

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE, MS. FAY ROPELLA, IN HONOR OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. GREGG HARPER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Fay Ropella, Inspector General for the United States Capitol Police (USCP) Department, on her upcoming retirement, and to thank her for her many years of public service.

Ms. Ropella was sworn in as the second Inspector General for the USCP in November 2013, and has diligently served this institution with honor and integrity.

During her more than 20 years working in the Inspector General community, Ms. Ropella has served in numerous capacities on teams which recovered tens of millions of dollars as a result of audits and investigations into areas such as labor cost mischarging, contract and grant fraud, and misuse of federal funds.

As Inspector General for the USCP, Ms. Ropella has led an office responsible for identifying and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse within the Department. Over her past years of service, Ms. Ropella's priorities were to serve as an independent and trusted contributor to the USCP's mission and operations and to improve the management and financial integrity of the Department's programs. Before her appointment to Inspector General, she was serving as Assistant Inspector General for Audits, performing the duties of Deputy Inspector General for the USCP and helping establish the office from the ground-up. One of her earliest accomplishments in this role was to assist the USCP in completing its first set of financial statements, resulting in a clean opinion. In her work, Ms. Ropella has distinguished herself by promoting positive change within the USCP and has earned the respect of her colleagues in the process.

Before joining the USCP, Ms. Ropella served for more than 10 years with the Office of Inspector General for the Department of State. Among her many senior leadership positions, she was the chief financial advisor to the Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, managing appropriations in excess of \$1.5 billion. Before joining the Department of State, Ms. Ropella worked at the U.S. Information Agency and the Department of Defense.

Ms. Ropella graduated Magna Cum Laude from Saint Leo College with a Bachelor of Arts in Accountancy. Ms. Ropella is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Fraud Examiner, and she has been active in the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency, Federal Audit Executive Council, as well as the Legislative Inspector General quarterly meetings.

Ms. Ropella will retire on March 30, 2018, leaving behind a legacy of leadership, trans-

parency, accountability, and cooperation. She has been a true public servant, and we are grateful for her unwavering dedication to this institution. We wish Ms. Ropella success and happiness in her retirement and offer our congratulations to her and her family.

TRIBUTE TO 98-YEAR-OLD VETERAN VIRGINIA HENDERSON GRANGER

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to my Memphis constituent Virginia Henderson Granger, a veteran overseas U.S. Army nurse during World War II, who turned 98 last month. Mrs. Granger was born on February 21, 1920, in Johnson City, Illinois. She graduated from West Frankfort Community High School in 1937 and went to nursing school at Christian Welfare Hospital in East St. Louis, Illinois, earning her R.N. in 1942. Later, after her service in the Army, Mrs. Granger went to Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and graduated in 1952 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing.

Mrs. Granger volunteered for the Army Nurse Corps in 1943 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. At Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, Mrs. Granger received her basic training and then worked at the Station Hospital for six weeks while awaiting further orders.

She traveled by troop train to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, which was the port of embarkation for the European Theatre of Operations. Mrs. Granger was sent to Barnstaple, England, as a platoon nurse caring for troops. She returned to the U.S. to take up her permanent assignment after a passenger/cargo ship, the USS *Munargo*, was converted into the 206th U.S. Army Hospital Ship *Thistle*. She served on the *Thistle* for most of two years, rising in rank to First Lieutenant.

The home ports for the *Thistle* were New York City and Charleston, South Carolina, while its overseas port was Naples, Italy. As a hospital ship, it was considered neutral under the Geneva Convention and bore a large red cross on the upper decks. While aboard the *Thistle*, Mrs. Granger made 12 round trips across the Atlantic Ocean bringing sick and wounded troops home from the European Theater. While in the Mediterranean Sea, the ship shuttled sick and wounded troops from Oran, Algeria and Southern France. Mrs. Granger and the rest of the crew of the *Thistle* participated in the Southern France Invasion in August 1944. At the end of the war in Europe, the *Thistle* and Mrs. Granger were sent to the Philippine Islands to evacuate the remaining sick and wounded. After three years of service, Mrs. Granger returned via Long Beach, California, and was discharged in Des Moines, Iowa.

