

off to college in Washington both proud and worried. They were proud because she was becoming exactly who she was meant to be, and they were worried because loving a child means carrying their hopes and dreams alongside your own.

Through it all, Juniper lived her life on her own terms with authenticity, courage, and joy. Her family describes her as pure love.

Friends remember reassuring hugs. They remember someone who noticed when others felt afraid, different, or alone. That kind of compassion leaves a mark that never disappears, and Juniper's voice will never be silent in our memories.

While we in Congress must address the senseless violence that took her from her grieving family and community, we must also honor the blessing that is Juniper. The tragedy of her death must not overshadow the beauty of her life.

We honor Juniper in the people's House so that her voice and her memory never fade.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL).

Ms. JAYAPAL. I thank the gentlewoman for those beautiful words and also for sharing this moment of celebration of Juniper Blessing and her life.

I am so proud that Juniper Blessing was a constituent of mine as well as a college student at the University of Washington in Seattle.

She was deeply loved and respected for who she was. At just 19 years old, she had already made her mark, and the tragedy of her murder leaves an incredible sense of pain in our community.

Here on the House floor, we send our thoughts, our prayers, and our commitment to her family, friends, and our entire community that we will continue to honor Juniper's incredible life, spirit, and light.

Juniper's friends have described her immense warmth, kindness, and commitment to justice. An incredibly talented woman, she shared her joy with our community through the arts and her singing voice. She said that her participation at the University of Washington's production of "Considering Matthew Shepard," a musical response to the murder of a gay college student, was the most powerful thing she had ever been a part of.

She had a curiosity and love of planet and people that showed up in her choice of majors: atmospheric science specializing in meteorology and hurricane tracking with minors in both philosophy and music.

She was beloved on campus. Just a few weeks ago, the University of Washington community took part in an honor walk across campus carrying pieces of her memorial from Red Square to Mary Gates Hall where a new memorial will remain through September as a place for reflection and remembrance.

Let's honor Juniper's life and legacy to make this moment a rallying cry of love to all our transgender students at the University of Washington and across the country and a display of our strength and commitment that comes in times of tragedy to embrace even more tightly the right to freely and safely express who you are.

To the people at the University of Washington and my district and across the country, know that you are loved, and we will never stop fighting for the right for everyone to be who they are.

I now ask for a moment of silence to honor the incredible life of Juniper Blessing.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOE WADE ELLIS

(Mr. MILLER of Ohio was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. MILLER of Ohio. Joe, if you are watching: I don't have my cell phone or keys in my pockets, but I rise today to honor the life of Joe Wade Ellis.

Born in Mississippi and raised in Alabama, Joe was a mentor, a friend, a patriot, and he was one hell of a man.

Joe recently passed away after an accident that occurred while supporting the United States delegation to the G7 meeting in France.

Joe, as I sit here in the office you helped me create, mold, and shape, I can only say how grateful I am to you.

When you and I first met, you were brought on to be my mentor in 2017 during the first Trump administration. My boss at the time wanted to let me go, probably not to anyone's surprise, but you saw something in me. You then told the White House how impressed you were with me, and then somehow I became the director of that office just 2 years later.

I have lost many people in my life but very few who cared about me the way that you did. You were my mentor and closest friend. You were with me through all the ups and downs. You were my rock like you were for so many others. You had a contagious personality. Everyone wanted to be around you, even if you may not have wanted to be around them, which could be often.

When I asked you to come out of retirement to be my chief of staff, I truly did not believe you would accept it, but when I won my race, you were there and simply responded: I am in. Let's talk tomorrow.

I knew you didn't want to take this job, but you did it for me. I knew that then, and I know it now. You said you would only stay for a year, but you stayed for the full term to make sure I won reelection, got reelected to steering, and got on Ways and Means.

That was because of you, Joe Ellis.

When my daughter was born, I had never seen you so excited for me to be a dad. You gave me invaluable advice that I will pass on to her as she grows older, and she will know where it came from.

