

Alumni Association and the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus for Military Service by Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. In 2010, he was also inducted into the Henry H. "Hap" Arnold Society by the Association of Graduates at the United States Military Academy.

An active member of the Northwest Florida community, Dr. Merkel supports numerous nonprofit organizations, including the Fisher House at Eglin Air Force Base, the Emerald Coast Wildlife Refuge, and the Walton County Heritage Museum; he is the president of the West Point Society of Northwest Florida; and he is the First Congressional District Coordinator and Admissions Representative for the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. I can personally attest to his hard work and efforts in this capacity, and I appreciate his personal initiative to follow the progress of all Northwest Florida cadet appointees to West Point and to help ensure they get all the external advocacy/encouragement they may need for successful graduation.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Major Charles E. "Doc" Merkel, Jr., Ph.D., is retiring with an honorable career on which he can proudly hang his cap. He has touched countless lives throughout his time both in and out of the military and has given selflessly back to the country he loves so dearly. It is my pleasure to join a grateful Northwest Florida community and Nation in saluting his lifetime of service. Vicki and I thank Dr. Merkel; his wife, the former Diane Davis of Annandale, Virginia; daughter, Leigh Anne; son, Charles Robert and his wife, the former Julie Jordan of Graceville, Florida, and his three-year-old son, Charles Edward and wish them all the best for continued success.

#### IN MEMORY OF MR. JIM MORRIS

#### HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 6, 2016*

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Jim Morris, a beloved musician from Punta Gorda, who passed away on July 13, 2016.

Jim was a passionate singer and songwriter with a devotion to telling stories with his music. Born and raised in Georgia, he was a gifted athlete. Jim attended Augusta College, where he majored in English Literature, on a full baseball scholarship. After an injury forced Jim to give up his pursuit of a baseball career, he began what would be a fifteen year career with Hercules Chemical Company in Delaware.

Following a trip to Florida, Jim decided to leave his job as a corporate executive with Hercules Chemical and attempt to begin a career as a singer and songwriter in Punta Gorda, Florida. Jim quickly found success writing songs about his own life, including one about his outlook on life "Livin' Till the Day I Die." Friends have said that there is not a better phrase to describe the way in which Jim approached life.

Jim cared deeply about Punta Gorda and continuously worked to improve the small community. He served as an ambassador for the Charlotte County Bureau of Tourism, trav-

eling all over the country to tell others of the wonders of the community he fell in love with.

Jim was also a dedicated philanthropist, using his music to benefit those in need. He donated thousands of dollars to his favorite charity, Shoes for Kids, and performed dozens of benefit concerts all over the country throughout his career. Following the destruction of Hurricane Charlie in 2004, Jim assisted in organizing a benefit concert, to help his friends and neighbors get back on their feet, that raised over \$30,000.

According to those who knew him best, Jim was the type of man that never met a stranger. When not writing music, he loved to fish in Charlotte Harbor and travel around the world with his wife, Sharon.

Mr. Speaker, I speak for the entire Punta Gorda community in saying that our thoughts and prayers are with Jim's family as they mourn his passing. He will be greatly missed.

#### HONORING THE 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWING INDUSTRY

#### HON. CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 6, 2016*

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the invaluable contributions of the towing and recovery industry in the United States, the Towing and Recovery Association of America, the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum, towing associations around the world, and the members of those towing associations, and to celebrate them.

In 1916, Ernest Holmes built the first twin boom wrecker in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for use in his own garage and later agreed to build and sell the units to others;

The first production wreckers were known as "680's" because they cost \$680;

In service to the United States, the Ernest Holmes Company supplied the W-45 military wrecker for use during World War II;

In 1959, the Ernest Holmes Company patented its first tow sling and car dolly;

In the early 1970's, Gerald Holmes built the first hydraulic towing equipment, an advancement in the industry;

In 1995, the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum was established in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the birthplace of the tow truck;

In 2003, the Museum, having outgrown its original home, moved to 3315 Broad Street in Chattanooga;

In 2006, the Museum officially dedicated the Wall of the Fallen, the first monument in the industry to honor towing operators killed in the line of service;

In the United States, there are more than 35,000 tow companies and hundreds of thousands of individuals employed in the towing industry, including tow truck operators, dispatchers, safety advisors, and owners;

More than 1 tow truck operator is killed every 6 days assisting motorists on the roadways of the United States;

Tow truck operators respond to nearly 15,000,000 accidents per year across the United States;

Tow truck operators are an indispensable part of keeping the United States moving by keeping the highways of the United States clear and open for travel;

Most highway crashes require assistance from tow truck operators;

The people of the United States have a duty to drive safely and be courteous toward fellow motorists on the roadways as the people of the United States work together toward the common goal of reducing fatal accidents;

The week of September 9 through September 16, 2016, would be an appropriate week to designate as "National Towing Industry Awareness Week" and recognize the 100th anniversary of the tow truck, and support the designation of "National Towing Industry Awareness Week", to be held in conjunction with the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum Induction Ceremony and the Wall of the Fallen Ceremony, each of which is held annually at the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and encourage the people of the United States to observe the move over and slow down laws in the United States.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE LOS FELIZ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

#### HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 6, 2016*

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA) upon its one-hundredth anniversary.

In 1916, the Vermont Canyon Improvement Club was founded by William Mead, a prominent Los Angeles businessman and one of the original landowners in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. His initial order of business at the first meeting was to define the club's land boundaries. In 1922, the club's name changed to the Los Feliz Improvement Association, and beautification of the Los Feliz area was named as one of the association's foremost goals.

Over the past century, LFIA advocacy has taken many forms. Between the years of 1922 and 1930, the association was instrumental in realizing many precedent setting goals, including its support for the City of Los Angeles to accept a substantial bequest from Colonel Griffith J. Griffith for the construction of the Greek Theatre and Griffith Observatory. LFIA also was instrumental in the relocation of businesses on Los Feliz Boulevard to other areas throughout the city thus turning the boulevard into a residential street. Persistent in its advocacy for new schools, the association's efforts were reflected with the opening of two new schools, Franklin Avenue Elementary School and Thomas Starr King Junior High School, both of which serve Los Feliz residents to this day. The Los Feliz Improvement Association is heavily involved in cultural preservation, and many local historic landmarks were preserved and designated thanks to the successful advocacy of the LFIA, including the restoration of the Mulholland Memorial Fountain, Hollyhock House, and the Shakespeare Bridge.

Today, the LFIA continues to support historic preservation efforts in Los Feliz by maintaining a historic photo archive and property