

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING MRS. MARY SMITH-BLACKMON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Mrs. Mary Smith-Blackmon of Canton, Mississippi, whose courage and perseverance helped shape the story of school desegregation in our State of Mississippi.

In 1965, Mary Smith-Blackmon made history by transferring from Rogers High School, an all-Black school, to Canton High School which had previously been all white. Her courage marked a significant turning point in the fight to desegregate public education in Mississippi and helped pave the way for greater education equity across the state.

From the moment she stepped onto campus at Canton High School, Mrs. Smith-Blackmon was met with open hostility. Alongside her peers, she faced harassment from the students, isolation within classrooms, and a school environment designed to make them feel unwelcome. Despite being targeted, ridiculed, and humiliated, she returned each day with strength and determination, refusing to let adversity stand in the way of her education.

Eventually, she became the only one of the three black students to remain at Canton High School, carrying the weight of integration largely on her own. In May 1966, she graduated with honors, becoming the first African American student to graduate from an all-white Canton High School.

Her accomplishment in Canton, Mississippi, was not only a personal victory, but a milestone in the long struggle for educational equity in our State. It reflected both the painful realities of integration and the extraordinary strength required of those who led it.

After graduation, Mrs. Smith-Blackmon continued her education at Tougaloo College and Jackson State University, where she studied education. She returned home to Canton, Mississippi, and devoted more than 30 years to teaching, mentoring, and uplifting generations of students in the very community where she once endured such hardship. Her story reminds us that progress in Mississippi did not come easily or without sacrifice. It came through resilience.

Mr. Speaker, today we honor Mrs. Mary Smith-Blackmon for her historic achievement, lifelong dedication to education, and her enduring legacy as a pioneer of school desegregation in our State of Mississippi.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her remarkable life and contributions to Mississippi.

CELEBRATING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF COLUMBIA BOROUGH

HON. LLOYD SMUCKER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate the 300th anniversary of Columbia Borough in Pennsylvania. Columbia, located in western Lancaster County along the Susquehanna River, was founded in 1726 by Quaker settler and entrepreneur John Wright near a Shawnee village. Originally known as Wright's Ferry, the community was formally laid out by John Wright's son, Samuel Wright, who renamed it Columbia in 1788. As a nod to Christopher Columbus, Samuel hoped to persuade Congress to make it the capital of the United States. That ambition fell short by a formal 10–9 vote, only broken by the vice president, in 1790. Renowned at the time for its railroads and bridges, Columbia became an important transportation hub in the decades that followed and served as a beacon of light along the Underground Railroad. In the summer of 1863, as Confederate forces invaded Pennsylvania in an attempt to force Union capitulation, the residents of Columbia burned their mile-long bridge across the Susquehanna River and halted the advancing Confederate troops. This courageous act helped protect communities east of the river and remains one of the borough's most significant contributions during the Civil War.

By the late nineteenth century, Columbia had emerged as major industrial center, manufacturing products ranging from silk to machinery. While its economy has shifted away from manufacturing, the borough is now known for its museums, antique shops, and recreational opportunities along the Susquehanna River. Columbia, a small borough of 10,000 people, has a rich history intertwined with that of Lancaster County and our Nation as a whole. It is an honor to represent Columbia Borough and its residents, and I wish them heartfelt congratulations for 300 years of incredible contributions to our community and our country. I look forward to witnessing the next chapter in the proud history of this mighty river town.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF GILBERT "BUTCH" WALLACE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Gilbert "Butch" Wallace, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, friend, and public servant whose impact on our community will be felt for generations.

Butch is survived by his beloved wife of 48 years, Carolyn Wallace, their two daughters, Heather Wallace and Michelle Boone, and grandson Tyler Muller. Together they built a family grounded in faith, service, and love.

The Wilson family always welcomed him as "Uncle Butch," Attorney General Alan Wilson and Palmetto State Armory founder Julian Wilson were especially encouraged by "Uncle Butch."

A Florida native, Butch attended Florida State University where he earned a degree in Communications and Business. He went on to build a successful State Farm Agency, serving his community for 48 years. Through his work, he not only helped countless families and businesses, but also, created jobs and contributed to the economic growth of our state.

For more than 20 years, Butch has served as a valued member of my staff, where he touched the lives of countless South Carolinians, including my own. His wisdom and unwavering commitment to others made him an indispensable member of Team Wilson and a trusted friend of all those who worked alongside him.

His dedication to service extended far beyond his professional life. He was deeply involved in his community serving as a Charter Member and President of the West Metro Rotary Club, President of the National Kidney Foundation of South Carolina, a member of the National Federation of Independent Business State Advisory Council, and a member of the Boy Scouts of America Indian Waters Council Board. Additionally, in 2019, he was a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian award.

His commitment to civic engagement led him to serve in many political leadership roles including as Chairman of the Lexington County Republican Party and as a delegate to many state and county conventions.

Butch lived a life defined by service, integrity, and kindness. South Carolina is better because of his contributions, and all who knew him are better for having called him a friend. He leaves behind a legacy of leadership, compassion, and service that will endure long beyond his lifetime.

May we honor Butch by striving to serve others with the same dedication and grace that he demonstrated throughout his remarkable life.

RECOGNIZING DR. SUNITA "SUNNY" COOKE

HON. MIKE LEVIN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Dr. Sunita "Sunny" Cooke for her retirement as Superintendent and President of MiraCosta Community College. In honor of her retirement, I stand before you to celebrate her outstanding contributions to

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MiraCosta Community College and the greater Community.