Mrs. Granger was awarded the World War II Victory Medal, the EAME (Eastern, Amer-

ican, Mediterranean) Campaign Medal with three Bronze Service Stars, the American Pacific Campaign Medal, and three overseas bars.

Mrs. Granger, a widow, was married to John W. Granger, an Army veteran of the war, for thirty years.

After leaving the Army, she worked as a nurse at the John Cochran Veterans Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, and the Memphis Veterans Hospital. She worked a total of thirty years at the two hospitals and served in almost all of the departments within the hospitals. For several years she was the supervisor of the Spinal Cord Injury, Post Surgical Unit, and Psychiatric Departments of the hospital in Memphis.

Except for her college years in St. Louis, Mrs. Granger has lived in Memphis since 1946. She helped open the Veterans Hospital in St. Louis and she helped move the Memphis Veterans Hospital from Park and Getwell to its current location on Jefferson Avenue. She retired from the VA in 1979. Mrs. Granger currently lives at the Kirby Pines Retirement Community.

Mrs. Granger is a longtime member of American Legion Post 250 in Germantown. I want to commend Mrs. Granger for her long years of service to our country and its veterans and hope that my constituents and her many friends will thank her for the devoted hard work she has done for a grateful nation.

HONORING THE POWER OF STUDENT VOICES AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor The Power of Student Voices at Central High School, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Power of Student Voices at Central High School was created in the fall of 2005 to create a more informed citizenry that can actively participate and investigate the unique culture of the American political landscape. In May 2008, Central High School was awarded the AARP Ethel Percy Award for Civic Engagement. Additionally, the students participated in the Presidential inaugural activities in 2009 and 2017 and of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf in January 2015. Last year, the students participated in an in-depth study of the 2016 Presidential Election.

Now, Central High School's seniors have the opportunity to explore our nation's capitol as they visit historical landmarks and meet with political actors. This unique experience will give them the opportunity to meet with political professionals, conduct interviews, write news articles and blogs (to be displayed on a student-made website), and explore the historical and political landscape of the political process. Students will develop a direct sense

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

of political efficacy and interact with key decision-makers to affect the policy making process.

The 2nd Congressional District of Pennsylvania extends gratitude to The Power of Student Voices at Central High School for their hard work and commitment to civic engagement.

TRIBUTE TO ED WHITING

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding member of our community, Mr. Ed Whiting, on his retirement as Chief of Police and for his tireless and dedicated service to the City of Taft, California.

For well over thirty years, Ed has dedicated his life to ensuring that the citizens of California's 23rd Congressional District remain safe and informed. Having graduated from East Bakersfield High School in 1976, Ed has long served as an instrumental member of California's Central Valley community. Upon graduation from high school, Ed enlisted in the United States Air Force as a Law Enforcement Specialist, where he learned how to effectively enforce rules and maintain order. Ed's successful career with the Air Force is marked by the accolades that he received—including a Good Conduct Medal and the Joint Service Commendation Medal for Operation Red, White and Blue during the 1980 Cuban Refugee Resettlement in Florida. He retired from the Air Force after achieving the rank of Sergeant.

Following his military service, Ed joined the Kern County Sheriff's Office before attending the Police Academy in Bakersfield. Ed went on to serve in Bakersfield, McFarland and eventually Taft in a myriad of roles—from Police Officer to Detective to Sergeant. His down-to-earth demeanor and larger-than-life personality have made Ed a joy to work with.

With an extensive background in law enforcement and a passion for serving others, Ed was the ideal candidate to take on the role of Taft Police Chief in 2012—serving proudly with diligence and grace. Perhaps one of the most telling events of Ed's success as police chief was the smooth and orderly manner in which he handled the 2013 shooting at Taft Union High School. Ed's effective rapid response strategies became a trademark of his career, and I truly believe that Ed's leadership greatly enhanced the Taft community's safety.

