

HONORING RAYMOND SIMONDS

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I along with Congressman MIKE THOMPSON rise today to recognize Raymond Simonds, an outstanding member our community and our friend, for his 40 years of service as a member and past president of the Solano County Fair Association Board of Directors.

Over the years, Raymond has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the diverse and changing needs of the county fair. Following his original appointment to the Board of Directors, Raymond has revitalized the county fairgrounds by consistently recruiting new and innovative attractions.

In addition to his thirty years of leadership on the county fair's racing committee, Raymond has repeatedly distinguished himself as a true supporter of vibrant local traditions and community involvement. Raymond's service will stand as an enduring inspiration to the next generation of Solano County's leaders.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that, on behalf of the grateful residents of California's Third and Fifth Congressional Districts, we recognize Mr. Simonds for his forty years of dedicated service, and we wish him well as our best wishes for his continued success in the years ahead.

IN RECOGNITION OF MISS ABIGAIL
EVELYN SUZAL

HON. BARRY LOUDERMILK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Miss Abigail Evelyn Suzal from Georgia's 11th District for her efforts to recognize and appreciate children all over the world. Children are the future of this nation, and we must work hard to preserve freedom, prosperity, and hope for the generations to come.

I would like to thank Miss Suzal for her letter to my office requesting that Universal Children's Day on November 20th be added to the calendar with the possibility of the school day off and breakfast in bed. I applaud Miss Suzal for her advocacy for children worldwide.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF DR. RUSTY STEPHENS, PRESIDENT OF WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate Dr. Rusty Stephens, my friend and an exemplary educator, as he retires as President of Wilson Community College located in my hometown of Wilson, North Carolina.

Before embarking on a life of service to a number of community colleges, Dr. Stephens

himself attended Miami-Dade Community College in Miami, Florida. Furthering his education, Dr. Stephens later obtained a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Florida State University. He went on to earn an Education Doctorate from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Dr. Stephens' experiences with his own community college education would later give him the unique perspective that allowed him to lead one of the premier community colleges in North Carolina.

Prior to moving to Wilson, North Carolina, Dr. Stephens served numerous community colleges throughout the country beginning in 1971. He has held positions ranging from instructor to his current post as president and has educated young people from Ohio to Georgia and places in between. Dr. Stephens is truly the embodiment of the American success story. He now resides in Wilson, North Carolina, with his wife, Sandra. They have been blessed with a beautiful daughter, Heather, son-in-law Alex, and two grandsons.

As President of Wilson Community College, Dr. Stephens has overseen the completion of myriad advancements and improvements to the school. He worked with then-Wilson County Schools' Superintendent Larry Price to launch Wilson Early College Academy. That program is now in its seventh year and boasts an enrollment of nearly 300 students.

In addition to his passion for education, Dr. Stevens has an immense interest in sustainable energy and sustainable environmental practices. He is a member of the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association and the Wilson Sustainable Community Council. He was the driving force behind the addition of the 70,000 square foot Student Center LEED Building to the campus of Wilson Community College. The College, the City and County of Wilson, and our state has greatly benefitted from his work and interest in environmental stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Rusty Stephens has impacted and positively influenced the lives of countless people over his nearly 44 years in education. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Dr. Stephens for his dedication to generations past and present and in offering him best wishes as he embarks on the next chapter of his life.

HONORING JIM THEOFELIS

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the work and achievements of Jim Theofelis, Founder and Executive Director of The Mockingbird Society.

With an eye towards the future, Mr. Theofelis founded The Mockingbird Society in 2001—which has worked to improve the foster care system as well as end youth homelessness for the past 14 years. The organization stands on the principle that all young people deserve the right to reach adulthood in a healthy, supportive environment with the opportunity to thrive in life.

As Executive Director of The Mockingbird Society, Jim and his team successfully advocated for a number of policies aimed at re-

forming the child welfare system. Under Jim's leadership, The Mockingbird Society pushed for legislation that allowed youth to seal their juvenile records, so they will not be automatically disqualified in obtaining employment and housing. The Mockingbird Society also advocated for extended foster care and access to medical care for youth, which established the organization as a strong national presence on juvenile policy issues.

