

Yusef's lifelong contributions to the Black community in Minnesota covered a wide swath, including his work with the African American Leadership Council, Saint Paul's Hallie Q. Brown Center, the Urban Coalition, the Saint Paul Urban League, the Sabathani Community Center, the Million Man March, and Saint Paul Strong. He was interviewed for the Rondo Neighborhood Oral History Project, preserved by the Minnesota Historical Society, in which he reflected on his life's work.

Yusef was very special to me and to the constituents of Minnesota's 4th Congressional District. As a leader in Saint Paul's Black community and the Rondo neighborhood, Yusef reached out to me personally over the years, not only in his capacity as a local leader, but also as my neighbor. We were able to have many deep, valuable, and meaningful conversations about the history of the Rondo neighborhood and Saint Paul's Black community. I learned so much from those conversations, which repeatedly proved helpful to me in my work as a member of Congress. I fondly remember some of those conversations taking place on bitterly cold January mornings as we marched together in celebration of the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It was my great honor and privilege to call Yusef a friend. He has been an inspiration to me, and his legacy will continue to inspire many for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the remarkable life and powerful work of Mr. Yusef Mgeni.

CONGRATULATING THE HOUCHIN COMMUNITY BLOOD BANK ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Houchin Community Blood Bank on its 75th anniversary and recognize its decades of service providing a safe and reliable blood supply to families in Kern County and across the Central Valley.

Founded in April 1951 through the generosity of C. Elmer Houchin and the Houchin Foundation, the blood bank was established in memory of his mother, who needed transfusions during her fight with cancer. As the first blood bank in Kern County, Houchin made lifesaving care more accessible and ensured residents no longer had to travel long distances for critical treatment.

For over 70 years, the Houchin Community Blood Bank has undergone several significant improvements to meet the needs of our community. Over the past several decades, Houchin has expanded its reach with multiple new medical facilities for blood collection and processing. In addition, they have upgraded their technologies to ensure the highest quality testing and collection. Today, the bank serves all of Bakersfield and Kern County through multiple collection and processing sites. Thanks to these efforts, and the generosity of countless donors, Houchin has helped save more than 3 million lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Houchin Community Blood Bank on this remarkable milestone. As Kern County's only truly local blood provider, their commitment to service has greatly contributed to ending the blood supply shortage, saved countless lives, and improved access to care.

HONORING CHRISTINA BENZ

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Christina Benz, whom I have named the California 4th District's 2026 Climate Crisis Champion of the Year for Napa County, in recognition of her leadership in strengthening our community's commitment to a sustainable future.

Born in Concord, Massachusetts, Mrs. Benz graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. After growing interested in viticulture, she went on to pursue a Master of Science in Food Science at the University of California, Davis. She then moved to Napa and began to work with our wine community. During that period, she worked at Murphy-Goode and Laird Family Estates as a Winemaker and then as a Winery Production Manager for 37 Vintages. She has since retired and grown more active in Napa County's political and environmental groups.

Mrs. Benz has helped to strengthen and build organizations that are dedicated to making our county more sustainable and cleaner. Over the last four years she has helped to organize and plan the "Annual Napa Climate Summit," an event that has become a staple of Napa County and regularly attracts audiences of 200 or more. Additionally, the event puts a much-needed spotlight on the existential threat of climate change and how residents of the Napa Valley can help mitigate its harmful effects. She is also a frequent contributor to the Napa Register's Climate Connections column, where she informs concerned citizens across the Napa Valley of local progress and ways to participate in taking climate action. Most prominently, she drafted and advocated for a "Climate Change and Sustainability" element in the 2040 City of Napa General Plan that was adopted in 2022. This element is especially important as it embeds sustainability as a core principle of the City of Napa's General Plan and commits that the city will have net-zero climate pollutants by 2030. She was also able to secure funding for the Napa River Ecology Center in American Canyon from the Sierra Club. The Ecology Center will create a community gathering space for future generations. It is dedicated to educating the public about the importance of the Napa River's wetlands and working to defend them.

