

of an African American woman. Principal Wood began a transformative period of leadership focused on academic excellence, student enrichment, cultural exposure, and community engagement. Throughout the following two decades, she expanded educational opportunities by creating student travel, cultural and academic experiences across the United States, Canada, and Europe, while also advocating for additional school and community resources. Her commitment to students and families led to the establishment of community-serving programs and facilities, including a Home Economics Laboratory. By 1987, under her visionary leadership, enrollment at Community School No. 53 had grown to approximately twelve hundred students, making it the largest elementary school in the City of Buffalo at that time.

Over the years, Principal Wood received numerous awards and accolades in recognition of her outstanding service and commitment to education, including the P.U.S.H. for Excellence Award, the Black Educators Association Educator of the Year Award, the RIT Distinguished Teacher Recognition Program Award, and the United Voices of St. John Distinguished Service Award. In addition to her educational honors, Principal Wood and her daughter, Lauren, were the first mother-daughter pair to serve as principals in Buffalo Public School history. Although Principal Wood retired from Buffalo Public Schools in 1987, she continued to carry forward her love of education, establishing the Belton and Mabel McCarley College Scholarship Program to support and encourage students across the community.

Principal Wood was a faithful member of St. John Baptist Church, contributing her time and talents by serving as the Sunday School teacher, and narrating the United Voices of St. John's Sunday night musicals and community concerts. In her time of leisure, Principal Wood found joy in life's simple pleasures—traveling across the globe, reading to her grandchildren, and cooking for her loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, Principal Nan M. Wood lived a life of devotion to her family, community, students, and faith. Her unwavering commitment to those she loved and her compassion towards others had a profound impact on all who knew her. Principal Wood was a woman who believed in the importance of equitable education, family, and faith above all else and worked tirelessly to support those around her. Her kindness, loyalty, and warmth will forever be remembered. Let us continue to honor her legacy by carrying forward the values she lived by: faith, education, and above all, love.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JEANNE GIBSON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Jeanne Gibson. Jeanne's life and legacy are immeasurable. Jeanne, a real life "Rosie the Riveter," inspired generations of women across our country through her example of service, determination, and patriotism.

Jeanne grew up in Minnesota before moving to Seattle in 1944. She entered a shipyard

world of heavy steel, protective face shields, and the afternoon-to-night swing shift at the height of World War II. She was one of the more than six million American women who answered the call on the home front as a "Rosie" during the war. Jeanne later reflected that the work felt exhilarating, but its urgency made it seem ordinary to the people doing it.

After the war, Jeanne moved to California, which she called home for the rest of her life. She earned an undergraduate degree, a master's degree, and a doctorate in educational psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. Across a 30-year teaching career, Jeanne touched the lives of thousands of students, always focused on supporting and uplifting younger generations.

In 2024, she and her fellow Rosies were collectively awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their extraordinary contributions to our Nation. I had the privilege of meeting Jeanne several times over the years, and every accolade she received was well deserved. She was a pioneer, an advocate, and a true patriot.

Even in her later years, Jeanne remained a tireless champion for preserving the legacy of the Rosies. She volunteered at Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park on "Rosie Fridays," sharing the stories of the women whose work helped win World War II and ensuring their legacy would inspire future generations.

Just days before her passing, Jeanne was honored with a Wall of Honor banner at the park she loved so dearly and recognized during a San Jose Earthquakes halftime ceremony celebrating Bay Area heroes. It was a fitting tribute to Jeanne, a woman whose life was defined by selfless service, strength and grace.

On behalf of California's 8th Congressional District, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Jeanne's family and to all those whose lives she touched. I thank Jeanne for her service, her leadership, and her unwavering commitment to preserving the legacy of the "Rosies." Her story will continue to inspire generations to come and she will never be forgotten.

HONORING FRANK P. RUFFINO

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Frank P. Ruffino, who has dedicated more than four decades of service to the State of California and demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the betterment of the community.

Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Ruffino has served the public as the Pensions and Benefits Director for the California State Treasurer's Office and the State Treasurer Designee for two of our Nation's largest public pension systems, the California Public Employees' Retirement System and the California State Teachers' Retirement System. In these roles, Mr. Ruffino provided critical guidance on pension, retirement, and benefits policy.