Prior to his work at The Mockingbird Society, Jim earned a MAEd from Seattle University and served in various positions dedicated to helping youth and families ranging from direct service to senior management. Overall, he has spent nearly 35 years working with and advocating for disadvantaged children and youth—specifically in mental health—and has been widely recognized for his hard work and selfless commitment to youth causes. Of his many awards, Jim received the 2011 Jefferson Award, our country's longest standing and most prestigious celebration of public service—a testament to his commitment to the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize the work Mr. Theofelis has done to reform the child welfare system in our state and in our nation. Jim's unrelenting and passionate dedication to advocating for vulnerable youth serves as an example of the tremendous impact one outstanding person can have on his community.

IN RECOGNITION OF TEACHER AND
MUSICIAN WILLIAM DEWITT

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO
SABLAN**

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, allow me to add to the record of the U.S. House of Representatives the story of Mr. William DeWitt, a teacher, who has brought the art of music in the Northern Mariana Islands to an unprecedented level of excellence and who has given to thousands of our young people the joy of finding within themselves their own musical talents.

Mr. William DeWitt first came to the Northern Mariana Islands in 1993, beginning his career in middle and junior high school, teaching a variety of subjects, including band, piano, and choir. He then accepted an offer to teach at Marianas High School and was successful there at reviving its band program. Enthusiasm for instrumental music education began to crescendo, and in 2002 Mr. DeWitt was invited to join the faculty of the newly inaugurated Saipan Southern High School, which was designed to be a magnet school for students with an interest in the arts and technology. He has now spent thirteen years at Saipan Southern, helping countless students fulfill their dream to make music and share it with the world. In doing so, Mr. DeWitt and the students he has guided have created a legacy, the Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Band, that is certainly one of the greatest sources of pride for the Northern Marianas Public School System and, indeed, for our entire community.

When Mr. DeWitt came to Saipan 22 years ago, he could not have known what he would accomplish. Our island community has always

teemed with multi-generational musical talent and held a deep love for singing. But band music and its array of instruments—the trumpet, flute, trombone, and clarinet—were less well known. Mr. DeWitt changed that.

Mr. DeWitt also oversaw the incorporation of a growing diversity of students into our schools using music as a unifying influence and adding the international flavor of this new student body to its musical sensibility. Up to 250 students now participate in some aspect of the Manta Ray Band program at Saipan Southern. They come from many ethnicities and cultures—Chamorro, Carolinian, Palauan, Marshallese, Filipino, Korean, Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian—and William DeWitt has helped them learn to join together as one, making music.

Perhaps, this very diversity is key to the success and world-wide recognition the Manta Ray Band has achieved under the baton of Mr. DeWitt. Five times in the last seven years the Manta Ray Band has earned the Tumon Bay Music Festival Sweepstakes Award, the most wins by any organization in the festival's history. The Manta Rays have been invited to and performed at two Olympic Games: Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012. The Band has showcased its talents at the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, Westminster Abbey, and Disneyland. And just last month, at the Los Angeles Musical Festival the Manta Ray Band earned the Gold Award as the highest scoring ensemble in festival competition.

This Gold Award is something of a fairy-tale ending to Mr. DeWitt's career. His band executed its performance with a new precision and intensity. His students displayed an infectious enthusiasm and rhythmic jaunt that gave their concert an element of variety and versatility no other ensemble could match. But backstage after the event amidst the triumph, while cameras clicked, tears flowed and hugs abounded, as the Manta Rays dealt with the recognition that this pinnacle also marked the end of an era—for Mr. William DeWitt had taken his final bow with the band.

William DeWitt and his family will now be able to spend time with his parents in California, where he will also pursue a post-graduate degree. We wish him well. And we will always be grateful to him for the way that he drew from a very small population of students their maximum talent, so inculcating them in the fundamental elements of musicianship that they were able to soar on international stages.

We will also remember as significant as what he gave to each individual student is what Mr. William DeWitt gave to the larger communities of which we are part: the pride and honor his musicians brought to Saipan Southern High School, to the Public School System, and to the Northern Mariana Islands as a whole. This musical venture he has led became a partnership for all of us. Individuals and businesses gladly supported the Manta Ray Band with contributions totaling more than a million dollars over the course of the past decade. And, as a community, we should honor William DeWitt's legacy by continuing to give our young musicians the opportunity to develop, master, and showcase their talents.