On behalf of California's 23rd Congressional District and the United States Congress, I am grateful for Ed's service to our community, as I know the Taft community is as well. I have always appreciated his friendship and advice, and I know that many others join me in celebrating his successful career. I wish Ed, his wife of 29 years, Robin, and his two children, Melissa and John, happiness in Ed's retirement.

HONORING RICKLIN'S HARDWARE
STORE

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an iconic small business, Ricklin's Hardware, an institution in Narberth that is closing after over a century of dedication to the community.

Ricklin's Hardware began before it even had its now familiar storefront to its name in 1913. Founder and namesake Hyman Ricklin started the business going through Narberth, door-to-door, with a pushcart full of tools before settling on the business' iconic location on Haverford Avenue. Ricklin, his wife, "Ma" Ricklin, and children operated the store for several years. The store endured two fires and the loss of its original building before it was sold to Ed Riddell and brothers Mario and Kelly Barone in 1960.

Though once amassing five separate hardware stores, Ed Riddell settled on a flock of two fixtures, including Ricklin's Hardware and Suburban Hardware in Byrn Mawr, which closed last year after nine decades of service. Since 1973, Ed's son, Jed, has worked in the store alongside his father. Jed worked at Ricklin's throughout high school, as did his friend and classmate Charlie Waters, and the pair became co-owners of Ricklin's in 1990.

As Ricklin's Hardware has passed hands from one generation to the next, so too have its customers. Riddell and Waters and other longtime employees have personally seen more than three generations pass through its doors. This is a true testament to the loyalty of its customers, the community, and the remarkable care Ricklin's has provided.

After 105 years of service, Ricklin's Hardware has proven that the individual and specialized support characteristics our small businesses provide as an irreplaceable investment to our neighborhoods. As Riddell and Waters plan to close the doors of Ricklin's Hardware on April 28, they should do so with the recognition that through the generations Ricklin's has established ties to the Narberth community that will last long past its closure.

The 2nd Congressional District of Pennsylvania extends gratitude to Ricklin's Hardware for its dedicated service to Narberth and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, on March 22, 2018, I was unavoidably detained and missed recorded vote No. 123. Had I been present, on Roll Call No. 123, On Ordering the Previous Question: H. Res. 796: Providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1625) to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to include severe forms of trafficking in persons within the definition of transnational organized crime, I would have voted NO.

RECOGNIZING DR. DAVID HERD

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. David Herd, a resident of New York's 23rd congressional district in Geneva, New York.

Dr. Herd just completed his term as president of the American Chiropractic Association, where he has been a member for nearly four decades. In his time at ACA, Dr. Herd has served in many leadership posts, including serving as New York's delegate to the organization's governing body, as chair of the ACA's strategic planning committee, and as chair of the ACA's membership committee.

A native of Buffalo, Dr. Herd received his BA at the State University of New York at Buffalo and his Doctor of Chiropractic degree at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa. Dr. Herd has also served on the faculty of the New York Chiropractic College, located in Seneca Falls. In addition, Dr. Herd has also served in the leadership of the New York State Chiropractic Association, as president of the Rochester district in the early 1990s.

These past two years, Dr. Herd has spearheaded a move to streamline the governance structure of the ACA, leading to a more dynamic and responsive organization. A tireless advocate for chiropractic patients and his beloved profession, he and others at the ACA have now laid the groundwork for a strong and vibrant organization for years to come.

On March 1st, the American Chiropractic Association recognized Dr. Herd with their most prestigious honor, the Chiropractor of the Year award. Mr. Speaker, this is truly an honor befitting of an individual who has dedicated his life to his patients and his profession. I congratulate him on this honor and for a successful tenure as president of the ACA.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEMPHIS SANITATION WORKERS' STRIKE AND THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the coordinated struggle of workers on the 50th Anniversary of the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike to voice their grievances and reach a collective agreement for rights in the workplace.

