

The national award that Michael received recognizes teachers who demonstrate innovation and program development, a commitment to lifelong learning, and dedication to shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Michael on his selection for the national Outstanding Agriculture Education Teacher of the Year Award and express gratitude for his passionate commitment to the academic achievement of his students.

#### HONORING ROBERT DUVAL

(Mr. SUBRAMANYAM of Virginia was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and career of the great Robert Duvall, who passed away on February 15 at the age of 95.

Many know Mr. Duvall as one of the most iconic actors and filmmakers of his generation. He is known worldwide for his unparalleled range and for bringing to life some of the greatest stories ever told, such as his haunting debut as Boo Radley in "To Kill a Mockingbird" and powerful portrayal of Tom Hagen in "The Godfather."

In our community, we know him as just a great guy and great human being, an Army veteran who served our country, and a man of quiet integrity, who preferred his Virginia farm to the glitz of Hollywood.

Robert lived by a simple rule: listen, really listen. He did that as a resident of Fauquier County, where he was known as a great neighbor and environmentalist, who supported so many causes in our community.

In Winchester, he supported a children's home, often visiting the kids with gifts, like gingerbread houses during the holidays.

As Robert once said: "Yesterday is gone, and we can't get it back." While we cannot get him back, we are left with an incredible legacy that he leaves behind in our community and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my condolences to all of his family. May he rest in peace, and may his legacy in Hollywood and in our community continue to inspire.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF WITOLD "VIC" BRICK

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible life of Witold "Vic" Brick, a local veteran in Loudoun County who fought with the Allies in World War II.

Vic passed away last week at the age of 103. He was born in Warsaw in 1923, and he graduated from school in 1943.

After experiencing the worsening conditions under German occupation, Vic joined the Polish underground movement, the AK.

The AK was the primary Polish resistance to the Germans in World War II, tasked with sabotaging German military efforts. He was part of an uprising that lasted 63 days until it was

captured. Vic was amazingly able to survive this and was liberated by General Patton.

Vic didn't stop his service there. After being rescued, he joined the Polish 2nd Corps, part of the British Eighth under the command of General Alexander, who served bravely until the end of the war.

It was Congress that allowed Vic and 10,000 other Polish servicemen living in England to immigrate to the United States.

Vic considered himself lucky in an unlucky situation and remained forever grateful for the opportunities he was given as an American citizen.

Vic was a valued part of our community in Loudoun County. We were proud to have him and lucky to hear his stories about all the years that he served, as well as the years after that.

Vic is survived by his children, George, Kay, and Michelle, and his nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

May Witold "Vic" Brick rest in peace and his bravery inspire others to do the right thing, even when the odds are against you.

#### VA DISABILITY BENEFITS DETERMINATIONS

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to the recent interim rule from the Department of Veterans Affairs that would change how disability benefits are determined for our veterans.

Under this rule, disability ratings would be based not on the underlying condition, but on how a veteran presents after medication.

If you have severe PTSD and take medication for it, your benefits will be evaluated not based on your underlying PTSD but based on your condition after taking the medication at the time you are being evaluated.

Remember, these medications wear off. Maybe you seem fine right now after taking your medication during your evaluation, but then the medication doesn't work later on or loses its effectiveness over time. You are still judged based on the time you were evaluated.

We are creating a system here that is destined to fail our veterans. We are even incentivizing them not to take their medication if they want to receive full benefits.

Thankfully, because of public backlash, the VA has said that it will not enforce this rule right now. However, the rule is still in place, and it can be enforced at any time.

Veterans relying on these lifesaving medications every day are still left in limbo, not only for their mental health but for their chronic pain, traumatic brain injuries, seizures, heart disease, diabetes, and all the other ailments that they have suffered as a result of their service.

These medications do not cure disabilities. They help veterans function despite them.

It makes no sense, and it is wrong for a veteran's benefits to be dependent on

how well their medication is working during the time of evaluation. We must eliminate this rule once and for all.

