

the MIIS family of support to help bridge the divides of historic mistrust between Palestinians and Israelis. He helped create a space for the students to share visions of a Middle East at peace.

Global Majority's training programs were designed to impart some basic and practical skills in negotiation strategy and tactics. With MIIS students and graduates Cameron Hunter, Lejla Bratovic, Ramiz Younis, and Nick Tomb, we recreated a MIIS family environment in the heart of the Middle East, where mutual respect and open-exchange built bridges between cultures and those who had always seen "the other" as their enemies.

While I like to think that our training imparted some value, I came to realize that it was often the time that students spent together in Jordanian nightclubs, dancing and socializing, that built the lasting human connections. These experiences helped participants discover their shared humanity. In fact, out of one of those Global Majority conferences emerged a romance and a marriage between a Palestinian and an Israeli!

This Romeo and Juliet connection along with others have been called "MIIS-matches"—those relationships that take shape with couples who met at MIIS.

Similarly, MIIS family graduates will continue to intersect and network around the world. Graduates, you will bring a critically needed mindset to your future work.

We have seen the power of MIIS-educated interpreters and translators where according to Professor and former Dean Laura Burian, high powered international negotiations have relied on interpreters for all parties who shared a common bond—they were all trained at MIIS.

In the arena of nuclear non-proliferation, as certain world leaders have actually threatened the use of nuclear weapons, we have heard from the founder and director of the Center for Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies, Bill Potter, of high stakes meetings of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference where as many as one half of the members of national delegations are members of the MIIS family—those trained by Bill Potter, Jean Du Preez, and the Center's entire team. These human connections that you have helped to build can prove critical to the affirmation of existing and future treaties.

Professor Potter and Professor Anna Vassilieva of the Russian Studies Program have served the MIIS family of students and graduates for decades. I think of them as the patriarch and matriarch of the faculty, staff, and students of MIIS who have worked for decades to build the international human connections that can lead to greater global understanding and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Thank you, Bill and Anna.

Professor Mahabat Baimyrzиеva has helped to build the MIIS family through long distance learning and cutting-edge educational technology as she has trained students in the art and science of sustainable organizational development that is also reliant on human connections. Professor Maha has shown students and others how to build organizations that can serve and heal our interconnected world.

While our world is rich in natural resources, we are also living in a world that faces the ravages of climate change that threatens all life on land and sea. Professors Jeffrey Langholz and Jason Scorse have built a pioneering program in environmental and ocean policy, and management. They have relied on science and human connections to create pathways of possibility to save our planet. They look to you, MIIS graduates, to embrace the urgency of these threats to inspire and galvanize greater

unity among nations and people and to demand that policy makers work together based on a fundamental respect for science, not its abandonment.

Professors Robert Rokowsky and Wei Liang have continued to lead training programs in international trade and diplomacy, developed by Professor Feketekuty, grounded in practical professional skills. Their MIIS graduates have earned the respect of policy makers and academics in the field of international trade around the globe.

And, among the MIIS family of graduates, we have seen leaders emerge internationally and in support of our local communities. Graduates Chris Devers and John Myers have helped to build the Rancho Cielo program in Salinas which is serving at-risk youth who have benefited from the work of MIIS student volunteers.

Graduates, with the diplomas you have earned today, you also receive a life membership in the MIIS family. You will always be a MIIS graduate and now carry the privilege and responsibility of being ambassadors of the MIIS legacy and the MIIS family—a family that we are pleased to learn will likely continue to grow.

As you embark upon today's troubled world, you will face the many challenges faced by the human family. But while many look at the world in desperation, you bring tools to a world that needs your skills now more than ever. The MIIS family, dedicated to critical global issues and making a difference, will grow with your contributions.

It won't be easy. We are living in a new world paradigm where leaders speak of training more lethal warriors and ignore the Rule of Law and international law with impunity.

