving family, visiting the sick, opening the doors of Fourth Street Towers and the daycare he chairs, and standing with those struggling for dignity, where his heart is clearest.

His civic and ministerial affiliations read like a ministry of presence: President of the General Missionary Baptist Congress of Christian Education of Georgia; Faculty Member of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education; President of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance; Southeast Regional Vice President of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education; Southeast Regional Coordinator for the National Baptist Convention Sunday School Publishing Board; member of the American Baptist College Board of Trustees; Chair of the Boards for Fourth Street Towers and Fourth Street Daycare and Academy; member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; and a devoted Rotarian in Columbus. He serves on the John Amos Cancer Center Advisory Board, the Valley Healthcare Board, the Board of Historic Columbus, the Mayor's Advisory Council for Diversity, Prosperity, and Unity, and so many other places where hope is built and lives are lifted.

These affiliations are not mere lines on a résumé, they are evidence of a man who shows up. He shows up for education, for housing, for health, for history, for young people, and for justice. He shows up when the community needs a voice, a hand, or a prayer.

His awards—from the Dr. Henry Cook Social Action Award to a Congressional Commendation—honor his work. But the truest measure of his ministry is the lives changed: the child fed, the family housed, the student inspired, the grieving heart held.

His family, including his wife, First Lady Jacquelyn Flakes, and his children, Braya, and Kevin have carried this calling with him, sharing joys and the burdens of ministry. He carries on the legacy of his late father Reverend J.H. Flakes, Jr. and beloved late mother, Robena Flakes. I thank the people of Fourth Street, to the countless boards and associations that have been strengthened by his wisdom, and to Reverend Flakes. I thank them for answering a sacred call with brilliance and for leading with conviction and tenderness, and for making Columbus a place that remembers what it means to love your neighbor.

There is a Scripture that I know has anchored him in storms and celebrations alike: "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Reverend Flakes has not grown weary. He has labored in hope, and the harvest of lives touched testifies to a faithful heart.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife Vivian, and me along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's 2nd Congressional District in honoring Reverend Dr. Johnny H. Flakes, III on his 14th pastoral anniversary—to give thanks for his steadfast ministry, to celebrate his community leadership, and to express our gratitude for a life that models the Gospel in word and deed. May God continue to bless him, his family, his flock and the Columbus, Georgia community.

RECOGNIZING MR. DON LAFFOON'S
RETIREMENT AFTER 47 YEARS
OF SERVICE TO ELECTRICAL
CORPORATION OF AMERICA

HON. MARK ALFORD

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize a remarkable Missouri business leader and true American success story—Mr. Don Laffoon of Raytown, Missouri—as he begins a well-earned retirement.

Don is the longtime President and CEO, and now Chairman of the Board, of Electrical Corporation of America, a Raytown-based company that has grown into a nationally respected contractor operating in more than 40 states, as well as Mexico and Canada. Under his leadership, the company has delivered complex industrial and power projects while maintaining a strong commitment to safety, quality, and integrity.

What makes Don's story especially meaningful is how it began. He joined the company in 1979 as a warehouseman and driver, completed an electrical apprenticeship, became a journeyman wireman, and worked his way up through nearly every role in the business.

In 2003, he and his partners purchased the company and continued building a strong operation that creates good-paying jobs and supports critical infrastructure.

Don has also devoted decades of service to the National Electrical Contractors Association, recently serving as Chairman of its Government Affairs Committee, advocating for contractors and workforce development nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Missouri's 4th Congressional District, I thank Don Laffoon for his lifetime of service and wish him continued health and happiness in retirement.

RECOGNIZING MS. LORI READY-
DIGIOVANNI

HON. GREGORY F. MURPHY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a vital member of the Jacksonville, North Carolina community, Ms. Lori Ready-DiGiovanni. Ms. Ready-DiGiovanni is receiving the 2025 HIRE Vets Platinum Award from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Lori is the Human Resources Manager at Stanadyne in Jacksonville, North Carolina, where she is receiving the award. The HIRE Vets Medallion Platinum Award was designed