I will miss our foreign trips together during the admin where you taught me everything I know about Advance. I will miss our time together as colleagues but even more as friends. It hurts when I call you and you are not on the other line.

You passed away doing what you loved. I know you are in a better place and that God has a plan for all of us. I just don't think you realized the impact you had on so many people during your time here on this Earth. That time was cut way too short, and I know you are watching and you are probably, you know, laughing a little bit as I am crying, but know how much I love you. Know the impact you had on me and other people, and I miss our time more than you can imagine.

RESTORE BACK BAY STUDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GALLAGHER). The Chair recognizes the Member from Delaware (Representative MCBRIDE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to start by thanking my colleagues who have spoken earlier in this speaking program for honoring individuals whose lives were cut tragically short, and I want to extend my condolences to all those who are mourning those who have been honored in this Chamber today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my disappointment at the rejection of my amendment to the Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

My amendment supported the continuation of the Back Bay study, a congressionally authorized effort to help Delaware better address the vulnerabilities facing our coastal communities.

Delaware is the lowest-lying State in the Nation. In Sussex County, farmers, small businesses, and families are already dealing with the consequences of rising sea levels, coastal flooding, and increasingly severe weather.

The Back Bay study, which began in November of 2022, has been providing valuable research needed to strengthen infrastructure and plan for the future.

But earlier this year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers terminated the study, citing an inability to "develop a scope and budget that is compliant."

In response, Senator COONS, Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER, and I called on the Army Corps to reinstate the study and provide a real explanation for walking away from this congressionally authorized effort.

Given their inaction, I filed my amendment. But the message from the majority party's leadership that has refused to even allow for a vote on my amendment is that research that supports the long-term safety of Delawareans in the face of rising sea levels is of no consequence to them.

I will keep working to restore the Back Bay study because Delawareans cannot afford for this study to simply be abandoned.

FAREWELL TO RETIRING LEGISLATORS

Ms. MCBRIDE. Mr. Speaker, this coming June 30, the Delaware's State

legislature will convene for its final regular session day of the 153rd general assembly. With it, the State senate and statehouse will bid farewell to several retiring legislators, leaders with over a century in combined public service to our State of neighbors.

Representing constituencies across Delaware, spanning the partisan and ideological spectrum, I was proud to call these legislators colleagues during my 4 years in the general assembly. I had the chance to see their devotion to their constituents, and I will take a moment in this Chamber to celebrate their service.

In my old stomping grounds of the Delaware State Senate, my forever president pro-tempore, Senator David Sakola, is retiring after over 35 years in office. During that time, Dave has been a tireless champion of public education, environmental sustainability, and equality.

For the last 6 years as the President pro-tempore of the State senate, Dave led a caucus that raised the minimum wage, passed paid family and medical leave, advanced historic gun safety legislation, and protected vulnerable neighborhoods whose rights and freedoms have been anything but secure. I am proud to call Dave not only a former colleague but a friend and mentor.

Across the aisle, Senator Dave Lawson is retiring after 16 years representing western Kent County. A Vietnam veteran, retired Delaware State trooper, former volunteer with his local fire company, and a businessman, Dave has spent his life serving the Nation that he loves. He has paid it forward time and time again, fighting for those who put their lives on the line for all of us from veterans to first responders.

In the statehouse, my dear friend Deb Heffernan is retiring after 16 years representing the Sixth District. During her time in Dover, Deb has been an effective advocate for her neighbors delivering for teachers, families, caregivers, and people with disabilities. She has brought her expertise to defending our environment and investing in next-generation infrastructure in her district and across Delaware. During my time in the Delaware General Assembly, Deb and I teamed up often, including to lead the successful effort to pass paid family and medical leave statewide.

To my former colleagues who are also turning the page on this chapter of their service, Representatives Ron Gray, Rich Collins, Charles Postles, Jeff Hilovsky, and my friend Kevin Hensley, I thank each of them for their service on behalf of our neighbors across the First State.

