

identifies those needs, and works to find solutions.

Each year Devotion to Children recognizes an individual who has made extraordinary contributions by promoting public awareness of the organization and local needs, providing funding for programs and services, and who has collaborated with other community organizations to support local children. I am pleased to join Devotion to Children in congratulating and thanking this year's honoree, Mr. Mark Silverwood, for his service to our community.

Mark Silverwood is President and CEO of Silverwood Associates, Inc. and Silverwood Management, Inc., affiliated real estate development and management companies, as well as a partner in Silverwood Investments, LLC.

Since founding Silverwood Associates in 1993, Mr. Silverwood has been responsible for the acquisition, renovation, and management of several thousand apartments in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, North Carolina, and West Virginia. Mr. Silverwood has more than 35 years of experience in the real estate industry, building more than 4,000 residential units and one million square feet of commercial space.

In addition to his work as a developer, Mr. Silverwood has served on the Board of Directors of the Arlington Free Clinic and the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization, as co-chair of the Urban Land Institute Workforce Housing Committee and as a member of the Governor's Housing Policy Advisory Committee. Currently, he is a member of the Urban Land Institute's Washington District Council Advisory Board, the Virginia Housing Development Authority's Northern Virginia Advisory Board, and the Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the dedicated work of citizens like Mark Silverwood and the volunteers, staff, and sponsors of Devotion to Children are some of the many reasons why Fairfax County and Northern Virginia as a whole remains one of the best places in the country in which to live, work, raise a family, and start a business. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Devotion to Children for their dedication to future generations and in congratulating Mark Silverwood on receiving this award.

GARY BROZ

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this summer will mark the end of Gary Broz's tenure as city manager of Liberty, Texas.

Gary has been a valuable asset for the city of Liberty since he took over as city manager in 2009. He revamped the city's infrastructure by authorizing the reconstruction of the city electrical grid and the replacement of the decades-old sewage plant and pipes system. He is responsible for the new, modern police station, upgraded parking meters, and the city's new municipal golf course and country club.

Above all, his leadership and poise helped the city navigate the challenges brought by Hurricanes Rita, Ike, and Harvey, as well as additional floods. The city's levy withstood Hurricane Harvey last fall, preventing millions of dollars of damage to the city and requiring only minimal repairs afterwards.

When Gary leaves his post in June, he will leave the city of Liberty better than he found it. The city's financial situation is promising, with deep reserves and a new fixed asset fund set aside for the purchase of new equipment. Liberty is also more recognizable as a city than it was in 2009 and has a stronger sense of community.

Gary's idea of a retirement? Taking on a new role as the city manager of Eagle Lake. Not that this comes as too much of a surprise, since hard work has always been a staple of Gary's life.

From working the Houston Rodeo to pay his way through college and his experience working as a farmer and rancher to his decades-long career in city governments across Texas, Gary has always met challenges in life head-on, leaning on an indefatigable work ethic and the uncanny ability to get even the toughest job done.

In his new post, Gary will be able to spend more time with his wife, Georgia, whom he married 39 years ago, as his office will only be a brief fifteen minutes away from his house in Columbus.

Mr. Speaker, it is individuals like Gary whose hard work done on behalf of our communities makes our country great.

And that is just the way it is.

HONORING AMBASSADOR VASILIOS PHILIPPOU

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me as I rise to pay tribute to H.E. Ambassador Vasilios Philippou as he begins his new position as the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in Ottawa, Canada.

Ambassador Philippou began his career in the National Guard for the Republic of Cyprus. He went on to receive his B.A. in Economics, Social Administration, and Political Science at University of Montpellier France in 1989, followed by a Master's degree in International Politics from Free University of Brussels in 1999, and most recently a Master of Arts in International Relations from Alliant International University in 2013. Ambassador Philippou served in the Foreign Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus in 1991. He was later appointed as the Consul General of Cyprus in New York, in addition to later being appointed Counsellor to Economic Affairs, Multilateral Affairs, and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Cyprus to various other countries. He also served as High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus to Antigua, Barbuda, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago in 2016.

Ambassador Philippou has been honored and recognized by many different government entities and organizations. The United States Congress honored him for his dedication to peace, understanding, and positive communication for human rights. Ambassador Philippou was awarded the "The International Good Scout Award" from the greater New York Councils of Boy Scouts of America. He has been honored by the Cyprus Children's Fund for his commitment to aiding the needy

children of Cyprus, and the Ambassador is an Honorary Fellow of the Foreign Policy Association of New York. Ambassador Philippou has dedicated his life to the service of the country of Cyprus, its international relations, and the well-being of Cypriot children.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my fellow members of the U.S. House of Representatives agree that Ambassador Vasilios Philippou deserves to be recognized for all of his hard work and dedication to the lives of others both in his country and internationally.

PROTECTING CIVIL SOCIETY,
FAITH-BASED ACTORS, AND POLITICAL
SPEECH IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, our hearing today will explore U.S. policy responses to the growing trend of government incursions on the space for non-state actors in Sub-Saharan Africa. As authoritarian regimes and backsliding democracies have entrenched themselves in countries such as Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, governments have increasingly encroached upon the mediating space between individuals and the state, particularly against religious groups and journalists, who often stand as independent institutional checks to authoritarian rule.

Protecting non-governmental sector in Sub-Saharan Africa is critical to preserving civil and political rights within the region. As we learned from the U.S. civil rights movement, groups such as churches and independent journalists are the safekeepers of civil liberties. Through sanctions and public diplomacy tools, the international community can protect the space for these safe-keepers to operate in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For example, the Catholic Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the only organization with a nationwide institutional presence and moral authority capable of checking Kabila's growing authoritarian rule. The National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO, per its French acronym) is the only civil society institution that pressures the Kabila regime to respect human rights and democratic principles. CENCO mediated the Saint Sylvester political agreement in 2016. It also oversees the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace (CEJP) which conducts voter-education and election-observer training programs and is a recipient of USAID funding, and has expressed "moral support" for pro-democracy protests.

The Catholic Church's leadership in the Congo does not come without a cost. Priests, nuns and parishioners have been targeted, attacked, and killed in retaliation for its leadership. A few months ago, Father Sebastien Yebo, parish priest of St. Robert in an outer eastern suburb of Kinshasa, was abducted by Congolese security forces. Interviewed on RFI radio, Father Joseph Bema from St. Kisito's parish said he has rarely slept at home since the brutal suppression of the protest marches organized by the Lay Coordination Committee on Jan. 21.