

Pastor Simmons has also made it a priority to reach out to the less fortunate in our community, providing critical support for those who need it most. For over a decade, he and his congregation have blessed thousands of youth with school supplies and book bags, ensuring they have the resources needed to succeed in their education. His dedication to helping the youth in our community, especially in the 14208 area and along Jefferson Avenue, has changed lives and inspired many to follow in his footsteps.

It is an honor to recognize Pastor Kenneth Simmons for his unwavering commitment to serving our community and exemplifying the power of faith, service, and love. Pastor Simmons' work continues to uplift those around him, and I am proud to stand with him in celebrating this incredible milestone. I thank him for all that he has done, and may God continue to bless him and his ministry.

HONORING ALBERT E. DOTSON, JR.

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor one of South Florida's most respected and revered role models and community leaders, Mr. Albert E. Dotson Jr., Chairman of 100 Black Men of America, Incorporated. Mr. Dotson has served as Chairman since being elected in 2004.

Founded in New York City, in 1963, as The 100 Black Men, the organization was incorporated in 1986, as 100 Black Men of America, Inc., with nine chapters, as a national alliance of leading African American men of business, industry, public affairs and government. The organization's mission is to improve the quality of life for African Americans, particularly African American youth.

Mr. Albert E. Dotson, Jr., became a member of 100 Black Men in 1989 and was elected the founding president of his local chapter, 100 Black Men of South Florida. Inc. He served as president of the South Florida Chapter for 10 years, before being elected as the national Secretary and then Vice President.

Under Mr. Dotson's leadership, as Chairman of 100 Black Men of America, Inc., since 2004, the organization has 116 chapters and is growing in the United States, and the Caribbean.

Mr. Dotson has mentored countless young men and empowered them to achieve their dreams, matriculate through colleges and universities and propel into productive, community leaders and servants nationally and internationally.

Please join me in honoring Mr. Albert E. Dotson, Jr., for his many years of distinguished service as Chairman of 100 Black Men of America, Inc., and for his unwavering commitment to our young men and community.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY
LIFE AND LEGACY OF MRS.
LULA HATCHER

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of Mrs. Lula Hatcher, who passed away on July 3, 2026, at the age of 93.

Mrs. Hatcher was born on December 17, 1932, in Selma, Alabama, to the late Mr. Will Sr. and Mrs. Lannie Travis. Mrs. Hatcher was a respected entrepreneur, community leader, and lifelong resident of Selma, Alabama. Best known as the owner and matriarch of Lannie's Bar-B-Q Spot, she dedicated her life to preserving one of Alabama's most celebrated family-owned restaurants while serving her community with faith, generosity, and southern hospitality.

When she was just 12 years old, her mother, Lannie Travis, opened Lannie's Bar-B-Q Spot on Minter Avenue. From its humble beginnings, the restaurant grew into a local institution for its authentic barbecue, warm atmosphere, and commitment to treating every customer like family. Under Mrs. Hatcher's leadership, in 2025 the restaurant was named one of USA Today's Restaurants of the Year, being the only Alabama restaurant to earn the distinction that year.

Beyond her accomplishments in business, Mrs. Hatcher was admired for her unwavering Christian faith, compassionate spirit, and commitment to the people of Selma, Alabama, where she served as a mentor and role model and encouraged others to pursue their dreams while remaining grounded in faith and service. Perhaps her greatest legacy is the example she set—an example of tradition rooted in love, perseverance, and excellence.