And yet, in this time of such great need, we know that higher education is in a period of contraction. During this academic year alone, the U.S. government has dropped the number of international student visas by almost 100,000, representing a 36% decline in international student enrollments. Some have heralded the denial of visas to international students as an achievement, but they show their ignorance as they fail to recognize the value that international students bring to our nation and to the global commons.

At the same time, immigrant workers are being targeted by ICE with no respect for their due process or basic civil rights. We must remember the critical contributions that immigrant workers and their families make to our economy, our communities, and our humanity. Professor William Arrocha has contributed greatly to the field of immigration and migration studies and has served as an expert on the current crisis. *Mil gracias*, Professor Arrocha!

Internationally, we have witnessed the dismantling and dissolution of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has resulted in the documented deaths of over 600,000 innocent civilians—the majority, women and children. These preventable deaths resulted from the drastic cut-off of nutritional support, medicines, and medical care. You and members of the MIIS family can be instrumental in reversing the tragic effects of these brutal decisions.

As active wars continue to rage, the death toll remains highest among innocents, among women and children and non-combatants. Those who initiate these wars are failures. We must develop leaders who are measured on their ability to negotiate, to build diplomatic relationships, and to invest in the welfare and survival of people—not in their destruction.

As you march with your diplomas today, you carry not only a lifelong professional credential—you also join the ranks of the MIIS family living around the world. You are

now among the best trained on the planet to bring together experts in multiple disciplines to explore pathways to peace, global sustainability, cross-cultural communication, and public health.

Graduates of the Class of 2026, the time is now. The world needs you more than ever before.

My final word of advice to you as we speak of the MIIS family is how you will embark on your professional journey with your own families. As you pursue important and demanding jobs, at the end of the day, at the end of your career, the family with whom you live and create a life will be among your most important and valuable supporters. The family that supports you will not remember you for any piece of legislation, trade agreement, or international treaty that you might have helped to negotiate, or a high stakes meeting you helped to interpret . . . NO, they will remember the time you spent together!

So, in your busy and important work calendars, remember to include and prioritize family time—time with your partners, spouses, children, parents and grandparents. These will be among the most important appointments in your calendar in your life's journey.

Finally, my congratulations and best wishes to each and all of you!

Go now, Members and ambassadors of the MIIS family. Make us proud by doing good, and by being good people. Our world needs you!

Thank you.

HONORING MRS. ANNETTE  
TILLMAN HILL

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Annette Tillman Hill, a native of Copiah County who is known for being a distinguished educator, counselor, civic leader, and community advocate.

Mrs. Hill began her educational journey at Center Hill Elementary School, attended Piney Woods for junior high school, and graduated from Utica Institute High School. She entered Tougaloo College in the fall of 1952 at just fourteen years old and graduated in 1956 at the age of eighteen. While attending Tougaloo, she was initiated into the Gamma Omicron Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Mrs. Hill was inducted in the Tougaloo College Hall of Fame in 2015. She also served as Regional Chairperson for the Bush Challenge National Alumni Giving Fund and remains an active member of the Tougaloo National Alumni Association.

Following graduation, Mrs. Hill began her career as a Science and Mathematics teacher at Parrish High School in Hazlehurst, where she taught for four years. She later relocated to Chicago and continued her work in education at Wendell Phillips High School, serving both as a Science and Mathematics teacher and later as a school counselor. During this time, she earned a Master of Education degree in Guidance and Counseling from Chicago State University.

In 1971, Mrs. Hill returned to Mississippi to serve as a counselor at Jackson State University. While at Jackson State University, she served on numerous committees and boards,

including the Committee for Health Professions and Recruitment and the Advisory Board for St. Dominic Mental Health Center’s Task Force for Children, where she helped assess community needs and recommend services for underserved youth and families.

In 1982, Mrs. Hill returned to the Hazlehurst City School District as a high school counselor, a position she held until retirement. During her tenure at Hazlehurst High School, she played a pivotal role in establishing the Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) program, which remains an important and successful component of the school today. She also served on the ROTC Scholarship Committee, helping students access educational and leadership opportunities.