To enshrine this moment into history and the record of the House of Representatives, I recently introduced a resolution, H. Res. 720, to commemorate the historic convergence of the Civil Rights and Labor movements that the sanitation workers' strike represents. Since its introduction, my resolution has garnered the support of a bipartisan coalition of nearly 100 members of the House including almost every member of the Congressional Black Caucus, every member of the Tennessee House delegation, and the support and passage of an identical resolution in the United States Senate.

On February 1, 1968, Memphis sanitation workers Echol Cole, 36, and Robert Walker, 30, climbed inside a garbage truck amid putrefying trash and dead chickens in a driving rain and were crushed to death when the compactor malfunctioned. Twelve days later, frustrated by the city's response to the latest event in a long pattern of neglect and disrespect for its black employees, 1,300 black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike.

Sanitation workers demanded recognition of their union, better safety standards, and higher wages. Their fight—symbolized by strike placards reading “I AM A MAN”—brought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Memphis. On April 4, 1968, during the labor dispute, Dr. King was assassinated on the balcony outside his room in the Lorraine Motel, now the site of the National Civil Rights Museum.

On the cusp of the solemn 50th anniversary of the assassination of the late, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I would like to lay out the record of the Memphis sanitation workers' strike and the events leading up to the assassination of Dr. King:

In 1968, 1,300 African-American sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, fought for collective bargaining rights and equality in the workplace.

In the struggle for workers' rights, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) integrated the labor movement and the civil rights movement in a demand for basic human rights and respect for all men and women.

Black employees doing most of the low-wage work in Memphis had almost no health care, pensions, or vacation, worked in deplorable conditions, and were shown disrespect by White supervisors.

40 percent of the workers qualified for welfare in order to supplement their low salaries and were denied the opportunity to improve their working conditions by Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb and the City Council.

On January 31, 1968, 22 Black sewer workers who reported for work were sent home when it began raining, losing a day's pay, while White workers were not sent home and received a full day's pay.

The following day, February 1, 1968, sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker sought refuge from a downpour in the hamper of a garbage truck amid putrefying garbage and were crushed to death when the compactor malfunctioned.

On February 12, 1968, Memphis sanitation and public employees went on strike after attempting last-minute negotiations with Mayor Loeb and the city on the terms of their employment, demanding that the city recognize their union, and provide a pay increase to \$2.35 an hour from an average of \$1.70, overtime pay, and promotions based on merit irrespective of race.

In response to the workers' demands, Mayor Loeb, on February 13, 1968, threatened to hire replacements unless workers returned to work.

On February 18, 1968, the President of AFSCME, Jerry Wurf, arrived in Memphis and negotiations began in the basement of St. Mary's Episcopal Church with Rabbi James A. Wax of Temple Israel representing the Memphis Ministerial Association, mediating between the city and striking workers, assisted by Local 1733 President T.O. Jones and

AFSCME Director of Legislative and Community Affairs William Lucy.

After an all-night vigil outside City Hall on February 19–20, 1968, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and union workers called for a boycott of downtown businesses.

On February 23, 1968, 1,500 strikers and supporters organized a march to the Memphis City Hall, where, 11 days after the initial strike, the City Council refused to recognize the union.

In the following days, 500 White labor union members joined members of the clergy and sanitation workers in a march downtown, 116 strikers and supporters were arrested during a peaceful demonstration, and hundreds of high school students joined in another march led or supported by members of the clergy including Rabbi Wax, the Reverend Frank McRae of St. John's United Methodist Church, Father Nicholas Vieron of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, and Dean William Dimmick of St. Mary's.

On March 4, 1968, a proposal by State Senator Frank White to create a State mediation board to resolve the stalemate was rejected by Mayor Loeb.

On March 5, 1968, the Ministerial Association announced that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., would be traveling to Memphis on behalf of striking workers.

On March 7, 1968, the City Council voted to reject union dues checkoff for sanitation workers.

