

Mr. and Mrs. Norton have called Dahlonaga home for years, and their love for the town is evident in the passion with which they run their business. The Picnic Café has employed dozens of college students and Dahlonaga residents, providing the Lumpkin County community with jobs and students with work experience.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Nortons' commitment to their small business, and, in the spirit of Small Business Week, thank them for their dedication to serving the people of Dahlonaga. I am looking forward to my next visit to the Picnic Café to see what's new on the menu, and wish the Norton family continued success.

#### RECOGNIZING JAMES HICKS

#### HON. RODNEY DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 16, 2017*

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a man who has dedicated his life to protecting and educating the public. James Hicks will be retiring this May from the Pana Fire Department after 45 years of service.

During his career with the fire department, James pioneered an Explorer Post, which he led for 34 years. This program allows youth and young adults become involved with and learn more about firefighting and fire responder careers. Under James' leadership, many of the explorers were inspired to protect their communities and become firefighters.

Hicks has also worked to keep the area schools informed on fire prevention techniques and spent many hours volunteering with the Pana Ambulance Service as an Emergency Medical Technician.

I am honored to recognize Mr. Hicks and wish him all the best in his retirement.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF SIMON EAGLIN FOR HIS LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO THE YPSILANTI COMMUNITY

#### HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 16, 2017*

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Simon Eaglin, a prominent community leader who served Ypsilanti throughout his life. Mr. Eaglin served as Postmaster General for the Ypsilanti area for over two decades and provided impactful leadership to many local organizations and causes.

Born in 1917, Mr. Eaglin moved to Ypsilanti during the Second World War to work at the Willow Run Bomber Plant and aid the United States' war effort. After the end of the war, Mr. Eaglin became a radiation control technician at the University of Michigan medical center while working to complete his college degree at Eastern Michigan University. He was then named as the Ypsilanti Post Office's Postmaster in 1964, a position he served until his retirement in 1988. Mr. Eaglin was known for his efficient leadership in ensuring prompt delivery of mail and packages in the Ypsilanti

area. He was also heavily involved in the Ypsilanti community, serving as a member of the local Kiwanis Club and spearheading several of the organization's outreach efforts and remaining involved with its committees.

As the first African-American Postmaster in Ypsilanti, Mr. Eaglin dedicated his life and career effectively served the public while helping to break down barriers. In addition to his pioneering career as Ypsilanti's postmaster, Mr. Eaglin was well-known as a kind, caring individual whose service to the Ypsilanti community was instrumental to making the city a great place to live and work. In addition to his career as Ypsilanti's Postmaster, Mr. Eaglin volunteered for years with St. John's Catholic Church, the Housing Bureau of Seniors and several local hospitals. His legacy of public service, as well as his upbeat and friendly attitude, made him a beloved figure in the community, and he will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Simon Eaglin, Ypsilanti's former Postmaster and community leader. Mr. Eaglin went above and beyond to serve the city and its residents during his life.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO DR. DAVID DiCHIERA

#### HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 16, 2017*

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. David DiChiera, who is retiring from the Michigan Opera Theatre. While he began his distinguished and impassioned career in California, he became known in Michigan and beyond as Mr. Opera. He is retiring from the Michigan Opera Theatre, which he founded in 1971 and which he served as General Director and Artistic Director. After completing his undergraduate studies in musical composition at UCLA, David DiChiera continued his scholarship in Italy on a Fulbright scholarship, and returned to UCLA to join the faculty and to complete his PhD in musicology. In 1962, Dr. DiChiera was recruited to join the faculty at Oakland University as a professor. He later became chairman of music at the university.

While at Oakland University, Dr. DiChiera created "Overture to Opera," a program featuring local opera singers which brought opera to communities throughout Michigan, and which planted the seeds for the creation of Michigan Opera Theatre. As Dr. DiChiera explained in an interview, "I would cast the wonderful local singers who otherwise had limited opportunities . . . we started taking this program to community centers—every year, I took it to The War Memorial and area schools. This was all throughout the 1960s. Then, in 1970, I thought it was time to do a full-length opera, and to create the beginnings of an opera company."

It is important to keep in mind the backdrop for Dr. DiChiera's efforts to create an opera company in Detroit. By 1971, when Michigan Opera Theatre was established, the city itself was experiencing a major loss of population and many people were skeptical that this endeavor could succeed. But Michigan Opera Theatre not only succeeded, it thrived—first at the Music Hall in downtown Detroit which was

restored with the support of the Kresge Foundation and Detroit Renaissance, and later at the Detroit Opera House, which was formally opened on April 21, 1996 with a performance by the great tenor Luciano Pavarotti.

Dr. DiChiera's impact extends beyond his building of this important institution. He has been a vital center of gravity for arts and culture in and around the City of Detroit. He has been committed to nurturing and showcasing the broad diversity of talent in opera, something which he viewed from the inception of Michigan Opera Theatre as central to its mission. "Building bridges into the community was a primary mission," he said in the Theatre's blog, "making sure that the African American community, the majority of Detroit's population, was represented on the stage." In addition to producing works which reflect the African American experience such as *Porgy and Bess* and *Tremonisha*, the Michigan Opera Theatre commissioned and produced the world premiere of Margaret Garner, based on the novel *Beloved* written by Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison. Ms. Morrison wrote the libretto for Margaret Garner, and the production starred famed mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves. Dr. DiChiera has ensured that Michigan Opera Theatre has performed works reflecting the rich cultural fabric of Metro Detroit, including the Armenian opera *Anoush*, King Roger and *The Haunted Castle*, which celebrate the region's Polish community, an opera based on the life of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, and *The Passenger*, an opera about the Holocaust.

In addition to founding, building, and leading Michigan Opera Theatre, Dr. DiChiera is a noted composer as well. In further tribute to him, the Michigan Opera Theatre is featuring this month Dr. DiChiera's full-length opera, *Cyrano*, based on Edmond Rostand's timeless play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Mr. Speaker, like innumerable opera aficionados, I know that David DiChiera has brought boundless joy to experienced opera lovers while helping to create countless new ones. Along the way, he has nurtured young artists and has ensured that the Michigan Opera Theatre reflects the diversity of the community it serves. Dr. DiChiera built an enduring institution in Michigan Opera Theatre, and in so doing, he has established himself as one of Metro Detroit's true treasures. I encourage my colleagues to join me in congratulating and thanking much beloved Dr. David DiChiera for the immeasurable contribution he has made to the arts in Metro Detroit and far beyond.

#### HONORING THE 52ND ANNIVERSARY OF HEAD START

#### HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 16, 2017*

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the Head Start organization on its 52nd Anniversary.

Since its establishment, Head Start has been working to serve the country's most vulnerable families. In addition to working with organizations that provide learning, nutrition and general health assistance for children, Head Start has also helped to provide training, job