

TRIBUTE TO MARK ABERNATHY

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Mark Abernathy, an incredible individual, close friend and trusted confidant, and to celebrate his life and service to our community in California's Central Valley, the great state of California, and our country. Mark will be missed by so many that have been influenced by his political acumen, his unparalleled wit, and his spirit and passion for his neighbors and community. He passed away on January 27, 2018, and I know that our community joins me in mourning this loss.

Mark was born and raised in the Land of Lincoln, appropriate given that the principles of Abraham Lincoln was a seminal influence that would eventually shape much of Mark's patriotism and worldview. From a young age, Mark learned the value of hard work and perseverance while growing up on the family farm with his sister Jill, his brother Mike, and his cousins, growing corn and raising hogs. During that time, he developed an adoration for baseball—and especially the St. Louis Cardinals—that would remain with him for the rest of his life. Mark attended Western Illinois University and paid his tuition fees by literally "singing for his supper" as a guitar player and singer for the "The Rising Sons," a country western band that he was a member of all throughout college. He graduated with degrees in agriculture and biology and felt a call to serve his country shortly after, joining the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War and serving as a Captain and electronic warfare officer from 1968 to 1972.

The Air Force eventually brought Mark to California, where he first uncovered a natural talent for campaigning and an interest in local politics. While stationed at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, he served as Chair of the Fairlake Young Republicans Club, where he met Cathy Swajian, who would become the love of his life and inseparable partner while raising two daughters and becoming a fixture in Republican politics.

Bakersfield welcomed the Abernathys when they moved in 1981, and Mark became involved in state and local politics through when he founded his political consulting firm, Western Pacific Research, which would grow to influence and create some of the most effective Young Republican groups and elect many elected officials on the local, state, and national levels through grassroots political campaigns. Mark was the type of person who never gave up—whether that meant working all throughout the night to finalize and execute campaign messaging or strategy, or just walking door to door to register voters and share his passion for community engagement. He adhered, and he made sure his campaigns adhered, to the values and principles enshrined in our Constitution and our nation's founding documents. Yet his great emphasis toward civic responsibility was only surpassed by his devotion to his faith and to his family, never missing a softball game or the opportunity to take his beloved daughters, Margaret and Madeline, to a baseball game. He was a

man of exceptional character and talent, and his unparalleled 97 percent candidate victory record serves as a simple testament to the success he had in mastering his craft.

Perhaps most telling of Mark's legacy are the many currently-serving elected officials whom he worked with and helped to shape, myself included. Many of my closest friends and colleagues in the Central Valley—as well as former Governor Schwarzenegger during the gubernatorial recall campaign—worked with and listened to Mark in order to win their campaigns and serve the community and country that has given so much to us all. Mark always stressed the importance of involving our youth in politics and bringing a sense of passion to all that one does. Mark's political talent made him incredible, but his devotion to God and ability to inspire faith in others is what made him exceptional. He never gave up hope that goodness and God's will would prevail with hard work and belief.

The city of Bakersfield, Kern County and the State of California have lost a brilliant mind and an integral citizen of the community, and Judy and I have lost a treasured friend. His passing was a shock to those who knew him, and we will miss his advice, humor, tenacity and character for years to come. But he will be remembered as a leader who inspired generations of Republicans to fight for their principles and beliefs and to remain bold in strengthening the ties among faith, family and community. On behalf of the House and the 23rd Congressional District of California, we remember the remarkable life of Mark Abernathy and extend our most heartfelt condolences to his wife, Cathy, and daughters, Margaret and Madeline.

HONORING EDWIN HAWKINS

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Edwin Hawkins, who passed away on January 15th at the age of 74.

An Oakland native, Edwin was a four-time Grammy winner and gospel music trailblazer, whose work inspired generations and helped shape the contemporary Gospel music industry.

His crossover hit, "Oh Happy Day", was featured in the hit movie "Sister Act 2", reached No. 4 on the Billboard pop chart and No. 2 on the R&B pop chart. And in 2007, he was voted into the Christian Music Hall of Fame.

Edwin was truly a man before his time. He was compassionate, caring, and never wavered from his faith.

