

provide accessible community based health services.

Perhaps what is most special about BLDC is that it is a family affair. The Brooks family have been and continue to be dedicated community activists. Bishop Theodore Brooks and his late brother, Walter, seeing a real need, opened the doors of BLDC as a way to make a difference in the lives of their neighbors. Today, BLDC is still led by President and CEO Bishop Theodore Brooks and his son, Darrell, works tirelessly by his side. They understand that a home is not simply a place to rest your head—it is a source of comfort and security for families. By making these investments, they are not only leading by example, they are empowering residents and inspiring a renewed pride in and commitment to their community.

For their many invaluable contributions to the Dixwell neighborhood and the New Haven community, I am honored to rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Bishop Brooks, his son Darrell, the Brooks family and the staff and supporters of the Beulah Land Development Corporation as they celebrate the organization's platinum anniversary. I have no doubt that even as they celebrate this special occasion, their vision and leadership will continue to make a difference in our community and in the lives of others for many more years to come.

CONGRATULATING MERLE  
SIDENER ACADEMY FOR HIGH  
ABILITY STUDENTS, A BLUE RIB-  
BON SCHOOL

### HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 19, 2014*

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding school in my district that is being honored as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School. It is a pleasure to congratulate the Merle Sidener Academy for High Ability Students in Indianapolis, Indiana in celebration of this special occasion.

The National Blue Ribbon designation, given by the U.S. Department of Education, is awarded to both public and private schools across our great nation. Started by President Reagan and given annually since 1982, the award celebrates great American schools that achieve very high learning standards or are making significant improvements in the academic achievements of their students. In my district and across the country, the award recognizes the great educators, students and parents who have worked so hard to ensure Indiana's children reach their full potential and achieve academic success.

For all of these reasons and many more, I am so proud that the Sidener Academy is receiving this prestigious designation. It is a wonderful acknowledgement of the school's commitment to providing young Hoosiers an exceptional education. While 420 schools nationwide received nominations, only 287 were chosen as National Blue Ribbon Schools, making this recognition all the more impressive.

Since opening its doors in 2008 as a magnet school for Indianapolis' gifted and talented students, the Sidener Academy has grown to

nearly 400 students and offers a 2nd–8th grade curriculum. The school was named in honor of Merle Sidener, a prominent figure in the Indianapolis community. After making a successful career in journalism, Sidener eventually served as the President of the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners.

As a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I also want to acknowledge how important it is to our nation's future to encourage and raise a new generation of Americans who have the skills and knowledge to succeed both in and out of the classroom. Students like those at the Sidener Academy give me hope that we will accomplish this vital mission. Their outstanding work is an inspiration to students, educators and parents across the nation. Once again, congratulations to the Sidener Academy. I am very proud of you.

### RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF JUSTICE MARVIN BAXTER

### HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 19, 2014*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Mr. NUNES and Mr. VALADAO to recognize Justice Marvin Baxter for his honorable service to the state of California. For decades, Justice Baxter served as a dedicated leader who willingly and unselfishly gave his time and talent to make our state a better place.

Marvin Baxter was born in Fowler, California on January 9, 1940. He grew up on his family farm as a second generation American. All four of his grandparents emigrated from Armenia in the early twentieth century. After graduating from Fresno State, he went on to the University of California's Hastings School of Law, where he earned his law degree in 1966.

Justice Baxter began his lifelong career in law in 1967 as a Deputy District Attorney for Fresno County. Two years later, he continued on at a private practice focusing on civil law. Justice Baxter worked with the firm Andrews, Andrews, Thaxter, Jones & Baxter for 14 years before he moved back to public service acting as Appointments Secretary to Governor George Deukmejian. In that capacity, Mr. Baxter advised the Governor on judicial and executive appointments.

After working in the Governor's office for five years, Mr. Baxter was appointed by Governor Deukmejian as Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal for the Fifth District. In 1991, he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of California. Subsequently, in 2002, Justice Baxter was elected by the California voters to serve an additional 12 years as associate justice.

Throughout his career, Justice Baxter has been a part of many landmark decisions. He is known amongst his peers for being straightforward and clear headed in the courtroom. Colleagues will miss the most senior Supreme Court justice for sound feedback they could regularly count on.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that Mr. NUNES, Mr. VALADAO, and I ask our colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to recognize Justice Marvin Baxter for his service to the state of California. Although his time on the California Supreme Court has come to an

end, Justice Baxter has made a lasting impression and we commend him for his hard work and dedication.

### HONORING AIXA TORRES

### HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 19, 2014*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Aixa Torres, a tireless advocate for New York's working families. Born in Santurce, Aixa moved with her parents and sisters to New York City in 1955. Attending public school, she graduated from Central Commercial High School as a certified Bookkeeper. She has lived for over 50 years in the Lower East Side (LES) with her siblings Silvia, Aurea and Arthur.

In 1971, Aixa married the late George Carmona, Jr. and had two children, George III and Liza Noemi. She still lives in the LES with her daughter and grandchildren Mia Noemi and Elijah Michael Daniel.

Aixa has committed her life to caring for her community. For more than three decades she assumed leadership roles on numerous committees and boards for various organizations in the city including parent associations and Action for Progress Adult Day Care center. For twenty-two years she has advocated for District 1 families.

Aixa was elected President of Alfred E. Smith Resident Association in 2010, representing over 4,300 tenants in twelve buildings. Now serving her second term as president, Aixa has stood out as a courageous, committed and caring fighter for Smith residents. She has worked to end neglect and abuse by city agencies, helped stop attempts to develop luxury apartments on open spaces, while caring for residents in the crisis of Hurricane Sandy.

During her tenure as president she and the association have received citations from the New York City Council and recognition from the New York State Assembly and Senate for her work on behalf of Smith residents. Aixa was honored by the New York City Council Women's Caucus at the Inaugural #WOMENLEAD Celebration.

Mr. Speaker, this month, Aixa will be retiring from her post as a District 1 Family Advocate. While she is leaving her position with the New York City Department of Education, anyone who knows Aixa recognizes she will certainly remain an active and welcome voice in our community. Today, I would ask all my colleagues to join me in saluting someone who has been a champion for New York residents and a stalwart defender of our city's families—Aixa Torres.

### IN MEMORY OF RICK RICHARDSON

### HON. PAUL C. BROWN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 19, 2014*

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American, a great Georgian, patriot, and personal friend—Rick Richardson, who passed away on November 14th from a sudden stroke.