

Bob passed away on February 15 at the age of 83, leaving behind a legacy defined by service to his family, his students, and the community that he loved so deeply.

Life and tomorrow are never guaranteed. Little did any of us realize when I met with Steve, his son; Steve's wife, Leigh; and his granddaughter, Charleigh, about 10 days ago to think about the planning of Bob's memorial service, that today I would be extending condolences to Steve and Charleigh on the passing of Leigh, unexpectedly last Sunday. Again, life and tomorrow are never guaranteed. The only thing that is guaranteed is God's love and God's forgiveness.

□ 1045

Born in Highland Park, Michigan, and raised in Ironwood, Bob devoted his life to learning and to helping others succeed. After earning his bachelor's degree from Northland College and a master's in education from Northern Michigan University, he moved to Houghton, Michigan, in 1967. For the next 35 years, he taught U.S. history and government at Houghton High School, shaping the minds and the character of generations of young people.

To many of his students, he was simply "Mr. B." To the community, he was much more than a teacher. Bob was a mentor, a coach, and someone who believed deeply in investing in young people. He coached basketball and golf. Even after his coaching days ended, he stayed involved in athletics as a referee, bringing fairness, enthusiasm, and integrity to every game he worked. He was that kind of referee on the basketball court who celebrated the players of both teams on a shot well played and sometimes would chastise them a little bit for them being on the outside edges of the rules.

In fact, he told me a story. One time he said to his class in the beginning of November: You know November 15 here in northern Michigan is not a holiday. Just because it is the opening of deer season doesn't mean you get a day off of school. However, if a few days after November 15 there is some fresh venison on my desk, your grades won't suffer.

That was the kind of guy Bob was when it came to engaging his students and celebrating life as it was meant to be for these young high schoolers.

Bob believed that service with the community didn't stop at the classroom door. In 1990, he stepped into public service, first on the Houghton Planning Commission and later on the Houghton City Council. In 2008, he was elected mayor of Houghton, a position he held with pride and dedication for more than a decade.

Those who worked with him often described Bob as the kind of leader who brought people together. He led with kindness, wisdom, and an optimism that made others believe in the future of their town. He was the kind of per-

son who knew everyone, encouraged everyone, and celebrated every success, big or small.

To our family, Bob was something even more important. He was a steady presence, someone who cared deeply about the people around him. He faced life's hardships with strength and grace, carrying forward with the same generosity of spirit that defined him.

Bob loved his family, and one of his greatest joys was being a grandfather. He took pride in watching that next generation grow, just as he had taken pride in helping generations of students find their way. As his granddaughter, Charleigh, heads off to Miami of Ohio this fall, I know she is going to take the memories of her grandfather with her and celebrate that every day.

Mr. Speaker, communities across this country are built by people like Bob Backon, people who quietly dedicate their lives to others: teachers who inspire, coaches who mentor, local leaders who step forward, not for recognition, but because they care deeply about the place that they call home.

Bob embodied the very best of Michigan's Upper Peninsula: hard work, humility, kindness, and an unwavering commitment to community.

His impact will live on in the countless students he taught, the athletes he coached, the city he helped lead, and the many people whose lives were better simply because they knew him.

Whenever you hear the song "Sweet Caroline," you think about Bob humming that somewhere and leading the chorus. That was his song, and I am sure he is still singing it up in heaven.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FONG). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BERGMAN. I will always be proud to call him my cousin and friend. May his memory be a blessing and an inspiration to all who knew him.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EPSTEIN FILES

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about the investigation and horrific crimes of Jeffrey Epstein.

Last Friday, I attended President Clinton's deposition in New York. This deposition raised even more questions about President Trump's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein.

Let me explain why. First off, of course, President Clinton said that President Trump flew on the plane; but not just that, President Clinton also recounted a conversation he had with President Trump about Jeffrey Epstein on a golf course in New York in the early 2000s. He said that President Trump had told him that the reason him and Jeffrey Epstein had a falling out had to do with a real estate land dispute.

