CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SOFIA MENDOZA

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 13, 2015

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Sofia ''Sophie'' Mendoza. Her passing was unexpected, and represents a huge loss to the community in San José. Sophie was born in 1934 in Fillmore, California. Her father was a labor organizer, and would often move the family in search of new opportunities. After relocating to Arizona in 1939, Sophie settled in San José while attending Campbell Grammar School and Campbell High School.

Sophie's father would often tell her ''we are born into this life with a purpose to help one another.'' Sophie would go on to dedicate her life to fight injustice wherever she saw it, eventually becoming one of the most accomplished community organizers in California's history. She frequently crossed paths with leaders such as United Farm Workers founder César Chavez, author Ernesto Galarza, and playwright Luis Valdez.

Sophie's first major accomplishment came early in high school. Campbell High School, which had few Latino students, had French, German, and Math clubs but no Spanish club. Frustrated, she complained to her father who encouraged her to find a solution. Refusing to be marginalized, she circulated petitions, talked to teachers and raised enough signatures to establish the Spanish Club at Campbell High. It was the beginning of a journey pursuing equity and recognition for all.

Sophie met her husband, Gilbert Mendoza, shortly after completing high school and began studying at San José State University. At the end of her third year, the couple married and started a family. Sophie involved her children in organizing from the beginning. Her son was able to name every San José City Councilmember before he started the first grade.

Sophie went on to start United People Arriba, an umbrella organization that brought together grassroots community organizations and managed multiple political projects. She was instrumental in establishing the first major health clinic in East San José, personally led a 2,000 person demonstration against police brutality, and worked with international delegations from Nicaragua and El Salvador to promote peace. When she learned that her children's schools were receiving unequal funding, she organized the first student walkout in California history. She was a trailblazer who left a lasting impact in San José. I am here today to recognize her as one of San José's most influential leaders.

Sophie is survived by her children Rick, Agustin, Sandra and William, with five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. The oldest sibling of five children, Sophie is survived by her siblings Robert, Larry and Margaret.

Mr. Speaker, we commend Mrs. Sophia Mendoza for her years of dedication and commitment to San José and the Latino community. Her contributions serve as an example of what can be accomplished by uniting our communities and working toward positive change.

BLACKHAWK EQUIPMENT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 13, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and applaud Blackhawk Equipment for their community leadership and economic contribution to Jefferson County.

Blackhawk is a leader in the air compressor industry and provides comprehensive air solutions and services. The company has over 100 years combined experience in the industry and employs four DOE Certified AirMaster + Specialists. Blackhawk is the premier rotary screw, oil-free, and centrifugal air compressor distributor in Colorado. They also specialize in air dryers, cooling towers, air audits, air tools, custom controls, skid packages, portables and rental air.

Recently, Blackhawk expanded in the city of Arvada by moving from a 10,000 sq. ft. facility into a 26,500 sq. ft. facility to accommodate growth. The company hired 5 new employees in 2014 and added $500,000 in new capital investment.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Blackhawk Equipment for their well-deserved Business Recognition Award.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: HONORING DR. JULIETA V. GARCIA AND IRMA RANGEL

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 13, 2015

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in honor of Women's History Month. The 34th Congressional District of Texas is home to inspirational women who have broken barriers and significantly improved the quality of life for countless South Texas families. Today, I take the time to honor two of them—Julieta V. Garcia and Irma Rangel.

Dr. Julieta V. Garcia built her legacy on making higher education accessible to South Texans. She served as the president of the University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB) from 1992 to 2014. In 2009, Time Magazine listed Dr. Garcia among the top ten college presidents, and last year, she was named by CNN Money/Fortune as one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders. During Dr. Garcia's tenure, her relentless advocacy for increasing access to higher education in South Texas is reflected in UTB's enrollment statistics. The UTB student body is 91% Hispanic, and 71% are first-generation college students. Her forward-thinking leadership laid the foundation for establishment of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Recently, Julieta Garcia took on a new role as the first executive director of The University of Texas—Americas Institute, which focuses on developing the next generation of leaders through a non-partisan venue that convenes discussions on critical issues of global significance.

Irma Rangel, a St. Mary's Law School graduate, served in the Texas State Legislature from 1976 to 2003. She was the first Mexican American woman elected to the Texas House of Representatives. Her legislative career focused on the concerns of women and children and how to provide them a mechanism for progress. She established education and employment programs for mothers on public assistance, built centers to protect victims of abuse, and labored to make voting more accessible for all Texans. In 1994, Irma Rangel was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame. Rangel's contributions will live on through the many families her work brought into the middle class. She died on March 18, 2003, from cancer. The Irma Rangel College of Pharmacy opened its doors at Texas A&M University-Kingsville on August 10, 2006.

During Women's History Month, we are reminded of those who broke down barriers for future generations. I encourage all to take a moment today to reflect on the contributions women have made to our nation. I thank these women and others who have dedicated themselves to service.

HONORING WILLIAM 'ZEKE' GRADER, JR.

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 13, 2015

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues, NANCY PELOSI, MIKE THOMPSON, and JACKIE SPEIER, to recognize the incredible legacy of William 'Zeke' Grader, Jr., who has tirelessly served California's fishermen and coastal communities and as an environmental champion and community leader for many decades. Always willing to share his vast knowledge and expertise with others, Zeke has helped fishermen to define their interest in battles over offshore oil and gas development, land-use, timber harvesting, water allocation, and other issues of social equity and sustainability.

From an early age, Zeke Grader grew up in the coastal fishing community. His father founded Grader Fish, Co., in Fort Bragg, California, to buy, process, and broker fresh, local fish. Zeke spent much of his childhood on the family dock, helping fishermen to unload their catch. He graduated from Fort Bragg High School and moved south to attend Sonoma State University, where he studied political science and graduated in 1970.

Zeke Grader served his country in the United States Marine Corps before obtaining a law degree from the University of San Francisco and passing the California State Bar in 1975. At that time, Congress was deliberating how to assert our national sovereignty over a two-hundred mile wide economic zone in order to curb foreign overfishing in U.S. waters, allow depleted stocks to recover, and conserve fishery resources. Amidst such explosive public interest in natural resource protection, some in the fishing industry felt threatened by the burgeoning environmental movement. Zeke Grader was asked to serve as the executive officer of the newly formed Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), and he led the organization in a more productive and effective direction by embracing efforts to protect the coastal environment.

With Zeke at the helm, the PCFFA took a leading role in crafting important state and federal legislation to preserve the coastal fishing