Thank you, Mr. William DeWitt. May the richness of island life always flow in your blood, just as your accomplishments will always be engraved into our island history.

TRIBUTE TO DR. SUSAN BECK

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dr. Susan Beck for being named a 2015 Woman of Influence honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, the Des Moines Business Record.

Since 2000, the Des Moines Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of female leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities either personally or professionally, forging a path for other women to follow. The women given this prestigious award are individuals who have selflessly dedicated their time and proven their leadership abilities across a variety of professional fields.

Dr. Beck's interest in leadership and the health field began at Iowa State University, where she earned her Bachelor's degree before moving on to receive her Medical degree at the University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences (now Des Moines University). Dr. Beck has been with the Katzmann Breast Center since 2000, beginning her current role as medical director in 2007.

Dr. Beck has served in a variety of leadership roles over the years at places like Mercy Medical Center, Des Moines University, Susan G. Komen, and Innervision Health Center. Dr. Beck has proven her leadership abilities time and time again. She has the special talent of bringing people together to achieve one common goal in a way that few are able to mirror. She continually strives for the best and in her spare time she continues working toward her Master's degree in Public Health.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Dr. Beck in the United States Congress. It is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better her community and the State of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating her on receiving this esteemed designation, and wishing her the best of luck in all her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPH ROSSMANN

HON. TIM WALBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Joseph Rossmann, who will be retiring after decades of service to our country as a leader in helping countless Merit Shop construction companies provide high quality health insurance and benefits to their employees.

Mr. Rossmann has led the Associated Builders and Contractors Insurance Trust for almost three decades. Throughout that time, he has worked tirelessly to help ensure that ABC member contractors are able to provide best in class benefits to their employees.

Through his advanced industry designations, testimony in Congress on health insur-

ance issues and well-recognized thought leadership, he has helped move forward the cause of making healthcare affordable for tens of thousands of construction workers.

Mr. Rossmann's distinguished record of service to the Merit Shop construction industry and in his local community are to be commended. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Mr. Joseph Rossmann on this well-deserved occasion. I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing him a wonderful retirement and many years of happiness.

HONORING WARREN K. ASHE,
PH.D.

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the House of Representatives to join me in remembering and honoring Warren K. Ashe, Ph.D., who passed away at the age of 85 this week after a lifetime of demonstrating what an African American can achieve, despite being denied the opportunities that were routinely available to other Americans. For purposes of disclosure, Dr. Ashe was my cousin and I am proud of the relationship.

Although born in Halifax, North Carolina, Dr. Ashe was educated in the District of Columbia public schools, including the famed Dunbar High School, in those days of segregation, the college preparatory high school in the nation's capital for Black students. Dr. Ashe served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War and was honorably discharged as a sergeant.

Dr. Ashe's achievements were outstanding by any measure. He received his Bachelor of Sciences degree, as well as his M.A. and Ph.D. in microbiology from Howard University, and his M.A. in Religious Studies.

He rose from grade GS-1 medical biology technician at the National Institute of Health to become the first African American to be a senior research scientist at the National Institute for Dental Research, a research microbiologist in the Laboratory of Oral Microbiology, and a health scientist administrator in the Soft Tissue Stomatology Program. While at NIH, Dr. Ashe also served as equal opportunity officer. His selfless dedication to equality for others led him to take considerable risks to ensure that he did not become a token African American. As a result of Dr. Ashe's work in equal opportunity, the employment of Blacks at NIH and their promotion to scientific and administrative leadership increased significantly.

In 1971, Dr. Ashe was appointed the first dean for research at Howard University. His accomplishments at Howard were remarkable: leadership in the establishment of the first clinical research center in the world with NIH funding at Howard University and establishment of the National Human Genome Center at Howard that helped in the sequencing of human genomes to tackle diseases that disproportionately affect the African diaspora. Dr. Ashe's professional accomplishments were matched by his dedication in preparing high school students for the health sciences, his activities as a member of the most distinguished professional organizations in his field, and his devotion, in particular, to his church, Turner Memorial AME, where he was a steward until his passing.