Mr. Ruffino has held leadership positions across multiple departments at the state level, including the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Ruffino also served as a gubernatorial and legislative appointee, including appointment and reappointment by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. to the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners and appointment by the California State Senate to the Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists, where he contributed thoughtful leadership and governance oversight.

Additionally, Mr. Ruffino has demonstrated strong leadership within labor and professional organizations, including service as President and CEO of the Association of California State Supervisors and in leadership roles with the California State Employees Association.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Mr. Ruffino has maintained a lifetime commitment to civic engagement and volunteer service. He has supported community organizations, youth programs, and local initiatives, and has been recognized with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

I am proud to recognize and honor Frank P. Ruffino for his exemplary public service, leadership, civic engagement, and enduring dedication to the community.

RECOGNIZING THE REFUGE CAFE

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate The Refuge Cafe on the 20th anniversary of their supportive housing community in Broomfield.

For over two decades, The Refuge Cafe has uplifted vulnerable community-members who were struggling with substance use disorder, homelessness, and mental health. It first opened its doors in 2006 and today serves an estimated 1,000 community members every month. Their holistic work is a cornerstone of the Broomfield community, providing a safe place to rest, access to local resources, free lunches, Wi-Fi, showers, and hygiene supplies for our friends and neighbors in need. The Refuge is dedicated to serving individuals in the community by providing access to resources and offering a sense of belonging.

Having grown up as an at-risk youth, I know that healthcare is more than just access to services and economic stability—it is also about human connection. The Refuge intentionally cultivates this human connection in their community, fostering trauma-informed care that facilitates lasting recovery.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate The Refuge Cafe on celebrating 20 years of "holding hope and building dreams," as they continue to deliver integrated healthcare services to our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MRS. "MOTHER" BESSIE QUINNIE

HON. TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Mr. KENNEDY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of "Mother" Bessie

Quinnie, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and friend whose love, compassion, and devotion to her family and community inspired all who knew her.

Mother Quinnie was born on November 25, 1930, in Linden, Alabama to the late Lemus Mitchell and Estelle Richardson Mitchell. Mother Quinnie cherished every moment with her family—a life filled with love and compassion until her passing. Her greatest joy was spent as a devoted wife for more than half a century to the late Mr. Peter Quinnie and mother to Jerry, Charles, Kenneth, Michael, the late Manning, the late Albert, the late Melvin, the late Anna Ruth Hugley, and the late Marion Haynie. She was later blessed to have twenty-four beloved grandchildren, nurturing them with the same kindness and care she gave to everyone in her life.

Mother Quinnie was raised with the strong support of her family from the very beginning, helping to shape her into a natural leader in all aspects of her life. She had a deep love and compassion for others, which she expressed through her role as a devoted community member. She previously served as an employee of the Sisters of Charity Hospital, working in the housekeeping department. She was later promoted to the emergency room sterilization department, where she remained until her retirement in 1994. In addition to her professional accomplishments, she was a talented homemaker, providing constant care, guidance, and support to her family while nurturing a warm and loving home.

Mother Quinnie was a faithful follower of Christ, serving as a member of Jerusalem Baptist Church. She later became a member of Thankful Missionary Baptist Church, where she continued to serve the Lord faithfully as a devoted and loving church mother, inspiring all who knew her through her kindness, wisdom, and unwavering faith.

Mother Bessie Quinnie lived a life of devotion to her faith, family, and community. Her unwavering commitment to those she loved and her compassion towards others had a profound impact on all who knew her. Mother Quinnie was a woman who believed in the importance of family above all else and worked tirelessly to support those around her. Her kindness, loyalty, and warmth will forever be remembered. Let us honor her legacy by living as she did, with devotion to family, faith, and above all, love.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT
OF DR. MICHELLE ATCHISON,
PH.D.

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable career of Dr. Michelle Atchison, Ph.D., as she retires from the University of Texas at San Antonio as the Director of Federal Relations and the Senior National Security Strategist. Dr. Atchison dedicated her career to selflessly serving our Nation, ensuring our armed forces remained at the forefront of innovation. Her commitment to service also extended to the San Antonio

community, and I, along with the city's students are grateful for her contributions.