This directly contradicts information that President Trump has stated in the

past. He has claimed that their falling out was over spa workers at Mar-a-Lago.

We also know his own Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick, is in the files, as well. Despite this, the President contends that he doesn't know anything about Jeffrey Epstein's crimes. The question is: If you don't know anything about the crimes, how do you know that Howard Lutnick is innocent, as the President has stated multiple times.

I also have unanswered questions about President Trump's Mar-a-Lago club. President Trump himself said that Jeffrey Epstein stole many of the women who worked at the spa in Mar-a-Lago.

I made a motion in the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to subpoena documents related to Jeffrey Epstein and Mar-a-Lago. No Republican on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform supported my motion.

Republicans on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform wanted to spend our time talking to Secretary Hillary Clinton. If we are calling spouses before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, why haven't we talked to Melania Trump about what she knows?

There are still many questions that need to be answered. I am proud that yesterday the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform issued a subpoena to Pam Bondi. We will hold her accountable for what is obviously a coverup in her withholding of many of the Epstein files.

DOJ VISITS AND REDDIT

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to chat about what I have been doing at the Department of Justice. Many Members have been going to the Department of Justice to view the Epstein files unredacted. Many of the files I have looked at were still redacted, even ones without victims' names in it. Some of the files I went to look for are no longer accessible and actually have been removed from the website. We know these files existed, but they have been scrubbed by the DOJ.

Americans are tired of the corruption. They are tired of a tiered justice system where depending on how big your bank account is and how connected you are will directly impact the outcome of your case. They want transparency.

I went online to Reddit and different websites to ask folks what I should look at and what they wanted transparency on as far as the Epstein files were concerned. Here today, I wanted to come to the floor to share some of the files that people online have asked me to look into.

The first one was this file that talked about a torture video. This right here is an email. The email belongs to Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, and that is who this was sent to.

The next one has to do with an email that says: "Did you know somewhere

in the hills outside Zorro, two foreign girls were buried on orders of Jeffrey and Madam G. Both died by strangulation during rough fetish sex." This is from a fake email right here, dfd42299@protonmail.com. Then at the bottom down here, they are arranging for a Bitcoin to be sent to a wallet address. I am actually going to read that address out loud: 3Cr9TpVeBegey4zGRPEdzMC94HzUUScBHN.

One of the other files people asked for some transparency on had to do with the Federal Bureau of Investigation CHS reporting document. This is still redacted. Even when I went into the DOJ and clicked a button to unredact it, it was still redacted. I was told they received it this way.

The next one has to do with a diary of drawings and collages, something that could definitely give us some more information that could be useful. This is also still redacted. There are many pages from the diary, all redacted. Of course, we need to keep the victims' names from being made public, but Congress has a right to investigate this important information.

One of the files that folks asked me to look into is about Donald Trump. Jeffrey Epstein forwarded an email to Ghislaine Maxwell. This email was from Jack Goldberger.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

REMEMBERING LOU HOLTZ

(Mr. YAKYM of Indiana was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we lost a giant. Growing up in South Bend, Coach Holtz was more than a football coach. He was a living legend.

When I was young, my family took me to a Notre Dame hockey game. We were walking up late, so there was nobody else around. Appearing out from the shadows, you could see the silhouette of Coach Holtz. My father asked if he had a moment to say hello and sign autographs for us. The coach could have just blown us off, but he didn't do that. He walked straight up to me, got down on one knee, stuck out his hand and said: "Hi, I am Coach Holtz. What is your name?"

That moment for me became a life-long lesson. It taught me that no matter who you are or where you go in life, you are never too important to say hello to someone that wants your time. That is exactly who Coach Holtz was—a national champion, a Hall of Fame coach, sure; but even more importantly, he was an extraordinary person. He is someone who brought out the best in people. He got more out of people than they ever believed possible. He inspired them to be the best that they could be, and he set a high standard of excellence that the people around him could only hope to achieve.