I have known Ed for many years and he was a source of inspiration for me personally. He always spoke words of encouragement and like so many others, I am deeply grateful for his love and kindness, which brought me peace and joy over the years.

I offer my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Edwin Hawkins.

CONGRATULATING JIM WOODS ON RETIRING FROM HIS ROLE OF PLATTSBURGH HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jim Woods on retiring from his role as Plattsburgh Highway Superintendent.

For the past 30 years, Jim has been a dedicated member and leader of the Plattsburgh Highway Department. Jim joined the department on January 4, 1988, and served as the Deputy Highway Superintendent for four years before becoming the Highway Superintendent in 2011. As Superintendent, Jim oversaw the year-round maintenance of over 90 miles of road, working to ensure safe travel for North Country residents.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I would like to thank Jim for his three decades of hard work and dedication to his community, and wish him all the best in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER MARINE SERGEANT (SGT) DONNIE LEO FORD LEVENS

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Marine Sergeant (Sgt) Donnie Leo Ford Levens who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our great nation on February 17, 2006, during Operation Enduring Freedom. Sgt Levens was killed when two CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopters crashed into the Gulf of Aden near Ras Siyyan, northern Djibouti, while on a training mission in the Godoria Range area.

Sgt Levens of Long Beach, MS, was assigned to the Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464, Marine Air Group 29, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, II Marine Expeditionary Force, New River, N.C. He was deployed to Djibouti as part of the U.S.-led Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, a counterterrorism force. Sgt Levens was an Aircraft Ordnance Technician.

Sgt Levens's mother Margaret and brother Matt honored Sgt Levens by completing their studies at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in 2006. Margaret Levens said Donnie's courage inspired her to go back to school and earn a degree. President George W. Bush delivered the commencement address at the graduation ceremony held in Biloxi. President Bush praised Sgt Levens for his service and sacrifice.

Sgt Levens will be remembered for his courage and determination to keep America safe.

**REMEMBERING JOHN GADSDEN
THORNHILL**

HON. MARK SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, it's been said that while every man must die, not every man gets to live. That choice that we all have in running to embrace life and all of its possibilities is tragically a choice that many people don't make. This was never the case for John G. His life was marked by the way that he fully lived it. He didn't just sip life, or feel it at its edges, he drank it with gusto.

It's for that infectious smile of his that he'll be missed. It's for his enthusiasm of people, places, and circumstance that he'll be missed. It's for the high notes his voice would hit as he became more and more enthused in conversation, teasing, and even an occasional heckling that was well deserved.

His love of the community showed in many ways. In a traditional sense, it was seen in his membership of things like the Mt. Pleasant Rotary Club where he won the Service Above Self Award in 1982–1983. His love of what makes our community special was marked by his membership in things like the South Carolina Waterfowl Association. His love of the hunt was evidenced by awards like the Award of Honor from Ducks Unlimited in 1979.

The bottom line of both the traditional, and the anything-but-traditional, that marked John G was that he loved Charleston, the Lowcountry, and the people that make it special. At times that would mean him regaling us with side-splitting stories out at Halidon Hill, other times it meant he'd be charging through the woods and waters of the Lowcountry. He would intersperse these pleasures with his passion for bringing great food to others and what he created in Charleston Bay Gourmet.

I remember getting a dinner from him over at the Mt. Pleasant Farmers Market, and watching him at work there at the food trailer fit with what Dr. Martin Luther King said years ago on passion in the work at hand. He cared, and it showed.

John will be missed. I wish him the greatest of hunting in the great delta we will all one day see. He touched my life, just as he touched those of all who were lucky enough to spend time with him. So, accordingly, I ask that we observe a moment of silence in his honor.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE BROWN

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memorial to an Alaskan who dedicated his life to his business and making his customers feel as though they were in their own living room having a meal with friends. On January 13, 2018, Alaska lost one of its hardest working, most dedicated and adventurous fathers, Mr. George Brown.

George embodied the “Greatest Generation” that came to Alaska in the years fol-

lowing World War II. He valued hard work, personal relationships, and personal responsibility. He and his wife, Peggy founded the Lucky Wishbone diner in Anchorage, Alaska in 1955, the same year McDonalds was founded but in a much different environment, serving the best burgers, shakes and especially fried chicken you could find anywhere. Sorry Kentucky, the Colonel had nothing on Mr. Brown.