Raised in a military family, Dr. Atchison learned the importance of service from an early age. Upon her graduation from the University of California at Los Angeles, she joined the United States Air Force—launching a 27-year career, where she would rise to the rank of Colonel. Throughout Dr. Atchison's career, she continued her studies, earning a master's degree from the Catholic University of America and a Ph.D. from George Washington University.

Throughout Colonel Atchison's Air Force career, she held senior military command and senior staff positions, including serving as Chief of the Science and Technology Division, USJFCOM Experimentation; Chief Scientist for Air Force Experimentation Office; and Senior Advisor for the Air Force Command and Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center. Colonel Atchison's leadership was instrumental in advancing projects that enhanced the operations of USCENTCOM and our NATO allies. Outside of her scientific roles, she also served as a Congressional Affairs and International Political Officer, where she led the restructuring of the Civil Air Patrol and the Air Force education processes.

Following her career in the Air Force, Dr. Atchison spent 10 years in the private sector, where she led strategic partnership development for advanced technology laboratories. In 2013, Dr. Atchison joined the University of Texas System as their Associate Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations for National Security.

In 2021, Dr. Atchison joined the University of Texas at San Antonio. For the last five years, Dr. Atchison has been a remarkable advocate for the university. She has been a force in the university's emergence as a leading institution of higher learning. There is no doubt that current and future students will benefit greatly from her work.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in celebrating the remarkable career of Dr. Michelle Atchison, Ph.D. Her leadership and selflessness to serving our Nation will be long remembered. May future generations of leaders look to her as a powerful example of bravery and dedication in service to those around them.

RECOGNIZING THE KOREA
FOUNDATION

HON. YOUNG KIM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Korea Foundation for its steadfast support of the Peace Corps Korea Revisit Program. This initiative has enabled more than 500 former Peace Corps Korea Volunteers to return to the Republic of Korea and witness firsthand the extraordinary transformation achieved since their service from 1966 to 1981.

During those years, more than 2,000 Americans served in the Peace Corps in Korea, working alongside local communities as the country rebuilt from war. I know their story

personally because I was a young girl growing up in South Korea during those same years. These volunteers, together with the resilience and determination of the Korean people, helped a war-torn nation rise into a vibrant democracy and one of America's strongest allies.

The Peace Corps Korea Revisit Program is a powerful testament to the bonds forged through that shared experience. By supporting this program, the Korea Foundation has made it possible for former volunteers to reconnect with the communities they once served and to see the lasting impact of their partnership, service, and mutual respect.

I join Friends of Korea in expressing my appreciation for the Korea Foundation's leadership and generosity in advancing this meaningful initiative and strengthening the ties between the United States and the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Korea Foundation for its continued efforts to promote goodwill, understanding, and cooperation between our two nations.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
BISHOP DAVID COOPER

HON. MELANIE A. STANSBURY

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 20, 2026

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished leadership and 50 years of dedicated service of Bishop David Cooper, Senior Pastor of New Hope Full Gospel Baptist Church of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

For half a century, Bishop Cooper has devoted his life to the spiritual, civic, and social wellbeing of our community. As Senior Pastor of New Hope Full Gospel Baptist Church, his leadership has enhanced the quality of life for countless individuals and families across our state, region, and Nation.

Bishop Cooper's impact reaches far beyond the pulpit. He has provided trusted advisement at the state and national levels, mobilizing faith communities across New Mexico to promote civic engagement. He has worked tirelessly to eradicate social inequities and systemic racism, and has been a steadfast advocate for public health, education, and our common humanity.

Throughout his ministry, Bishop Cooper has served as a trusted messenger, carrying and amplifying the voices of the people to key leaders and serving as a collaborator for positive change. He has been a tremendous advocate for building more inclusive, resilient communities, strengthening families and neighborhoods, and expanding economic opportunity throughout the 1st Congressional District.

Bishop Cooper has strengthened the Albuquerque community, uplifted the lives of its residents, and left a lasting impact on all who know him.

Mr. Speaker, the 1st Congressional District of New Mexico extends its deepest gratitude to Bishop David Cooper for his 50 years of faithful service. He is a source of pride and inspiration for all New Mexicans, and I am honored to recognize his contributions.