Beyond education, Mrs. Hill has consistently demonstrated unwavering dedication to civic engagement and community improvement. She is a devoted member of NAACP and previously served as secretary and vice president of the Hazlehurst branch. She represented Covich County on the Central Mississippi Red Cross Board and served as Covich County FEMA Chairperson. Her civic leadership also includes service on the Covich County Board of Economic Development, the Hazlehurst Zoning Board as secretary, and the Board of Directors of the Hazlehurst Unit of the Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Annette Tillman Hill, for her steadfast commitment to education, mentorship, faith, and public service. She stands as an exemplary leader whose legacy of service and compassion merits recognition.

**RECOGNIZING JACOB TIERNEY FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY**

**HON. MARK TAKANO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 4, 2026*

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jacob Tierney for his significant contributions to the LGBTQ+ community.

Throughout his career, he has helped bring diverse LGBTQ+ stories and characters to audiences, contributing to greater awareness, empathy, and representation. His storytelling

explores themes of identity, belonging, and human connection, offering nuanced portrayals that move beyond stereotypes. More than simply entertaining, his work invites reflection, expands perspectives, and helps foster a richer and more inclusive cultural conversation.

Jacob Tierney has helped illuminate LGBTQ+ experiences for viewers and audiences worldwide.

His most recent work, *Heated Rivalry*, has received widespread acclaim, earning both a Peabody Award and the GLAAD Award for Outstanding New Television Series. Further accolades include 18 Canadian Screen Award nominations, including Best Writing, Best Direction, and Best Drama Series.

His creative vision has invited audiences to engage with diverse experiences and perspectives. His wit, humor, and artistic contributions have helped promote greater awareness and have pushed forward meaningful change.

I thank him for inspiring countless individuals to approach the world with greater compassion and acceptance.

**HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MS. SYLVIA COLLINS**

**HON. MARC A. VEASEY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 4, 2026*

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life, legacy, and extraordinary service of Ms. Sylvia Collins, a dedicated community activist, Democratic precinct chair, and tireless advocate for justice whose unwavering commitment to serving others left a profound and lasting impact on Dallas, Oak Cliff, and communities throughout North Texas.

Ms. Collins devoted decades of her life to uplifting her neighbors and strengthening civic engagement throughout Dallas County. As a longtime Democratic precinct chair and community organizer, she worked hard to ensure that all voices were heard and represented. Her dedication to public service extended far beyond politics, as she consistently stood alongside those seeking opportunity.

Throughout her life, Ms. Collins became known in Dallas as a passionate advocate who never hesitated to answer the call to

serve and stood on the frontlines fighting for justice. Whether assisting with voter registration efforts, supporting local campaigns, advocating for civil rights, standing up for immigrants and underserved communities, or volunteering her time at community events, she remained steadfast in her belief that meaningful change begins with ordinary people willing to take action.

Friends, colleagues, and elected leaders alike remember Ms. Collins as a tireless volunteer and compassionate servant leader whose kindness matched her dedication. She possessed a unique ability to bring people together, foster civic participation, and remind others of the power of community. She was especially admired for her unwavering advocacy, which was rooted not in personal recognition, but in a sincere desire to improve the lives of others and strengthen the communities she loved.

Ms. Collins’ life was tragically cut short in the devastating apartment explosion and fire that occurred in Oak Cliff in May 2026. While the circumstances surrounding this tragedy remain under investigation, the loss of Ms. Collins has left an immeasurable void in the hearts of her family, friends, colleagues, and the countless individuals whose lives she touched through her service and advocacy.

Today, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Sylvia Collins. We honor her extraordinary life, her steadfast commitment to public service, and the lasting example she leaves and will continue to live on in Dallas, Oak Cliff, and in the many lives she touched throughout her remarkable lifetime.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. MAXINE WATERS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 4, 2026*

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, due to unavoidable circumstances, I arrived late on June 3, 2026, and therefore missed four votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 192; YEA on Roll Call No. 193; NAY on Roll Call No. 194; and NAY on Roll Call No. 195.