Dr. Cooke began her career in higher education as a biology and biotechnology faculty member after earning her Ph.D. in Biology from Georgetown University. Throughout her 30-year career, she has served as a department chair, dean, associate vice chancellor, and president before joining MiraCosta College in 2015.

Under Dr. Cooke's leadership, MiraCosta College has implemented several innovative programs, including creating California's first biomanufacturing bachelor's degree at a community college. Under her leadership, graduation and transfer rates have significantly improved as she led the college to expand student support services to close equity gaps. The college was nationally recognized for this accomplishment as an Achieving the Dream Leader College and Aspen Prize for Excellence semi-finalist. Throughout her tenure, MiraCosta brought in nearly \$46 million in state and federal grants to support college programs and students and passed a transformative \$455 million facilities bond (Measure MM), modernizing classrooms and infrastructure.

Dr. Cooke's leadership has extended to the state level. In 2015, she chaired the Statewide Task Force on Workforce and a Strong Economy, leading to an ongoing annual investment of over \$260 million from the California State Legislature to enhance California community college career education.

Dr. Cooke has served as the Chair of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), an officer of the California Community Colleges Baccalaureate Association (CCCBA), and an officer of the California Community Colleges CEO Board. She has also served on the executive committee of the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation and on the boards of Biocom and local chambers of commerce.

Dr. Cooke's incredible leadership has been widely recognized. Her accolades include recognitions from the San Diego Business Journal in their Women Who Mean Business and Top 50 Women of Influence awards, as well as being included in the San Diego Top 500 List and the NAACP's Salute to Women of Color. Dr. Cooke was also named the CEO Awardee for the Pacific Region by the American Association of Community College Trustees.

Dr. Cooke's dedication to ensuring every student has the right to succeed has created a lasting impact on students, her colleagues, and the greater community. Her leadership and service will be remembered through the Dr. Sunita "Sunny" Cooke Legacy Fund, continuing her impact on the College and the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Dr. Sunita "Sunny" Cooke for her remarkable career and profound impact on MiraCosta College and the greater San Diego community. We are incredibly grateful for her dedication and deep commitment to student success. We wish her all the best as she enters retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANN WAGNER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not present for Roll Call Votes on June 8, 2026. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 208, and YEA on Roll Call No. 209.

HONORING BRIGADIER GENERAL SARAH RUSS OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

HON. JEFF CRANK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. CRANK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate a distinguished member of the United States Air Force, Brigadier General Sarah Russ, on her retirement after 30-plus years of military service.

Sarah began her public service career in 1994 as a distinguished graduate of the Officer Training School. In 2004, she transitioned to the Air Force Reserve and has served as an Air Attaché at three U.S. Embassies in the Indo-Pacific region. General Russ has also spent a significant amount of her career stationed in Colorado Springs, including as an Assistant Professor at the Air Force Academy. Sarah would go on to serve more than 10 years here, with multiple assignments to NORAD/NORTHCOM and became an instrumental part in establishing U.S. Space Command as a member of the initial cadre of Battle Watch Commanders.

In addition to her commendable military career, Sarah is remembered by her colleagues in the Air Force as an invaluable mentor. Her selflessness, willingness to give back, and dedication to our local community only add to her distinguished service record.

Today, I stand to not only honor but thank Brigadier General Sarah Russ for her selfless service to our great Nation, and I wish her nothing but the best in her transition to civilian life.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ADST

HON. AMI BERA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), a non-partisan, non-governmental educational organization, that has been introducing Americans across the country to our Nation's diplomatic history for 40 years through its diplomatic oral history collection, book program, and other educational and outreach initiatives.

In 1986, ADST began as the vision of then-Director of the Foreign Service Institute Stephen Low and Ambassador Richard Parker, with a mission to support the Institute's work. At the same time, newly retired Foreign Serv-

ice Officer Charles Stuart Kennedy conceived the idea of recording oral histories of retired American diplomats and began capturing their experiences and insights. In 1988, Parker invited Kennedy to incorporate his oral history program into the Association's work, and ADST, as we know it today, was formed.

In 1995, the ADST-DACOR book program was launched as a "service to the Foreign Service." The goal was to help Foreign Service Officers write and publish books about diplomacy. Margery Boichel Thompson became ADST's Publishing Director, and under her expert guidance, the ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Book Series was born. The Memoirs and Occasional Papers series soon followed, then ADST's own imprint: Arlington Hall Press. Under Thompson's leadership, the ADST book program has grown into a respected source of books on diplomacy and the Foreign Service, with over 120 books, including many award winners.

For more than three decades, the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program has been ADST's flagship initiative. With more than 3,100 oral histories, publicly available on the ADST website and at the Library of Congress, it captures over 100 years of U.S. diplomatic history and engagement with the world. Rich in historical insights and lessons learned, the archive has become a national treasure for congressional offices, current and aspiring diplomats, scholars, educators, students, and the broader American public.

For four decades, the diplomatic practitioners and oral history experts who make up the ADST team and the hundreds of interns they have taken under their wings have helped preserve the experiences of American diplomacy for future generations.

Whether through collecting and archiving oral history accounts, editing book manuscripts, sharing our Nation's diplomatic history with the American public, or supporting the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC), ADST's work grew from a simple vision into a dedicated and professional foreign affairs organization. With deep optimism, ADST will carry its mission forward into the next 40 years, ensuring the experiences and lessons of American diplomacy continue to be collected, preserved, and shared.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KWEISI MFUME

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 8, 2026, I missed votes due to a personal matter. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 208; and YEA on Roll Call No. 209.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5 JUSTIN A. KARLS

HON. MATT VAN EPPS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

Mr. VAN EPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Chief Warrant Officer 5 Justin A. Karls of the United States