Mrs. Lula Hatcher is preceded in death by her beloved parents, Mr. Will, Sr. and Mrs. Lannie Travis; her husband, Charlie Hatcher, Sr.; and her daughter, Carolyn Hickman (Phillip). She is survived by her loving family, including her seven children; her nineteen grandchildren; her twenty-five great-grandchildren; and a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, relatives, neighbors, and friends; and on a personal note, I have fond memories of gathering with family and friends at Lannie's Bar-B-Q Spot. Mrs. Lula Hatcher and her family created more than a beloved restaurant—they built a place where everyone felt welcome and the spirit of our community shine through. Her warmth, faith, and dedication to preserving her family's legacy made Lannie's a Selma institution and a source of pride for us all. I will always be grateful for the joy and fellowship she brought to so many families, and I know her legacy will continue to live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

We extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, and all who were shaped by her compassion and hospitality. May they find comfort in knowing that her legacy endures—in the delicious food she served, in the shining example she set, and in the countless lives she touched.

On behalf of Alabama's 7th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the extraordinary life and legacy of Mrs. Lula Hatcher for her culinary contribu-

tions to the City of Selma, the State of Alabama, and our Nation.

RECOGNIZING MARCIA SMITH

HON. KAT CAMMACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize an outstanding leader from Florida's 3rd Congressional District, Marcia Smith, on her well-deserved induction into the Florida FFA Hall of Fame.

This prestigious honor reflects Marcia's remarkable career devoted to advancing agricultural education, student leadership, and the values that make our rural communities so strong. Through her unwavering commitment to the Florida FFA, she has helped shape generations of young leaders, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and character to succeed both inside and outside the classroom.

Marcia's passion for agriculture and belief in the potential of every student have left a lasting impact across Florida FFA. The countless young people she has mentored and inspired will carry forward the lessons she instilled and continue strengthening Florida's agricultural community for generations to come.

Marcia's influence extends far beyond any single chapter or classroom. Through her selfless service and steadfast dedication to mentoring the next generation of agricultural leaders, she has exemplified what it means to lead with purpose and passion.

I congratulate Marcia on this well-deserved recognition. I thank her for her years of dedicated service to Florida's students and agricultural community. Her leadership, commitment, and lasting impact have made Florida's Third District proud.

RECOGNIZING COLONEL THOMAS
AKERS

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Colonel Tom Akers of Eminence, Missouri, on his induction into the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame, a well-deserved honor that reflects a lifetime of extraordinary service, achievement, and dedication to our Nation.

Born and raised in the Missouri Ozarks, Tom Akers exemplifies the values of hard work, perseverance, and patriotism that define our state. After earning his degree in applied mathematics, he served our country with distinction as an officer and pilot in the United States Air Force, demonstrating the leadership and commitment that would become hallmarks of his remarkable career.

In 1987, Tom Akers was selected by NASA to join its astronaut corps, beginning a chapter of service that would place him among the pioneers of America's space program. Beyond his accomplishments in orbit, Tom Akers has served as an inspiration to countless young people across Missouri and the Nation. His

journey from the small town of Eminence to the frontiers of space demonstrates that determination, education, and service can open doors to extraordinary opportunities. His achievements have brought great pride to the people of Missouri, particularly those in the Ozarks who have followed his career with admiration.

The U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame honors individuals whose contributions have left a lasting impact on our Nation's space program, and Tom Akers is unquestionably deserving of this recognition. His dedication to scientific discovery, national service, and the advancement of human spaceflight has earned him a place among the most distinguished astronauts in American history.

It is my privilege to recognize Colonel Akers on this significant achievement, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating him on his induction into the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame and in thanking him for his many contributions to our Nation and the state of Missouri.

HONORING TAVORIS M. EMERSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Tavoris M. Emerson for his outstanding service, leadership, and unwavering dedication to the citizens of Mississippi.

Tavoris M. Emerson was born and raised in the Mississippi Delta, where he developed a strong sense of duty, integrity, and commitment to sewing others. Throughout his life, he has demonstrated a passion for public service and a steadfast dedication to protecting and improving the communities he serves.

A proud veteran of the United States Army, Mr. Emerson served his country as a combat engineer, embodying the values of courage, discipline, and selfless service. Following his military service, he continued his commitment to public safety through a distinguished career in law enforcement and corrections.

