

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 people 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

by the HIRE Vets Act and is the only federal-level Veterans' employment award that recognizes companies for Veteran hiring, retention, and professional development. To receive this honor, companies must meet strenuous criteria regarding percentages of Veteran employees that are hired and retained, as well as provide resources to those employees that help with integration and personal growth. It is designed to highlight the companies and employees working to support our Veteran population.

While this is Lori's first time receiving the award at Stanadyne, it is, in fact, her fifth award since the HIRE Vets initiative was established in 2019. An outstanding accomplishment, her receipt of this award speaks highly of her devotion and steadfast loyalty to those who have courageously defended our Nation. Lori is a wonderful example of what all executives should be doing to support our service men and women as they transition back to civilian life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing and thanking Ms. Lori Ready-DiGiovanni and her dedication to supporting the Veteran population.

CONGRATULATING MR. KYLE BUCHANAN ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS PRESIDENT OF CRESTWOOD MEDICAL CENTER

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Kyle Buchanan on his appointment as President of Crestwood Medical Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

A native of Tusculumbia, in Alabama's 4th Congressional District, Mr. Buchanan brings more than two decades of experience in health care leadership, along with a strong record of improving hospital operations, advancing patient care, and strengthening workforce engagement. During his tenure as president of Helen Keller Hospital and Red Bay Hospital, he achieved meaningful progress in physician recruitment and retention, while enhancing the overall stability and performance of those institutions.

Mr. Buchanan has consistently demonstrated a commitment to servant leadership—understanding that the foundation of quality patient care begins with supporting dedicated health care professionals. His ability to foster collaboration among physicians, nurses, and staff has made a lasting impact on the communities he has served, and I have no doubt he will bring that same focus and energy to Crestwood Medical Center.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Mr. Buchanan has remained deeply involved in his community. His leadership roles with organizations such as Leadership Alabama, the University of North Alabama Board of Trustees, and the Shoals Chamber of Commerce reflect his dedication to service beyond the hospital setting. He has also been recognized for his contributions with Citizen of the Year honors and remains active in his church, where he serves in leadership roles.

Crestwood Medical Center serves as a critical provider of health care for families

throughout Huntsville and the surrounding counties, many of which make up my congressional district, and its continued success is vital to the well-being of North Alabama. I am confident that under Mr. Buchanan's leadership, Crestwood will continue to build upon its strong foundation and expand access to high-quality care for the community.

On behalf of Alabama's 4th Congressional District, I extend my sincere congratulations to Kyle Buchanan on this well-deserved achievement. I wish him continued success as he begins this new role and look forward to the positive impact his leadership will bring to the people of North Alabama.

RECOGNIZING THE 2026 CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION IN PUERTO RICO

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the dedicated judges and leaders who supported the 2026 Congressional Art Competition in Puerto Rico, an annual national artistic competition and experience designed to inspire high school students to explore art, innovation, and history.

The Congressional Art Competition provides students in grades 9 to 12 with a unique opportunity to develop original pieces that address real-world challenges through drawing, painting, and, most importantly, creativity.

Beyond the success of this program stands an exceptional group of judges, professionals, and leaders in art and entrepreneurship who generously volunteered their time and expertise. They carefully reviewed student submissions, evaluating technical execution and originality, while also offering thoughtful feedback grounded in experience and academic rigor, ensuring a fair, thorough, and meaningful evaluation for every participant.

Beyond judging, these leaders demonstrated a deep commitment to mentorship and youth development. By exposing students to professional pathways, they reinforced the message that Puerto Rico's young people can compete, create, and excel at the highest levels. On behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, I extend my sincere gratitude to the judges and leaders who offered their perspectives and expertise to our district's 2026 Congressional Art Competition, and I include in the RECORD their names:

Dr. Irene Esteves, Deputy director of Collections and Exhibitions—Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR).

Mr. Walter Otero, Founder of Walter Otero Contemporary Art (WOCA), Gallerist, Curator, and Cultural Manager.

Dr. Melissa Ramos Borges, History of Art Professor—University of Puerto Rico.

Ms. Mariel Quiñones, Curator of the Pío López Martínez Museum—University of Puerto Rico at Cayey.

Ms. Ariana García, Illustrator and Augmented Reality Creator, Artist-in-Residence—Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico (MAPR).

Mr. Fernando J. Montilla, Chief Innovation and Technology Officer, Atlantic University.

Their service reflects the very standards we hold our student innovators to—creativity, col-

laboration, and commitment to artistic expression.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, due to the House Committee on Appropriations markup not recessing on time and holding a vote, I missed the first vote on Wednesday, April 22, 2026.

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

HONORING ILENE PAPPERT ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Ilene Pappert on the occasion of her retirement after more than 50 years of dedicated service to the children and families of Staten Island, including 34 years as Director of Children's Aid Goodhue Center in New Brighton.

For nearly five decades, Ms. Pappert has been a steadfast and compassionate leader, devoting her life to uplifting young people and strengthening Staten Island's North Shore community. A trained social worker, she began her journey at Goodhue in the 1970s and steadily rose through the ranks before assuming the role of Director in 1992. Under her leadership, the Goodhue Center has nourished as a haven where generations of children have found support, mentorship, and opportunity.

Each day, Ms. Pappert could be found greeting children with warmth and care—whether helping with homework, tying a shoelace, or simply offering encouragement. Through after-school programs, summer camps, and family engagement initiatives, she helped create an environment where young people could grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Her leadership ensured that hundreds of children each year benefited from enriching programming in the arts, sciences, athletics, and beyond.

Beyond her work within the center, Ms. Pappert has been a tireless advocate for the Goodhue campus and the surrounding community. She worked closely with local elected officials to secure critical funding for programs and played a key role in preserving more than 40 acres of wooded land for public use, helping to ensure that future generations of Staten Islanders will continue to enjoy this treasured space.

Known for her gentle spirit and caring nature, Ms. Pappert has earned the admiration of colleagues, families, and community members alike. Her recognition as a 2026 Staten Island Advance Woman of Achievement is a testament to her extraordinary impact and enduring legacy.

As she transitions into retirement, we celebrate not only her remarkable career, but the