

HONORING DAVID DAVIS, 2026 MINNESOTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. KELLY MORRISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Ms. MORRISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate David Davis, instrumental and general music teacher at Park Spanish Immersion Elementary in St. Louis Park, on being named the 2026 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Davis exemplifies the creativity, dedication, and innovation that define Minnesota's educators. Throughout his 16-year career, including the past five years at Park Spanish Immersion Elementary, Mr. Davis has inspired students to develop their creativity, confidence, and love of learning through music. A graduate of Lawrence University and the University of St. Thomas, Mr. Davis continues to hone his expertise through graduate coursework in Change Leadership at the College of St. Scholastica.

Mr. Davis has reimaged music education by designing a curriculum centered on student voice, creativity, and cultural responsiveness. At Park Spanish Immersion, Mr. Davis guides his students to compose original music, collaborate with one another, and connect their learning to their identities, families, and communities. His curriculum is rooted in his belief in "inherent brilliance," creating classrooms where teachers and students learn alongside one another as partners in discovery.

Beyond the classroom, Mr. Davis has earned national recognition for advancing innovative and inclusive music education. He was the first Minnesotan to be selected as a Top 25 semifinalist for the GRAMMY Music Educator Award and has received honors including the Give A Note Foundation Music Education Innovator Award, the Music for All Elementary Excellence Award, and Yamaha's "40 Under 40" recognition. He also serves on the National Association for Music Education's Council of Innovations, participates in the Minnesota Department of Education's Culturally Responsive Arts Education cohort, and leads the Changemakers in Music Education project, expanding access and opportunity for students across Minnesota.

Mr. Davis's recognition as Minnesota Teacher of the Year reflects not only his remarkable talent as an educator, but also his unwavering belief in the growth potential of every student. His work reminds us that great teachers do more than impart knowledge, they inspire curiosity, foster a sense of self, and empower young people to see themselves as capable learners, artists, and leaders.

On behalf of the people of Minnesota, I congratulate David Davis on this well-deserved honor and thank him for his outstanding dedication to the students, families, and educators of our state.

HONORING THE 2026 ALLEN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 2026 Allen County Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductees. The Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce will hold an induction ceremony in Lima on July 9, 2026, to mark the induction of the 2026 Allen County Agricultural Hall of Fame class. I include in the RECORD the names of this year's inductees:

Gary and Jackie Austin of Harrod, and Thompson Seed Farm of Delphos.

Selection for the Hall of Fame is a high honor that has been accorded to fewer than 50 people and organizations since 2013. Consideration is based on each nominee's contributions to the agriculture industry in Allen County.

On behalf of the people of Ohio's 4th Congressional District, I am pleased to join in the accolades for these distinguished inductees as they are recognized for their commitment to agriculture and their service to others.

LETTER FOR THE SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CONGRESSIONAL TIME CAPSULE

HON. JAMES R. BAIRD

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to include in the RECORD a letter that I provided for the Semiquincentennial Congressional Time Capsule, which will be opened by the American people 250 years from now in the year 2276, the 500th anniversary of our great Nation's founding:

To the American people in the year 2276,

This letter was written in 2026, upon the semiquincentennial anniversary of our nation's founding. I, Congressman James R. Baird, PhD, representing Indiana's Fourth District, would like to offer this glimpse as you enter the 500th year of these United States.

Today, Indiana is defined by its affordability, rich agricultural heritage, and status as a manufacturing hub. Indiana offers a balance of urban culture and expansive rural landscapes. The people exhibit "Hoosier Hospitality." The term describes a welcoming and kind demeanor centered on treating strangers like old friends.

As the U.S. enters its 500th year, I ask that you remember America's founding principles. The Founding Fathers envisioned a nation based on inalienable, God-given rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Remember these principles. Freedom is never won nor defended easily but is always worth protecting. America is the greatest country ever created in human history. The words of Indiana veteran and journalist, Elmer Davis ring true now, as they will in 250 years: "This nation will remain the land of the free, only so long as it is the home of the brave."