Mrs. Benz is a staple of our Napa Valley community and participates in numerous organizations dedicated to the health of North Bay and Napa County. She has served on the Executive Committee of the Napa Group of the Sierra Club, the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Napa Valley Transportation Authority,

and the Board of the Napa Valley Vine Trail. She has helped guide our Napa County community as the Treasurer of Napa Green, a member of the Executive Committee of the Democrats of Napa Valley, and as a board member of Feeding It Forward.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Christina Benz has dedicated herself to protecting our environment and educating others about its importance. Her selfless commitment towards our community and the people who live within it is unmatched. For these reasons and more, it is fitting and proper that we recognize her today as Napa County's 2026 Climate Crisis Champion of the Year.

CELEBRATING THE FLANDRAU SCIENCE CENTER & PLANETARIUM'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JUAN CISCOMANI

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the University of Arizona's Flandrau Science Center & Planetarium's 50th Anniversary and the opening of their newest exhibit, *Mysteries of the Cosmos*.

The Science Center & Planetarium started as a result of the efforts of expert University of Arizona scientists and leadership, along with generous funds from the estate of author and Tucson visitor Grace H. Flandrau in 1972.

Recognizing the University of Arizona's excellence in astronomy and space science, the Arizona Board of Regents approved the formation of Flandrau that same year, and construction began in 1974.

From the moment the Flandrau Science Center & Planetarium opened its doors in 1975, it has provided visitors with immersive educational experiences.

Through the use of tools including interactive displays, digital features, laser light shows, large-scale models, and science lectures, the Flandrau Science Center & Planetarium has made studying the stars accessible to the public.

With the immersion of new planetarium technologies throughout the years, Flandrau has gone through renovations to ensure visitors get a well-rounded and unforgettable experience.

The Science Center & Planetarium has opened several new exhibits since its opening, many of which feature the incredibly talented faculty and their transformational research happening within the College of Science and at the University of Arizona.

The newest exhibit, *Mysteries of the Cosmos: Life in the Universe*, opens tonight. This new interactive exhibit is an exciting milestone that will further strengthen the Science Center & Planetarium's ability to bring the wonder of the stars down to Tucson.

To the Flandrau leadership and staff who have dedicated their time to this extraordinary center, and to the individuals who made the Science Center & Planetarium possible in the first place, I congratulate them on 50 years.

Here's to many more years to come and the future generations who will walk through their doors to learn about our incredible universe.

HONORING THE NORTHWEST
GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION'S
65TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. CLAY FULLER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. FULLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 65th anniversary of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, a remarkable milestone.

In the late 1950s, visionaries T. Harley Harper and Fred F. Starr championed a bold idea for regional cooperation. By 1961, that vision became a reality, launching the first multi-county organization of its kind in Georgia—and creating a model for the entire Nation.

What began as a pioneering association has evolved into the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. Today, it proudly serves fifteen counties, forty-eight municipalities, and nearly one million Georgians. From economic development to workforce and aging services, the Commission tirelessly improves our citizens' quality of life. Furthermore, they operate with incredible efficiency, delivering a \$38 return on investment for every single local dollar received.

Please join me in commending the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission on sixty-five years of outstanding official service to our communities and the great State of Georgia.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON ESTES

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. ESTES. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for the following Roll Call vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: YEA on Roll Call No. 138, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended of H.R. 7959, IRS Whistleblower Program Improvement Act, and YEA on Roll Call vote No. 139, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended of H.R. 227, Clergy Act.

CELEBRATING PIMA AIR AND
SPACE MUSEUM'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JUAN CISCOMANI

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of one of my district's signature attractions for residents and visitors alike—the Pima Air and Space Museum.

This incredible museum is a fun and informative tribute to our Nation's unstoppable determination to soar—literally.

The Pima Air and Space Museum opened its doors on May 8, 1976, but the idea for the museum started a decade earlier, when Air Force Colonel I.R. Perkin and the Tucson chapter of the Air Force Association established the Tucson Air Museum Foundation of Pima County.

