

A native of Thomaston, Georgia, Mr. Reeves worked in the sales industry prior to his career at South Georgia Technical College. He arrived at the College in 1973 and worked in multiple capacities as an instructor, supervisor, and Vice President of Economic Development. While serving as an instructor, he taught accounting, business, and business psychology.

His loyalty and performance spoke volumes, resulting in Mr. Reeves' ultimately being appointed to serve as President of South Georgia Technical College in 2004. Under his leadership, the college has expanded to offer more than 150 associate degrees and increased enrollment exponentially, reaching the high mark of 4,000 students by 2011.

His ambitions extended beyond improving the academic credentials of the school. Accordingly, President Reeves strove to improve the facilities on campus as well, renovating the tennis courts, gymnasium, and the Diesel Technology and Automotive Transportation buildings. He also oversaw the planting of more than 500 stately live oak trees in order to beautify the campus.

Combining his educational background with his acute business savvy, President Reeves has cultivated business partnerships with industrial titans, including Georgia Power, John Deere, and Kauffman Tire. All this was done with an eye toward providing students with prime opportunities to delve into the corporate world. He has also played a vital role in arranging scholarships for students by partnering with other colleges such as Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia to form a scholarship foundation.

President Reeves has been recognized and commended time and time again for his service to his community. He was named as "Boy Scout Distinguished Leader of the Year" and "Americus and Sumter County Volunteer of the Year," among many other accolades. In addition, President Reeves will be the first sitting technical college president to be granted the distinction of "President Emeritus."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing an esteemed educator and principled leader, President Gary Lamar "Sparky" Reeves. While many will lament President Reeves' retirement, it should be noted, however, that his long service to the College merits a much-deserved rest. Thanks to his tireless leadership, and high expectations for his beloved College, President Sparky Reeves will leave an unparalleled legacy at South Georgia Technical College from which countless generations will benefit. May God continue to bless Sparky Reeves and his family as he transitions to the next chapter of his remarkable life.

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 24, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate National Voter Registration Day, which, since 2012, has been observed annually on September 22 and is intended to increase awareness of voter registration opportunities, promote civic engagement, and celebrate democracy.

National Voter Registration Day, which started in 2012 was designed to create an annual moment when the entire nation focuses on registering Americans to exercise their most basic right—the right to vote.

In his address to the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Lyndon Baines Johnson said:

Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot.

But only the individual . . . , and others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment.

In other words, political empowerment—and the justice, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment it provides—comes not from the right to vote but in the exercise of that right.

And that means it is the civic obligation of every citizen to vote in every election, state and local as well as federal.

But before one can exercise the right to vote, he or she must first register.

Mr. Speaker, everyday approximately 12,000 Americans turn 18 and by 2016, more than 8 million young people will be eligible to vote.

This cohort, better known as the Millennial Generation, comprises approximately one-third of the voting age population.

The 93 million member Millennial Generation is the largest in the history of the United States, surpassing the post-World War II Baby Boomers.

The Millennial Generation also is the most diverse because nearly half of all Millennials (43%) come from communities of color.

Mr. Speaker, next year, in 2016, and for the first time ever, persons of color and young people have the potential of comprising more than half of the electorate, which means that we could have the most diverse national electorate in history.

Young people are the future of the nation so it is only right that they become more active and engaged in the process of electing the leaders who will make the decisions that shape the nation's future.

And that means taking the first step of registering to vote.

And that is why we observe National Voter Registration Day; to increase awareness among all Americans, but especially young people, of the importance and mechanics of registering to vote.

In every Presidential election since the 1964, the voter turnout rate for persons aged 18–29 has lagged behind all other age groups.

For example, in 2012 almost half (42%) of such persons were not registered to vote and 2014, a whopping 51% were unregistered.

And only 23% of eligible voters 18–29 actually voted in 2014.

Although these registration and turnout rates are low, we should not assume that the millennial generation is apathetic or disinterested in the public affairs of the nation.

It is significant that in 2014, 87 percent of Millennials made a local, national, or global difference by donating money or volunteering time with a charitable or social change organization.

But Millennials are facing challenges unknown to the Baby Boomers; they are the first generation in modern history to face higher levels of unemployment and lower levels of

wealth and personal income at the same stage of their lives.

Yet, this generation has also observed that positive change can result from sound public policy and that it makes a difference which officials are elected to make those policy decisions.

For example, economic policy decisions made during the past six years has led to a reduction in unemployment rates from a high of 9.8% in 2009 to a low of 5.1%, and the creation of more than 8.3 million private sector jobs.

Additionally, during the last six years we have witnessed policies and actions promoting and enhancing equality, diversity, tolerance, and inclusion advocated, championed, and implemented by persons elected by voters.

But it must be remembered that progress and positive change happens by choice, not by chance.

In a democratic form of government, participation is rewarded in the form of responsiveness from elected representatives; conversely, the interests of non-participants sadly are all too often neglected or ignored.

And it is important that we observe National Voter Registration Day so that everyone is educated and empowered with the tools to make their preferences known, their interests considered, and their voices count.

As President Johnson said:

The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.

In 2008, 6 million Americans did not exercise that power because they missed a registration deadline or did not know how to register to vote.

Mr. Speaker, our nation works best when all voices and all interests are fairly considered and that can only happen if all, or nearly all, eligible persons register and vote in elections.

The purpose of National Voter Registration Day is help make that happen and that is why I urge my colleagues to join in commemorating National Voter Registration Day.

TRIBUTE TO NORMA THURMAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 24, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Norma Thurman of Stuart, Iowa, on her retirement from the Stuart Herald on September 30, 2015, after more than 35 years at the local paper.

Norma has dedicated her life to keeping people informed on the important issues of the day in her town, in the state, and in our country. She has also worked tirelessly to promote her community through events like the Good Egg Days annual celebration. It is Iowans like Norma that make me proud to represent this great state filled with such hard working Iowans.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize and congratulate Norma on this momentous occasion. I am proud to represent her, her family, and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I know that my colleagues in the United