

1970's encounter with Andy Warhol left her with these defining words: "If you are in an artist in your heart, so be it."

Dowless currently serves on the Executive Board of the Downtown Orlando Arts District and CityArts Factory, the Executive Board of See Art Orlando, the Orange County Public Art Review Board, the Executive Board of After School All Stars, and Full Sail University's Entertainment Advisory Board. She has been an arts advocate and supporter, community leader, executive volunteer, mentor, and philanthropist for over 25 years. Because of her inspirational efforts to spread the meaningful message of love through arts and culture, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer appointed Donna as Orlando's official "Ambassador of Love" in October, 2007. Dowless' impact is sure to be seen and cherished for decades to come.

I am happy to honor Donna Dowless, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

#### SELECTION OF SENATOR ROBERT DOLE FOR THE 2014 NATIONAL VETERANS AWARD

##### HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 24, 2014*

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of National Veterans Day in Birmingham, it is my privilege to inform this House that a distinguished American statesman and patriot, Senator Robert Dole, has been selected as the recipient of the 2014 National Veterans Award.

The National Veterans Award was created in Birmingham for America's first official National Veterans Day observance November 11, 1954 as authorized by Congress and tirelessly advocated by Raymond Weeks. Each year, the award recognizes an outstanding veteran who has made the greatest contribution to veterans and veterans organizations in America.

As one of the greatest of our "Greatest Generation," Bob Dole embodies the values celebrated by this award and essential to the preservation of our freedom: duty, honor, and service to country.

Senator Dole's life story should inspire every American. As a young man, he left his home state of Kansas to answer the call of duty during World War II. He received two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star for his valor in combat. As so many know, he was gravely wounded on the battlefield while leading a platoon of the 10th Mountain Division in Italy in April 1945.

Returning home, Bob Dole surmounted the challenge of physical injury and entered into a new form of service to his country: public service. He was elected to this House in 1960 and elected in 1968 to the U.S. Senate, where during his 28 years of service he earned recognition as one of the true legislative giants in the history of the chamber. He was the Republican vice-presidential candidate in 1976 and the Republican presidential candidate in 1996.

Throughout his service in elected office, Senator Dole stood as a principled voice for fiscal responsibility, free enterprise, a strong national defense and American values. He was skilled in working in a bipartisan manner on issues including hunger and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The National Veterans

Award specifically recognizes his unwavering support of our troops in the field and his commitment to ensuring quality medical care for veterans.

After leaving government service, Senator Dole accepted a new mission that will stand as an enduring and indeed monumental legacy: the construction of the National World War II Memorial on our National Mall. His leadership of the national campaign for the memorial was instrumental in bringing this long-held dream to honor those who fought on overseas battlefronts and those who contributed here at home into magnificent reality.

At the dedication ceremony on May 29, 2004, Senator Dole said, "What we dedicate today is not a memorial to war, rather it's a tribute to the physical and moral courage that makes heroes out of farm and city boys and that inspires Americans in every generation to lay down their lives for people they will never meet, for ideals that make life itself worth living."

As a congressman, I have cherished the opportunity to welcome and express gratitude to veterans brought to the World War II Memorial by Honor Flight. Senator Dole is known for coming to the memorial to meet with Honor Flight groups, and I have personally witnessed how proud and privileged veterans from Alabama have felt to be in the presence of this American hero. It is altogether appropriate that Senator Dole has been recognized with his own bronze plaque at the memorial.

Senator Dole has always been modest about the immense contributions that he has made to the good of our nation, often minimizing them with his quick wit and willingness to share credit. But his steadfast devotion to the cause of freedom towers as sure and lasting as any of the glorious monuments in our nation's capital. With the support of his lovely and accomplished wife Elizabeth, he continues to provide wise guidance and inspiration to our country.

National Veterans Day in Birmingham takes pride in being the home to the largest and longest-running commemoration of Veterans Day in the U.S. The recipient of the National Veterans Award holds a special and esteemed place in this tradition. For lifelong defense of liberty and dedication to America, Senator Robert Dole honors us by accepting the 2014 National Veterans Award in the name of the veterans across many generations who have sacrificed to keep us all free.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF STEPHANIE PORTA

##### HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 24, 2014*

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Stephanie Porta. Born and raised in Orlando, Florida, Stephanie has been a leader from an early age. While in middle school, she received the Girl Scout Silver Award, the highest award a Girl Scout Cadet can earn for her demonstration of successful leadership skills.

After graduating with honors from American University in Washington, DC, she worked on several campaigns until becoming Director of Central Florida ACORN and then Florida ACORN.

Stephanie left Florida ACORN in 2009 when she co-founded Organize Now! and the Florida Institute for Reform and Empowerment (FIRE). Both organizations work to address the needs of Florida's low and moderate income communities. Stephanie serves as the Executive Director for both organizations.

Throughout her career, Stephanie has worked on a variety of successful campaigns for candidates and issues, including affordable utilities, police accountability, foreclosures, environmental justice, community safety, community development, health care, and public education.

In 2012, Stephanie led the effort to pass an ordinance to allow employees in Orange County to earn sick time. When the effort was thwarted by the Orange County Commission breaking the law, the campaign called out the injustice and continued to fight for more transparency and accountability in Orange County while leading the investigation around the scandal called "Textgate" in which the Mayor and Commissioners were secretly communicating with special interest lobbyists via text messages to thwart the will of 50,000 voters.

In 2013, Stephanie was recognized by the Orlando Sentinel as an "up and comer" for its "25 Most Powerful People in Central Florida" list and was recognized as one of "12 to Watch" in Orlando Magazine's "50 Most Powerful People in Orlando" list.

Stephanie was raised by Katie Porta, a single mother who spent her lifetime advocating for the disabled and taught Stephanie from an early age to treat people with dignity. Katie raised Stephanie with the belief that "people don't want to be treated down; they want to be treated up," a mantra that has influenced Stephanie's work. Stephanie's relentless quest to achieve justice for those who have no voice in our community has been a beacon of hope and inspiration.

I am happy to honor Stephanie Porta, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LEADERSHIP OF LINDA W. CHAPIN

##### HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 24, 2014*

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize former Orange County Mayor Linda Chapin. A Florida native, Ms. Chapin holds a Bachelor's Degree from Michigan State University. Ms. Chapin served as the first elected mayor of Orange County, Florida, from 1990–1998.

After leaving office, she joined the University of Central Florida where she founded the Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies, which focuses on issues facing the region such as growth, the environment, and transportation. Today she serves on a number of civic and community boards, and is Chairman of the Orlando Health Board of Directors.

As Orange County Mayor, Ms. Chapin took a strong role in promoting business and industry in Central Florida by developing an economic action agenda that included annual regional economic summits; incentives for high-technology companies; and trade missions to Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Under her