We have traveled to the moon and back, fought for freedom across oceans and continents, split the atom, and yet our greatest

achievement remains forming a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. May God bless you all, and God bless these United States of America.

As of the printing of this letter, Indiana makes up the following statistics:

1. The Hoosier state has a population of more than 6,973,333 people, based on U.S. Census data. The median age is 38. Average cost of a house in Indiana is \$256,584 compared to the national average of \$368,198.

2. Indiana has the highest percentage of manufacturing jobs in the U.S. with more than 540,000 workers across all manufacturing industries. Indiana is also the largest steel-producing state in the country, producing roughly 27% of all U.S. steel.

3. Indiana is the seventh-largest agricultural exporter in the country. There are just over 94,000 farmers in the state. We produce more popcorn, meat ducks, and gourds than any state. Indiana is the fourth-largest corn producer and fifth-largest soybean producer.

4. Six vice presidents were born in the state, making Indiana "The Mother of Vice Presidents."

5. The winning time of the 2026 Indy500 was three hours, five minutes, nine seconds and 6471 milliseconds. This was the closest margin of victory ever, 23.3 milliseconds.

6. The first successful goldfish farm in the United States was opened in Martinsville in 1899.

7. In 2026, Indiana University had an undefeated football season, beating Ohio State 13-10 to win their first Big Ten Championship Game. The Hoosiers defeated the Miami Hurricanes 27-21 to become the 2025-26 College Football Playoff National Champions, completing the greatest turnaround in college football history.

8. Interestingly, Aviator Pioneer Ameila Earheart taught at Purdue and her plane that mysteriously crash-landed over the Pacific Ocean in 1937 was legally owned by Purdue and if found must be returned to the University.

9. Purdue is also considered the "cradle of astronauts" since they have had more NASA Astronauts come from Purdue than any other public university.

10. 8 of the 10 largest high school basketball gymnasiums in the United States are in Indiana.

11. Purdue University has a premier basketball team with numerous wins throughout their storied history, including 26 "Big Ten" regular season championships and 3 Big Ten tournament championships, three NCAA Tournament Final Fours and two NCAA championship games, and participation in three "Final Four", seven "Elite Eight", and sixteen "Sweet Sixteen" games.

HONORING DR. RHODA MHIRIPIRI-REED

HON. KELLY MORRISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Ms. MORRISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Dr. Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed for her distinguished service to Hopkins Public Schools and her unwavering commitment to the students, families, and educators of Minnesota.

Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed concludes nearly a decade as Superintendent of Hopkins Public Schools after a career dedicated to expanding opportunity and helping students reach their full potential. Throughout her career in education, she has served as a teacher, principal,

district administrator, and superintendent, bringing a deep commitment to educational excellence and student success.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed began her career as a social studies teacher in Saint Paul before serving in leadership roles across Minnesota and California. In 2017, she made district history by becoming the first woman and first person of color to serve as Superintendent of Hopkins Public Schools.

During her tenure, Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed guided Hopkins Public Schools through a period of innovation and transformation. She led the development of Vision 2031, a community-driven strategic plan that established a roadmap for student achievement and future-ready learning. Under her leadership, the district expanded opportunities through Spanish Immersion, International Baccalaureate programs, project-based learning, and other initiatives designed to prepare students for success in a changing world.

Additionally, she also worked to strengthen academic achievement, expand access to advanced coursework and career pathways, and foster a culture of belonging throughout the district. Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed provided thoughtful and steady leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, helping students, families, and educators navigate unprecedented challenges while keeping student learning and well-being at the forefront of the district's work.

Throughout her career, Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed has been guided by a belief that education can change lives. She consistently advocated for students who were underserved and worked to ensure that all students, regardless of background, had the opportunity to succeed.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed is a devoted wife and mother. She and her husband, Frank, have raised two children, Sterling and Maddie, and her experience as both an educational leader and parent has shaped her approach to serving students and families.

Dr. Mhiripiri-Reed's legacy in Hopkins will endure through the students, educators, and families whose lives have been impacted by her leadership. On behalf of the people of Minnesota, I extend my sincere gratitude for her years of service to Hopkins Public Schools and wish her all the best as she begins this next chapter of leadership and service.