From supporting small businesses to promoting financial literacy, protecting people with disabilities to fighting for farmers, they have worked across the political divide to champion causes on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, in Delaware, public service is not defined by the title be-

fore your name nor the side of the aisle you sit on. It is defined by our capacity to deliver for our neighbors, working across difference to ensure government works for those it is meant to serve.

I thank my former colleagues and my friends in Leg Hall for their years of service to the greatest State in the history of the Union, and best wishes to a happy retirement.

□ 1030

HONORING BILL GRUMMONS

(Mr. BAUMGARTNER of Washington was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor a dedicated member of the city of Spokane Fire Department, Mr. Bill Grummons.

Bill has been promoted to deputy chief of training and safety in the department. As deputy chief, Bill will oversee and support members of the department in their training to help them become better prepared for the challenges of the fire service.

Bill's collaborative leadership style and commitment to improvement within the department will benefit both personnel and the community greatly.

Bill joined the Spokane Fire Department in February 2012. During his career, he served as a firefighter at Station 4, lieutenant at Station 1, captain in staffing at Station 18, and battalion chief of the south battalion.

With the increased risk of wildfires in eastern Washington, it is a good reminder that it is brave and talented men and women, like Bill, that we need in charge.

With his years of experience and commitment to the department, I have no doubt he will do incredible things to strengthen the Spokane Fire Department and help take care of our wonderful community.

Please join me in congratulating Bill Grummons on this well-deserved promotion and wishing him nothing but continued success in his new role.

WHITWORTH UNIVERSITY LAUNCHING NURSING PROGRAM

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to share the wonderful news that Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington, is launching a new bachelor of science in nursing program to strengthen care and address critical nursing shortages across the Northwest.

The school is set to launch in the fall of 2027. This 4-year BSN program reflects Whitworth's commitment to addressing the growing demand for highly trained nurses across the Pacific Northwest. This program is designed to expand access to high-quality nursing education while preparing graduates to serve in hospitals, clinics, and community health centers.

The BSN program will be housed in Hawthorne Hall, which is being transformed into a dedicated 22,500-square-

foot nursing education facility. The space will feature state-of-the-art simulation and skill labs designed to prepare students for real-world healthcare environments.

I commend Whitworth University for launching its new nursing program, a significant step toward addressing the growing demand for healthcare professionals in the Northwest.

This investment will create new pathways for students, support our hospitals and clinics, and help ensure families across the region have access to high-quality care for years.

REMEMBERING FRANKIE DEWITT

Mr. BAUMGARTNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a dear friend, a great patriot, and a wonderful citizen of eastern Washington, Mrs. Frankie DeWitt.

Frankie was an extraordinary woman whose kindness, strength, and unwavering commitment to others and to public service touched countless lives across our community.

Frankie was born in Oregon. With her father, a civil engineer, she traveled extensively throughout her childhood, living in Okinawa, Afghanistan, and Iran. It helped shape her lifelong approach to seeing people as they were and treating everyone with dignity and grace.

Frankie was a dedicated volunteer in the arts and at her church, and she spent 50 years involved in local conservative and Republican politics.

Frankie served as State committee-woman, GOP chair in Yakima, and northeast chair for the Washington Federation of Republican Women. She worked tirelessly to strengthen our party, support candidates, and encourage civic engagement across eastern Washington.

When I first ran for office in 2010 for the State senate, Frankie was a member of my campaign's brain trust. Her wise advice and sometimes critical guidance, always delivered with kindness, were essential to our success. I specifically remember Frankie telling me not to ride in cars in parades but to get out and shake hands with the public.

As I have continued my political career, Frankie's influence has remained with me. The values she lived by—service, compassion, and commitment to others—continue to serve as a reminder of why we do this work.

Frankie is now reunited with her beloved late husband, Tom. She leaves behind three wonderful children and seven granddaughters. Her memory remains a blessing, and her legacy lives on for the countless lives she touched.

As we celebrate these 250 years of our wonderful America, it reminds me that it is civically minded people like Frankie DeWitt who continue to keep this wonderful Republic.

RECOGNIZING CUPCAKE CUTIE BOUTIQUE

(Mr. LATIMER of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)