#### HONORING LANCE CORPORAL CHUKWUEMEKA OFORAH

(Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to memorialize Lance Corporal Chukwuemeka Oforah, a marine stationed at Camp Lejeune who tragically lost his life in a recent boating accident.

While conducting operations in the Caribbean on February 7, Oforah fell overboard while on the USS *Iwo Jima*, prompting an extensive multibranch, 72-hour search-and-rescue effort by the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

Despite these efforts, Oforah was later declared deceased. Despite the bravery and dedication of all those looking for him, sadly enough, his body was not found.

Oforah, an infantry rifleman, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2023, graduated from Parris Island in February 2024, and completed the School of Infantry at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. He was later assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment.

We mourn the loss of his life. May God give peace to his family in their time of profound grief.

At the time of his passing, he was deployed with Battalion Landing Team 3/6 and the 22nd MEU aboard the *Iwo Jima*.

We pray that the family feels the gratitude of a nation that will never forget their son's sacrifice.

Our servicemembers sacrifice so much in the line of duty and risk their lives to keep our country safe and free.

As the Representative of Camp Lejeune, as well as Cherry Point and New River Air Stations, I remain steadfast in my commitment to supporting our heroes in uniform and their families who stand behind them.

May we honor Lance Corporal Oforah not only with our words but with our unwavering support for those who continue to serve.

#### HONORING JOE LEEPER

(Mr. BEAN of Florida was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if you want to understand the strength of a community, look at the men and women who quietly built it, not for recognition or reward, but because it was the right thing to do.

Today, I rise to honor one of those men, Joe Leeper of Fernandina Beach, Florida, who passed away at 97 after an amazing life of service.

Born in 1928, Joe was part of a generation of Americans who answered the call to serve, worked hard, raised strong families, and built communities.

In 1946, he enlisted in the United States Navy, serving honorably during

the Korean war, even doing an assignment in Florida. That is where, Mr. Speaker, he met the love of his life, Alberta Jordan. They were blessed with four children, Brenda, Bill, Durwin, and Danny, building a family legacy that spans generations and continues to grow.

After the Navy, Joe drove a Greyhound bus but sought to become a police officer in Fernandina Beach. The story goes, he approached the chief with: "Chief, how do I become a police officer?" The chief asked him: "Can you start today?" and he did.

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After several years in law enforcement, Joe went on to spend 27 years at Container Corporation, starting at the scale shack and retiring as a timber accountant.

Joe's greatest legacy, Mr. Speaker, and his greatest impact is on the kids in Nassau County, Florida. He coached Little League, led championship teams, and helped establish youth football, which continues to this day, giving thousands of kids the chance to play and cheer, including me and so many other Bean boys.

Joe also served 62 years as a Shriner and delighted so many by driving in parades with his three-wheeled motorcycle and dune buggy raising money for sick children.

Mr. Speaker, Joe Leeper didn't seek recognition. He simply showed up year after year for his country, his family, and his community.

On behalf of Florida's Fourth Congressional District, I and my wife, Abby, extend our deepest condolences to the entire Leeper family and Joe Leeper fans across northeast Florida. Joe's legacy lives on in every kid who plays and cheers in programs he pioneered through decades of faithful service. May he rest in peace.

#### REMEMBERING ARDEN TEWKSBURY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a friend and dairy advocate, Arden Tewksbury, who peacefully passed away on January 30 at the age of 93.

Arden graduated from Meshoppen High School in 1950. He was an avid baseball and basketball player, despite losing his arm above the elbow in an accident at a young age. He served as a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association basketball official as well as a member of the PIAA Board of Directors.

Additionally, Arden was the longest serving volunteer school board member of the Elk Lake School District with 64 years of service.

Arden operated a dairy farm in northeastern Pennsylvania and retired in 2003. He was a well-known advocate for dairy farms across the Common-

wealth and worked with many farmers for more than five decades.