Throughout March 1968, national civil rights leaders, including Roy Wilkins, Bayard Rustin, Ralph Abernathy, James Bevel, Andrew Young, and Jesse Jackson, among others, came to Memphis to rally the strikers.

On March 28, 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Reverend James Lawson of Centenary Methodist Church led a march from the sanitation workers' gathering spot at Clayborn Temple and on to Beale Street which was marred by window-breaking and disintegrated into a riot as police responded with tear gas and gunfire.

Also on March 28, 1968, 16-year-old Larry Payne was shot to death by a Memphis police officer, police arrested 280 mostly Black demonstrators, and the State legislature authorized a 7 p.m. curfew which was enforced by 4,000 members of the National Guard moving into Memphis.

In response to Payne's death, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called Payne's mother, Lizzie, offering consolation, and vowed to visit her on his return to Memphis.

Also on March 28, 1968, and in response to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s promise to return to Memphis to lead a march based on the principles of nonviolence, the city obtained a temporary restraining order in Federal court forbidding such a march.

In response to the temporary restraining order, AFSCME General Counsel Mel Wulf asked the firm of Burch, Porter and Johnson and attorneys Lucius E. Burch, Jr., David Caywood, Charles Newman, and W.J. Michael Cody to work on lifting the injunction to allow the march to proceed.

Louis Lucas and Walter Bailey of the Ratner and Sugarmon firm were deeply involved in representing King and striking workers for the duration of the labor dispute.

On April 3, 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed a rally of 10,000 Black

workers and residents, members of the clergy, White liberals, and union members at Mason Temple, the Memphis headquarters of the Church of God in Christ, for what would be his last speech, forever known for the lines ‘I have been to the mountain top’, and ‘I may not get there with you but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land’, linking the civil rights and labor movements and foreshadowing his fate.

On April 4, 1968, a daylong hearing on the city's injunction resulted in an order from United States District Judge Bailey Brown in the late afternoon allowing the march, with some restrictions, to go forward on April 5, 1968.

On April 4, 1968, the day after his rallying cry for compromise, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated by a sniper on the balcony outside of his Lorraine Motel room in Memphis.

On April 4, 1968, Memphis and cities across the country erupted in violent protests and rioting.

On April 5, 1968, Rabbi James A. Wax led a march from St. Mary's Episcopal Church to City Hall and confronted Mayor Henry Loeb with the Nation watching on all three networks, telling him ‘There are laws far greater than the laws of Memphis and Tennessee, and these are the laws of God’.

On April 8, 1968, an estimated 42,000 people, led by the wife of Rev. Dr. King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, and her children, peacefully marched in memory of Dr. King and in support of the union's requests.

On April 16, 1968, AFSCME announced that a 14-month contract had been agreed to and accepted, and included union dues check-off, a grievance procedure, and wage increases of 10 cents an hour in May and another 5 cents in September, ending the 3-month strike.

On April 29, 2011, the 1,300 sanitation worker strikers were inducted into the Department of Labor's Labor Hall of Honor.

Today, the integration of the civil rights and labor movements remains a work in progress and requires our continued vigilance.

In the days leading up to and surrounding April 4th 2018, 50 years after that fateful night, the world will converge on Memphis, a now-sacred place where the world lost a true beacon of justice. Nevertheless, the light from that beacon shines on, lighting a path towards true equality and compassion for one another, long after the passing of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. There, we will pay homage and respect to a man whose bold courage helped change the world, and whose legacy continues to be a force for justice and hope for all.

I urge my colleagues to pass H. Res. 720, to immortalize our honor and respect for the Memphis sanitation workers and Dr. King and the legacy they leave behind.

HONORING PAUL BEALE'S
FLORIST

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an iconic small business, Paul Beale's Florist, a family-owned business on Ogontz

Avenue that has meant so much to our neighborhood and the City of Philadelphia for 47 years.

