

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL
EDWARD TONINI

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 51st Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Major General Edward W. Tonini, upon his retirement after 47 years of service. Since December 11, 2007, he has admirably served as the Commanding General of both the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard and as Executive Director of the Department of Military Affairs, guiding the preparation of Kentucky's 8,500 citizen soldiers and airmen, along with the Division of Emergency Management, to respond in times of state and national emergency.

He is responsible for Federal and State missions, assignment of leaders, recruiting, training, equipping, mobilization, facilities and public relations. He also oversees the development and coordination of all policies, plans, and programs affecting Army and Air National Guard members in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As a member of the Governor's cabinet and the principle advisor to the Governor on military matters, General Tonini has been a steadfast liaison on homeland security matters and a stalwart advocate for the brave men and women who serve this great Nation.

General Tonini received a direct commission in 1970 in the Kentucky Air National Guard. Prior to receiving his commission, General Tonini served as an enlisted member of the 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing of the Kentucky Air National Guard. His valiant service earned the decoration of the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Air Force Reserve Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Recognition Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award, and the Kentucky Merit Ribbon. We are blessed in Kentucky to have such a leader at the helm of our military affairs.

The list of medals, awards and accolades are mere reflections of the outstanding character displayed by General Tonini on a daily basis. His response time is impeccable, whether through organizing deployments overseas or responding to natural disasters in the hills of eastern Kentucky.

His legacy project is undoubtedly the state-of-the-art Joint Support Operations (JSO) Counter-Drug complex located in London, Kentucky. Under his leadership, 1,433 Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen have participated in JSO counter-drug operations from the facility, seizing more than 3.4 million marijuana plants with a street value exceeding more than one billion dollars. They also removed nearly 35,000 pounds of illicit drugs from the streets, including cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, methamphetamines and opium. Their work led to the arrest of more than 2,600 people, the seizure of over \$73 million in property and other non-drug assets, 514

weapons, 134 vehicles and more than \$14 million. Beneath his breastplate of courage, beats a true servant's heart for the people of Kentucky and we are grateful for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Major General Edward W. Tonini on a distinguished career of service to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States. My wife, Cynthia and I wish General Tonini and his wife, Carol many blissful years of retirement.

BRIT KIRWAN RETIREMENT

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to congratulate William "Brit" Kirwan on the occasion of his retirement after 12 years as chancellor of the University System of Maryland.

As a Terp myself, I have always taken a deep interest in the leadership of the university system and have come to admire Brit's integrity, professionalism and expertise.

Not only is Brit respected academically, he has a great personality and he understands the importance of relationships with elected leaders. His political savvy has helped the university system become a critical economic and workforce development engine in the State of Maryland.

Brit has become a sought-after mentor to other university leaders in areas including college affordability—especially for minority and low-income students—as well as cost containment, innovation in the classroom and diversity.

I truly believe that Brit's vision has helped the University System of Maryland become one of the best in the nation.

Under his leadership, the university system has become more affordable. The average tuition for undergraduate in-state students at university institutions, once the nation's seventh highest, has now dropped to twenty-sixth.

His leadership has strengthened need-based financial aid.

It has reduced the student achievement gap and even eliminated it on some campuses.

It has strengthened Maryland's competitiveness through the research and entrepreneurial efforts of faculty, staff and students.

It has developed the landmark "Effectiveness and Efficiency initiative," which has improved quality while saving more than \$460 million to date and has even been cited by President Obama as a national model.

It has made the university system a national leader in environmental sustainability.

It has improved college completion rates, especially among low-income and minority students.

Brit has also become known for his use of technology to rejuvenate traditional learning methods like the lecture hall. His efforts have increased the number of students showing up for class, eager to learn, while saving money and raising grades.

Let's not forget that Brit spent a quarter century as an educator and administrator prior to becoming Chancellor. Throughout each stage of his career—math professor, administrator,

university president, and chancellor—Brit has demonstrated a commitment to excellence and access for all.

Brit's expertise benefits colleges around the country as a member of the Board of Directors of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. He chairs the College Board's Commission on Access, Admissions, and Success in Higher Education; and is a member of the Business-Higher Education Forum.

He was also appointed by President George W. Bush to the Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In 2010, he was appointed to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, which advises the U.S. Secretary of Education on accreditation issues and certification processes for colleges and universities.

Locally, Brit is a member of the Board of Directors of the Greater Baltimore Committee, the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore, and the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education.

He is the well-deserved recipient of too many awards and accolades to list in their entirety, but they include the Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence, which is considered one of the nation's top higher education honors.

In 2009, he received the Carnegie Corporation Leadership Award, which included a \$500,000 grant to fund University System of Maryland academic priorities.

I consider him a personal friend. He is a true gentleman and each of his day-to-day interactions are marked with civility and graciousness. This is a rare quality in today's world.

He leaves big shoes to fill.

I congratulate him on a spectacular career that has spanned more than a half-century and wish him many more years of happiness with his wife and family in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present for votes yesterday, due to an illness. However, if I was able to vote, I would have voted the following way:

1) H.R. 158—Visa Waiver Program Improvement Act—YES.

2) H.R. 3842—Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers Reform and Improvement Act—YES.

**MEDIA BIAS POSES A THREAT TO
OUR COUNTRY**

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, media bias poses one of the greatest threats to our country.

The liberal national media should provide the American people with the facts, not tell them what to think. If voters don't have the facts, they can't make good decisions. And if