George kept the very spirit of the Greatest Generation alive up until his passing by ensuring that generations of Alaskans had simple, handcrafted diner food that was unsurpassed by any other restaurant. He also pioneered the “smoking ban” in Anchorage by banning smoking in the restaurant in 1991. George and Peggy’s place was home to so many of us. His smile and his infectious spirit could light up a room and his sense of humor warmed the restaurant where he was a fixture for over 60 years.

George was more than a restauranteur, he was my friend. As a frequent patron of the Lucky Wishbone, I can speak to his service to customers and how he always cared for his employees as though they were immediately family. He treated his staff like they were his daughters and sons which meant everyone made you feel at home when you visited the Lucky Wishbone.

George, Peggy and the Lucky Wishbone will live in infamy in our hearts and souls. I hope that George’s sister Elaine, daughter Pat, son Corky, and his grandchildren can take comfort in the bond they have with George and the legacy of the Lucky Wishbone. I also hope the precious memories of George will bring them comfort, and that they will come to find, in the lovely words of Hugh Robert Orr:

“They are not dead who live in lives they leave behind. In those whom they have blessed, they live a life again, and shall live through the years eternal life, and shall grow each day more beautiful, as time declares their good, forgets the rest, and proves their immortality.”

Please join me in expressing heartfelt appreciation for George and sympathies for his Alaskan family.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER SERGEANT (SGT) ROBERT SHANE PUGH

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Sergeant (SGT) Robert Shane Pugh who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on March 2, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. SGT Pugh was a combat medic with the Mississippi Army National Guard’s 155th Brigade Combat Team. He was mortally wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Iskandariyah, Iraq also wounding Sergeant First Class Ellis Martin. SGT Pugh posthumously received the Silver Star, the third-highest decoration for valor in combat, as well

as the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Mississippi Medal of Valor.

SGT Pugh’s Silver Star citation states, “Although in extreme pain, Sergeant Pugh directed treatment instructions to the members of his platoon for both himself and Sergeant First Class Martin. He remained calm and continued to give instructions until the medical evacuation helicopter arrived. Sergeant Pugh passed away on route to the hospital; however his courage and disregard for his own welfare resulted in saving the life of a fellow comrade who was severely wounded.”

SGT Pugh was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, headquartered in McComb, Mississippi. He enlisted in the Army in 1999 because he wanted to be a combat medic. In the civilian world, SGT Pugh was a licensed paramedic and worked as a phlebotomist for United Blood Services in Meridian.

SGT Pugh’s mother, Wilma Allen, said her son was her pride and joy. “I am very proud of him. He was happy, outstanding, and outgoing. He would do anything for anybody,” said his mother.

In a fitting tribute to this brave and caring soldier, the National Guard Readiness Center in Morton has been named in his honor. SGT Pugh is survived by his parents, Glen and Wilma Pugh, his stepfather, Gary Allen, and his siblings Tiffany Johnson, April Pearson, Jennifer Reed, Brad Allen, and Dale Allen.

TRIBUTE TO DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL RICHARD “KIRK” BOWDEN

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Memphis native Richard K. “Kirk” Bowden, a deputy U.S. marshal who protected some of the most important Civil Rights pioneers of the 1960s. Mr. Bowden was one of a small group who protected James Meredith when he travelled off campus after integrating the University of Mississippi in 1962. Bowden later guarded Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the 1963 March on Washington at which he delivered his “I Have A Dream” speech.

Mr. Bowden died January 20 at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland. He was 82.

Mr. Bowden was a graduate of Douglass High School in Memphis and attended what is now LeMoyne-Owen College before joining the U.S. Air Force criminal investigations division from 1954 to 1958. He served as an officer with the Washington, D.C., Police Department before joining the Marshals Service, from which he retired in 1987. He later returned on contract until 2017.

I met Mr. Bowden several times through the years at Douglass alumni events and appreciated his professionalism and commitment to the Douglass Red Devils.

I wish to pay my respects to Mr. Bowden and thank his family for his long and dedicated service to his community, his country and Douglass High.