Thanks to their dedicated efforts, the Pima Air and Space Museum began preserving the aircraft that helped us win World War II and other examples of our storied aviation past.

Several of the museum's founders were World War II veterans who witnessed firsthand a large part of our aviation history. The Pima Air and Space Museum took off as a way to give future generations a glimpse into our Nation's pioneering aviation advancements.

Since the museum's opening, it has grown to include several hangars and many compelling exhibits—it is home to around 400 examples of planes and aircraft equipment spanning more than 100 years of aviation history.

Pima Air and Space Museum is one of America's largest non-government funded aviation museums. It really is a must-see. Its collection of military and civilian aircraft is truly unique.

The Pima Air and Space Museum reminds visitors where we started in aviation, how far we've come, and how we as Americans refused to let anything hold us back.

I congratulate Pima Air and Space Museum on the past half a century. Here's to the decades ahead and many more visitors who will get to experience America's aviation history up close.

HONORING SEAN MCNAMARA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sean McNamara, whom I have named the California 4th District's 2026 Climate Crisis Champion of the Year for Solano County in recognition of his leadership in strengthening our community's commitment to a sustainable future.

Born in Winters, California, Mr. McNamara grew up working on his family's walnut farm in Solano County. He went on to graduate from Georgetown University with a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies. After completing his degree, he returned to his family's 300-acre farm which is the largest regenerative organic walnut farm in the world, Sierra Orchards in California. Mr. McNamara, along with his sister and farm team, manages Sierra Orchards.

After spending more time managing the orchards, Mr. McNamara was shocked by how conventional agricultural practices can devastate the microbes that enrich our soil. He was determined to adopt management plans that promote life and sustainability in his farming. Every crop he grows is planted with climate resiliency in mind. He began using sheep grazing instead of relying on pesticides, created an orchard recycling program in lieu of open burning, composted agricultural waste instead of discarding it, and took a regenerative approach to farming to ensure that the soil remained healthy. Under this management style, Sierra Orchards uses 30 percent less water and 50 percent less diesel than conventionally farmed walnut operations. Additionally, Sierra Orchards does not rely on off-farm agricultural inputs, which significantly reduces their carbon footprint.

Mr. McNamara shares the best practices utilized at Sierra Orchards with others to help promote sustainability. He regularly collabo-

rates with researchers from different University of California campuses, California Association with Family Farmers, the Solano County Farm Bureau, and Western Growers. Due to his openness and willingness to donate his time to these research-based organizations, significant breakthroughs will be made in the world of science and ecology.

Mr. McNamara is dedicated to supporting our Solano County community and serves as a board member of the Winters Chamber of Commerce, Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee, Putah Creek Council, and Rios to Rivers. Mr. McNamara married his wife, Sarah Ashkin, in March 2023. They are blessed with one son named Rylee.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. McNamara's approach to ecology is incredibly effective and his willingness to share his discoveries with others makes him an invaluable asset to our community. His resilience, kindness, and unwavering dedication to ecological justice make him a powerful role model in Solano County and beyond. For these reasons and more, it is fitting and proper that we recognize him today as Solano County's 2026 Climate Crisis Champion of the Year.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I missed two votes in the vote series on April 27, 2026. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 139, final passage of H.R. 227, the Clergy Act, and YEA on Roll Call No. 138, final passage of H.R. 7959, the IRS Whistleblower Program Improvement Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I missed two votes on April 27, 2026, due to personal obligations. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 138, and YEA on Roll Call No. 139.

HONORING MARANA UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JUAN CISCOMANI

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th Anniversary of Marana Unified School District. For the past century, Marana Unified has excelled in its one very important mission: educating our children.

Marana Unified School District takes its responsibility seriously and over the past 100 years has forged a well-deserved reputation for academic excellence.

Marana's top-quality schools are high on the list of reasons that families want to live in Marana.