HONORING COLONEL CHARLES L. DECKER UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

HON. PABLO JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Charles L. Decker as he retires from the United States Army after a dis-

tinguished military career. Colonel Decker served as the inaugural Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Caribbean District, and I want to thank him for taking on this mission during a time of transition and growth for the district's operations in our region.

Throughout his military career, Colonel Decker has served with professionalism and dedication. His education, including a Master of Science degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Stanford University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Clarkson University, prepared him well for the duties he faithfully executed. He is also a licensed Professional Engineer and a Project Management Institute certified Project Management Professional.

Colonel Decker's military record reflects his unwavering commitment to service. His education and training, spanning the Naval Civil Engineer Corps Officer School, the Command and General Staff Officer Course, Airborne training, and the Special Warfare Center and School, demonstrates his dedication to professional development. His military decorations, including the Meritorious Service Medal with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster and the Army Commendation Medal with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, illustrate his contributions to his organization and his peers.

Colonel Decker accepted command of the Caribbean District as a newly established operation, and he has managed that transition with competence and professionalism. We are grateful for his willingness to serve in this capacity and for the leadership he has provided to the organization.

On behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, I wish Colonel Decker well as he enters this next chapter of his life. We thank him for his service to our country and for answering the call to lead the Caribbean District during its formative years. I extend my best wishes to him and to his family.

HONORING AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 2, 2026

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor America's 250th Anniversary. 250 years ago, a band of ordinary citizens, dedicated to the simple idea that all are created equal, came together and formed an enduring experiment that changed the course of history.

For 250 years, America has been a model for democracy. A global beacon of freedom, lighting the path forward for governments of, by, and for the people in every corner of our world.

For 250 years, America has been the land of opportunity. Where unions built the middle class and built an economy where all had the opportunity to succeed and create a good life for their family.

For 250 years, America's natural beauty has outshined the world. With our Great Lakes and our national parks. With our spacious skies, our amber waves of grain, and our purple mountains majesty.

For 250 years, America has been the launch pad of dreamers and doers. Henry Ford put the world on wheels. The Wright Brothers took us to the skies. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin planted our flag on the moon.

For 250 years, America has pushed for progress. From westward expansion to the abolition of slavery to the expansion of the right to vote. From women's suffrage to civil rights to workers' rights. From Sojourner Truth to Rosa Parks, from Frances Perkins to Dolores Huerta, from Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gloria Steinem.

For 250 years, America has not stopped at the mountaintop. America has always looked beyond, pushing toward what is next. And 250 years on, America looks pretty damn good.

Mr. Speaker, each of us takes an oath when we arrive in this storied chamber to support and defend our Constitution. Included in that oath is a promise to never give up on our shared pursuit of a more perfect union.

We will never give up on a more perfect union where all get to live with dignity no matter what zip code they grow up in or what schools they attend.

We will never give up on a more perfect union where all can freely practice their faith without fear of violence; where children and parents do not have to worry about guns; where Americans can feel safe in their homes, in their grocery stores, in their houses of worship, and in their communities.

We will never give up on a more perfect union where parents can afford to raise their kids, buy a home, take vacations, and give their family a good life.

We will never give up on a more perfect union where we invest in manufacturing, support union jobs, and fight back against giant corporations that screw workers out of fair treatment in the workplace.

We will never give up on a more perfect union where every American is equal, where all have the right to vote and have their vote count. Where the promises of our 250-year-old Declaration of Independence are upheld and preserved for current and future generations.

There is nothing that Americans cannot do when we put our minds together and work to achieve our common goals. No star is too distant to explore, no depth too deep to discover, no disease too complex to understand, no cure too impossible to devise. Nothing is out of reach in the United States of America.

Nothing is impossible in the land of the free. Nothing can stop us from forever seeking that more perfect union.

When I think of America, I think of Michigan. And when I think of Michigan, I think of the greatest place on earth.

I wish Americans a Happy Fourth of July, Happy Independence Day, and a Happy 250th anniversary of our great country.