From a young age, founder Paul Beale always knew he would be a florist and one day own his own flower shop. Committed to his goal Mr. Beale worked his way up and was a manager at Stein's Flower shop for 15 years. In 1970, the Senate passed a bill that increased federal assistance for the financing of small businesses. In 1971, Paul's dream to own his own shop came to fruition when he took out a loan to start a shop of his very own, Paul Beale's Florist.

Paul and his wife, Altermese, worked tirelessly to keep their business up and running. The Beales' hard work has paid off over the years, as Paul Beale's Flowers has become a true fixture on Ogontz Avenue in West Oak Lane. The small business has also become a fixture of the Beale family. Paul's daughter, Paulette Beale Harris, is now the store manager, and four generations of the Beale family work in the shop. Mr. Beale is a true role model in our City as he is a strong believer that what he earns from his shop should be invested back into the neighborhood he is proud to call home.

The 2nd Congressional District of Pennsylvania extends gratitude to Paul Beale's Flowers for its dedicated service to the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

RECOGNIZING THE 80th BIRTHDAY
OF MR. HUBERT HOWARD COKER

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2018

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 80th birthday of

Mr. Hubert Howard Coker. Mr. Coker is an outstanding citizen who demonstrates a deep devotion to God, our nation, and to his family. Mr. Coker is known for his commitment to helping his fellow man through his many roles in life, including public service.

Mr. Coker was born on March 30, 1938, to Homer and Luna Coker. He was the eighth of ten children born on the family farm in the Ryan's Well community in Itawamba County. During his early years, he demonstrated the meaning of hard work by dividing his time in the fields with school work. At the age of 15, Mr. Coker traveled to Florida, where he took a job harvesting trees from swamps to help support his family. Mr. Coker eventually returned to Itawamba County and continued his education at Itawamba Agricultural High School. In 1957, Mr. Coker married Lula Faye Newell. In 1958, Mr. Coker earned his General Equivalency Diploma (GED). He attended Northwest Alabama Junior College in Phil Campbell, Alabama, where he studied electronics.

In 1959, Mr. Coker and his family moved to Wisconsin, where he began working for the American Motors Corporation (AMC). After a brief stay, Mr. Coker and his family moved back to Itawamba County, there he began working at the True Temper Corporation in Amory, Mississippi. He would later become an employee at Mueller Brass Industries, Inc., where he embarked on a long-term mission to make sure his fellow workers received better pay and opportunities for advancement. Mr. Coker assisted in the forming of the United Steel Workers Union at Mueller Brass Industries, Inc. He later served as president of the union. Mr. Coker also established other unions throughout the south to improve wages and working conditions. From 1982–1992, Mr. Coker served as the administrator of the Industrial Union Department. He also served as

a national organizer for the International Woodworkers of America (IWA).

Mr. Coker has long been a champion of civil rights. In 1968, he took part in the Poor People's March on Washington, D.C., where participants called for a federal solution to widespread unemployment and poverty in America. Mr. Coker continued to push for civil rights reforms as a member of the NAACP and the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

Mr. Coker's desire to help others inspired him to run for public office. In 1976, he was elected to serve as an Itawamba County Justice Court Judge. He was also elected to serve as chairman of the Itawamba County Democratic Executive Committee from 1980–1984. Mr. Coker served on the Mississippi Democratic State Executive Committee from 1984–1990. One of Mr. Coker's proudest achievements was being chosen as a Mississippi delegate to the 1984 Democratic National Convention (DNC) in California, supporting presidential candidate, Walter Mondale, and the first female nominee for vice president, Geraldine Ferraro.

Mr. Coker and his wife, Carol Gray Coker, live in Fulton. They have two daughters, Patricia Digby and Angela Johnson; one son, Kenneth H. Coker; seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Mr. Coker enjoys spending time with his family, cattle farming, investing in the stock market, and staying abreast of the latest news.

Mr. Coker's love of God and America, backed by humble roots and hard work, demonstrates a spirit of true patriotism, honor, and pride in being an American. I am honored to wish him a happy 80th birthday and all the best on this special day.