Arden served on committees of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and the Pennsylvania Farmers Union. He also served on the board of the Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative as well as being their president for 5 years.

Arden was a lifetime member and former grange master of South Auburn Grange 1188. The Pennsylvania State Grange honored him in 1987 as the Pennsylvania State Granger of the Year.

In 1991, Arden founded the Progressive Agriculture Organization, where he advocated for fair milk prices for small, family-owned dairy farmers. Arden was well-known around Pennsylvania's capital in Harrisburg and in our Nation's Capital.

While I was yet to serve in this Chamber, Arden worked closely with former Senator Arlen Specter, Pennsylvania's longest serving Senator, to introduce S. 1722, the Federal Milk Marketing Improvement Act of 2007. This bill would have required the Secretary of Agriculture to determine the price of all milk used for manufactured purposes, classified as Class II milk, by using the national average cost of production.

More recently, he helped to get whole milk back in schools. The passage of the bipartisan Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 was a great win, and I am glad Arden was able to see this legislation signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, Arden was loved by many people across the Commonwealth and will be dearly missed. He is a role model for so many. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family during this time.

#### HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM "SKATE" PARKS

(Mr. HARIDOPOLOS of Florida was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lieutenant Colonel William "Skate" Parks, an exceptional officer in the United States Air Force, who was awarded the Silver Star Medal, one of our Nation's highest honors for valor.

In early 2025, Lieutenant Colonel Parks served as mission commander for a 21-aircraft strike package in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. He led four F-16 Fighting Falcons on a suppression of enemy air defenses mission, deliberately placing himself in range of a heavily defended air defense zone.

For more than 15 minutes, with enemy missiles exploding mere feet from his aircraft and fuel below minimum levels, Lieutenant Colonel Parks flew defensive maneuvers, coordinated emergency refueling, and prevented the likely loss of multiple aircraft.

His courage and leadership contributed to a larger operation that defended our allies and advanced United States' security interests.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Lieutenant Colonel William Parks for his extraordinary valor and dedicated service to our Nation as a member of the United States Air Force.

#### SECURING FUNDING FOR SEA TURTLE CONSERVATION ON THE SPACE COAST

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a meaningful investment in conservation on Florida's Space Coast.

We recently secured \$1.75 million in Federal funding for the Brevard Zoo's Sea Turtle Healing Center at Port Canaveral and in Melbourne, building upon the amazing legacy of the Bowen family and so many other families that have been generous to the zoo and our community.

This funding will expand rescue and rehabilitation efforts for injured sea turtles and strengthen research and response capabilities along our Space Coast.

Sea turtles face threats from boat strikes, fishing gear, and environmental hazards. The Healing Center provides critical medical care and returns these animals to the wild whenever possible.

I had the incredible opportunity to sit down with some of these folks who care for our sea turtles just last week. This investment reflects a commitment to responsible stewardship and local priorities.

I am proud this funding was secured to support marine life and the community that depends on healthy waterways for all.

#### HONORING BRETT BOLTON AND TEAM USA AT WINTER PARALYMPICS

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Mr. Speaker, we all saw the exciting victory by the United States men's national ice hockey team securing a Gold Medal for the United States for the first time since the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics. Before that, the 1960 American team had won the Gold out in California. It was the first time we won it overseas, but there are still more Olympics to come.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding athlete from our district, Brett Bolton, as he prepares to compete in the upcoming Winter Paralympics.

Hailing from Rockledge, Florida, Brett is a member of Team USA's Sled Hockey Team, which is pursuing its fifth Gold Medal. His dedication to the sport and his commitment to excellence represents the very best in American competition.

Representing our country on the world stage is an extraordinary honor, and our community is proud to see one of our own chasing that historic achievement of a Gold Medal, potentially the fifth in a row.

Hockey holds a special place in communities across our Nation as it builds upon resilience, teamwork, and character as also recognized by our women's team that also won in overtime earning the Gold Medal over the Canadians.