Over the course of more than 16 years in public service, Mr. Emerson has held numerous leadership positions throughout Mississippi. His career has included service as an internal affairs investigator, chief of investigations, probation and parole agent, and community corrections officer with the Mississippi Department of Corrections. In each role, he earned a reputation for professionalism, accountability, and a relentless pursuit of justice.

Today, Mr. Emerson serves as the assistant chief of police for the Marks Police Department, where he plays a vital role in overseeing daily operations, mentoring officers, strengthening community relationships, and ensuring the safety and well-being of the citizens of Marks and the surrounding communities. His leadership has been instrumental in advancing public trust, enhancing departmental effective-

ness, and promoting professional standards within law enforcement.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mr. Emerson is a devoted father who takes great pride in the achievements and development of his sons. He is deeply committed to family values, mentorship, and serving as a positive example for future generations. His dedication to both his family and community reflects the character and integrity that have defined his life and career.

Throughout his journey, Mr. Emerson has faced challenges with resilience and determination, continually demonstrating faith, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to serving others. Guided by the Scripture, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go," Joshua 1:9, he has remained steadfast through adversity while continuing to serve his family, community, and state with honor and distinction.

Mr. Emerson's life exemplifies the principles of courage, service, leadership, and faith. His dedication to public safety, commitment to his community, and perseverance through life's challenges serve as an inspiration to those around him and to future generations of public servants.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Tavoris M. Emerson for his distinguished service to his community, his state, and his Nation. His commitment to public service, leadership, faith, and excellence makes him a worthy recipient of this recognition and an example for all Mississippians to follow.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY BENJAMIN SWAN, SR.

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Benjamin Swan, Sr., a son of the Civil Rights Movement, a champion of our great Commonwealth, and one of the most consequential figures western Massachusetts has ever produced.

Born in 1933, Ben spent the next 92 years proving that one person, committed to justice and rooted in community, can change the arc of a city. From the marches of the 1960s, where he proudly stood alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the great halls of the Massachusetts State House, where he served the people of Springfield for more than two decades, Ben Swan never stopped pushing and never stopped believing that this country could live up to its great promise.

When Ben came to Springfield, he made it his own. He led the Greater Springfield NAACP. He championed desegregation in schools. He fought for police reform. He stood up for the homeless, the working poor, and

every constituent who walked through his door or stopped him on the street. He served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1995 to 2017, and during that time, he became not only a good legislator but also a mentor. Elected officials across this region trace their path to public service back to a conversation with Ben Swan. He gave people the courage to run, the wisdom to serve, and the living example of how to do it with grace.

Springfield named a street for him. Springfield named a school for him. Those are extraordinary honors, and yet no honor will ever adequately reflect his legacy. The truest monument to Ben is the generations of leaders he inspired and the constituents whose lives he forever changed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary life and service of Benjamin Swan, Sr. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and loved ones during this difficult time. Ben Swan gave everything he had to this community, and it is this community that will carry his legacy forward.

RECOGNIZING BENJAMIN WELSER AND HIS INSPIRING SPIRIT

HON. LISA C. MCCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Benjamin Welser of Marysville, Michigan, a courageous 12-year-old whose love for law enforcement and enduring spirit have touched our Community and our Nation.

Benjamin has faced significant medical challenges throughout his life. Despite this, he has never wavered in his admiration for the men and women who serve and protect our communities, and he has long dreamed of one day becoming a police officer himself.

What began as a simple request from Benjamin's family for cards and patches from law enforcement agencies across the country grew into an extraordinary outpouring of support. Personnel from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and members of the Michigan State Police came together to give Benjamin a full day featuring a meet-and-greet with the K-9 unit, a BearCat tactical vehicle demonstration, and a helicopter flyover.

This remarkable display of compassion is a powerful reminder of the bond between our law enforcement community and the people they serve, and it shows the difference that such an act of kindness can make in someone's life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Benjamin Welser for his courage and resilience, and in thanking the many law enforcement officers and agencies whose compassion brought so much joy to Benjamin and his family.