Sallyann and I lift up the Holtz family in our prayers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Coach Holtz for the memories and his positive influ-

ence on the South Bend community and Notre Dame at large. Go Irish.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Mrs. SYKES of Ohio was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, as we come off the observance of Black History Month, we are reminded of a story of courage, scholarship, and action that helped reshape how America understands its past.

Black History Month began with the work of Carter G. Woodson, who believed that contributions of African Americans must be visible, taught, and celebrated. In 1926, he created Negro History Week to highlight Black achievement and make space in our Nation's story for those who are often ignored.

It was at Kent State University, my alma mater, in 1969 and 1970, that students decided that 1 week was not enough. Black students and educators argued that history this rich and important deserved at least a full month.

Students from the Black United Students Organization proposed expanding the observance into what we now know as Black History Month.

In February 1970, Kent State became the first campus to celebrate a month-long event, 6 years before it became a national observance.

As someone who attended Kent State and studied in Oscar Ritchie Hall, I know firsthand the power of students demanding more truth, more justice, and more inclusion. Their voices shaped one of many national movements showing how change can start with those who are willing to speak up.

Although February has ended, the lessons of Black History Month do not end with it. History shapes our identity as a nation: good, bad, and everything in between. When we know the struggles and triumphs of those who came before us, we understand our collective journey toward justice. Black history is American history, and leaving any part out makes our story incomplete.

The close of Black History Month is not a conclusion. It is a continuation. It is a reminder to confront inequities in education, economic opportunity, healthcare, voting rights, and justice. True justice requires more than just recognition. It requires change. It requires action.

Even as the calendar turns, the call remains the same: lift every voice, celebrate achievements, confront injustice, and teach future generations a history and the need for diversity, equity, inclusion, and unity.

As we reflect on Black History Month here on the House floor, I ask all of my colleagues to recommit to these principles. When we expand the story of our history, we expand the promise of our future.

□ 1100

HONORING JUSTIN DAVIS

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Greenville, North Carolina, United States Army recruiters and those across the country are working hard to get the job done every single day.

My son Justin has arrived now at Fort Benning, Georgia, to become an infantryman. He went from carrying our Nation's flag to now answering the call to protect it. He was inspired as a child and from his 4 years in JROTC with the Ram Battalion at Greene Central High School in Snow Hill.

I recall a few months back, he called me and said that he wanted to talk to me about something, and I said: "Son, what is it?"

He said: "Dad, I want to join the Army." I said: "Well, son, you know I was in the Air Force, right?" He said: "Yes, I do, Dad." He said: "But I want to join the Army, and you are not changing my mind."

I said: "Well, son, what is it that you want to do?" He said: "I want to be an infantryman." I said: "Son, do you understand the risk?" He said: "Yes, Dad, I understand the risk." He went on to say something very moving and profound. He said: "Dad, I listed my brothers as my beneficiaries."

Later, he shared that, after praying, he went in and took the oath of office with his Bible in his pocket. By the way, I saw that Bible later. It was a camouflage Bible, but the words were the same.

As his father, I said to him: "Son, I love you. Serve us well." I found it in me to say: "Hooah."

Mr. Speaker, I pause to give a special shout-out in recognition to Major Morales and Sergeant Penhollow, his JROTC instructors; Sergeant Head, who was really instrumental in sharing with Justin about the Army; and Sergeant First Class Young, who reminded all of us that you don't just recruit soldiers, but you recruit families.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I must admit that I am a proud father. I am a proud father.

Decisions that I make serving on the House Armed Services Committee have become just so personal that I want everyone to also understand I can't be willing to ask any parent across this country to send their son or daughter without giving mine.

The last words that Justin shared with me before he was leaving, he said: "Dad, I am going to make you proud." I would say to my colleagues, O God, he has more than made me proud.

To all the recruits who are shipping out to serve our country, and especially right now during these challenging times—I was taking him to MEPS in Raleigh just over the weekend. During these challenging times, I