

be remembered with affection and gratitude for a lifetime dedicated so affectionately to making our part of the world a fairer and more loving place in which to live.

HONORING MR. LERONE BENNET,
JR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a remarkable public servant and hometown hero, Mr. Lerone Bennet, Jr.

Mr. Bennet was a native of Clarksdale, Mississippi, and was an editor at Ebony Magazine during the time the publication published the photos of Emmett Till. In addition, he was also a journalist, author, and historian. A friend and Morehouse College classmate of Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., Mr. Bennet worked tirelessly in the struggle for Civil Rights. In 1994, Mr. Bennet was appointed to President Clinton's Committee on Arts and Humanities. He also served as an early adviser on the development of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

During the last years of his life, Mr. Bennet suffered from vascular dementia. Last night, at 89-years-old, he passed away.

Today, we honor the life of Mr. Lerone Bennet, Jr. and his family.

HONORING ANGELO NERO

HON. JOHN J. FASO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and honor that I rise today to recognize the retirement of Columbia County Coroner, Angelo Nero.

Mr. Nero retired January 1 of this year, after dedicating over forty years of his life as Columbia County Coroner. He is remembered for his professional, compassionate, and timely service during his career.

Angelo provided exceptional service to the people of Columbia County, while maintaining a professional relationship with local law enforcement and first responders. His colleagues knew they could always depend on Angelo to respond to phone calls at all hours of the night.

During his career, Angelo served as Valatie village trustee and mayor for ten years. Prior to his service at the local level, he served in our Armed Forces during the Korean conflict.

Angelo's selfless service to Columbia County and our nation is greatly appreciated, and I wish him and his wife Barbara the best in their next adventure.

SERBIA AND THE USA

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a distinct honor for me to talk about the great rela-

tionship we have with Serbia as co-chair of the Congressional Serbia Caucus along with EMANUEL CLEAVER of MO.

Serbia is a great friend of the United States. As a Texan, I have great admiration for the people of Serbia. Our strong opinions and habit to speak our minds make us natural allies.

In fact, one of the first people to settle Texas was a Serbian named Dorde Sagic, or George Fischer as he was known in the U.S. After settling in Texas, Sagic went on to become a justice of the peace in my hometown of Houston.

But Serbia has contributed much more to the cause of justice than just Mr. Sagic keeping the early streets of Houston safe.

Today we honor the service of Serbia's armed forces who have fought side-by-side with Americans to preserve justice during history's most horrific conflicts.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson gave a speech marking the fourth anniversary of Austria-Hungary's invasion of Serbia. Speaking of the bravery of the Serbian armed forces, President Wilson said:

"Nobly did they respond. So valiantly and courageous did they oppose the forces of a country ten times greater in population and resources . . . While their territory has been devastated and their homes despoiled, the spirit of the Serbian people has not been broken."

As a Texan, I admire such defiance against overwhelming odds.

Like President Wilson, I am proud to share the stories of Serbia's bravery here in Washington.

I believe the most meaningful for Americans is the story of the Halyard Mission during the dark days of the Second World War.

While under Nazi-occupation, the Serbian people demonstrated their bravery as they played a crucial role in the largest rescue operation of American airmen in history.

In 1944, American bombers were flying frequent missions to strike Germany's vital oil supplies in Romania as part of the allied advance into Europe.

The 15th Air Force led this effort by launching nearly 20,000 sorties into Eastern Europe, with many of the missions flying over Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia. As many as 1,500 pilots and airmen were shot down during these courageous air raids.

Serbian, who had been resisting German forces since 1941, risked their own lives to rescue American aircrews and hide them from patrolling Nazis.

For months these brave and noble Serbians cared for and protected American and allied pilots.

By August 1944, the Allied forces, including the 15th Air Force and Office of Strategic Services, devised a daring operation to evacuate the hundreds of Allied pilots being sheltered by the Serbian resistance.

American aircraft flew into enemy territory and evacuated these airmen from an air field built and protected by local Serbians near the village of Pranjani.

For over 60 years this operation was kept secret. But now we can remember the courage of our Serbian friends and say thank you.

The spirit of the Halyard mission still lives on today as a remarkable story of resistance and heroism.

As was the case in both World Wars, Serbia and the U.S. still face shared threats.

About 600 foreign fighters in Syria have come from the Balkan states. ISIS and al-Qaeda terrorists present a threat to Serbia and the region just as they present a threat to the U.S.

We must continue coordinating with our Serbian partners to stop returning terrorists and neutralize networks that recruit fighters in the Balkans.

The U.S. is also working with Serbia to improve its independent judiciary and fight corruption. A democratic Serbia with a strong rule of law is in America's interests.

But there are others who do not support this goal.

Russian disinformation efforts are designed to keep Serbia in its sphere of influence and poison our warming friendship.

Nevertheless, Serbia's integration to the West has continued to move forward.

In 2006, Serbia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program and, in 2015, signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan with the alliance to strengthen cooperation.

Recently the European Union announced that Serbia could join the EU as early as 2025. I applaud this step which will strengthen Belgrade's political institutions and economic ties with the West.

Together we share the same dreams of a bright and free future for both our countries.

We are blessed to have brave men and women that ensure our futures are bright and free.

Thanks to the Serbian armed forces for standing with America in the wars of the past and in the challenges we will face together in the future.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING CORA BEASLEY

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, when tragedy struck in 1957, the Surry County, North Carolina community came together, honored its' own, and remained strong.

I rise to commemorate the selfless sacrifice of Mrs. Cora Beasley, a third grade teacher. Sixty-one years ago, a fire consumed Flat Rock Elementary School in Surry County. Mrs. Beasley ignored the danger and helped students out of a second-floor window, saving their lives.

During the blaze, Mrs. Beasley attempted also to save third-grader Larry Adams, but sadly, they both perished. This month, the Flat Rock School community will rename its main building the Cora F. Beasley Building, a fitting tribute to one woman's selfless heroism.

I salute the efforts of this tight-knit community and offer my prayers for Mrs. Beasley, Mr. Adams, their families and all of those affected by the fire that day.