

HONORING EMMA HARTLEY, GULF
COAST HEART WALK WARRIOR

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 24, 2018

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor an impressive Gulf Coast philanthropist, Miss Emma Hartley of Gulfport, Mississippi.

My district is nicknamed "Mississippi's Fighting Fourth," earned for Mississippi's spirit and the residents who call her "home." Most Mississippians have a warrior spirit, a tenacity, a willingness to do whatever it takes to live and nurture each other with compassion and intentional care. These qualities embody one of Mississippi's youngest and most determined warriors—ten-year-old Emma Hartley.

Emma was born August 2, 2008, missing a heart valve. Less than 24 hours after her birth, Emma underwent the first of what would become many surgeries. Perhaps it was an innate fighting spirit and a purpose to persevere for the sake of loving others that brought Emma and her heart safely through that first critical surgery. Perhaps she knew then that she would need to grow strong and develop a voice to encourage others to face tough battles with a smile. Perhaps it is simply that God has big plans for this little girl. What is known is that Mississippi's Gulf Coast is blessed by Emma's heart, beating now for over 10 years, and Emma's desire to make a difference in the lives of those facing similar health challenges.

Emma has outlived the expectations of many of her doctors, and she will soon undergo her fifth surgery. Before age 18, she is likely to face several more; but, she endures each procedure with courage and grace. From an early age, Emma participated with her mom, Lisa Northrup, in fundraising efforts such as Rock Your Scar, the March of Dimes, Mended Little Hearts, and the Heart Walk for the American Heart Association. Now, with the support of family, friends, and her church, Emma champions her own efforts, working hard to raise funds, give speeches, and boost awareness of these causes in her local communities.

Crafting and creating artwork, two of Emma's hobbies, are incorporated into her philanthropic efforts, too. For one of her fundraisers this year Emma sold handcrafted wood signs, some of which were ordered from far away. Also, Emma's artwork has been reproduced in awards given to the top Heart Walk high achievers.

This year's Gulf Coast Heart Walk was on September 22. Emma offered the opening prayer to start the event. Mississippi is fortunate to have such a brave, talented, ambitious, and inspiring warrior, like Emma Hartley.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA FOR 27 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 24, 2018

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian

Issues, I congratulate Prime Minister Pashinyan and the people of the Republic of Armenia on 27 years of independence from the Soviet Union. Since this day 27 years ago, the Armenian people have lived up to their pledge to create a free and independent nation, built on strong democratic principles and a market economy.

Earlier this year, Armenia saw incredible and unprecedented change in its government as a result of the Velvet Revolution. The peaceful transition of power after the revolution is a clear indication of the will of the Armenian people, strongly demonstrating a commitment to a fairer and more democratic state. Since my first visit in 1997, I continue to be struck by the incredible progress Armenia has made towards bolstering its government transparency, strengthening its democratic institutions, and empowering its civil society. I believe it is critical for the United States to continue to deepen its ties with our regional partner at every level of government to ensure this transformation continues.

The Republic of Armenia has also consistently championed the right to self-determination of its neighbors in the Republic of Artsakh. This is a right that Artsakh continues to fight for in its steadfast pursuit of regional security and stability despite a tenuous cease fire. The United States must continue to support a negotiated end to hostilities with Azerbaijan along the lines of the Royce-Engel peace proposals, and take further action to ensure that all parties of the conflict are included.

I join with the Armenian people and the Armenian-American community in celebrating 27 years of independence. I send my best wishes on this important day and pledge my continued commitment to a strong United States-Armenia partnership.

IN TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL (RET.) ROBERT ANDREW COCROFT, UNITED STATES (U.S.) ARMY

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 24, 2018

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Brigadier General (Ret.) Robert Andrew Cocroft, U.S. Army veteran who passed away on September 12, 2018. He was born to Willie Tilmon Cocroft and Louise Cocroft (Gee) on November 16, 1946, in Conway, Mississippi. The Cocroft family settled in Milwaukee in 1947.

Robert received his formal education in the Milwaukee Public School system and was a fellow graduate of North Division High School in 1965. In 1966, while attending the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh on a football scholarship he was drafted into the U.S. Army but opted to attend Officer Candidate School to become an infantry officer. He was a Vietnam-era veteran who served overseas duty in the Republic of Korea. He joined the 84th Division of the Army Reserve in Wisconsin and climbed the chain of command until earning the rank of Brigadier General. At the conclusion of his military career, he was the Assistant Division Commander of Operations for the 98th Division having commanded at the com-

pany, battalion and brigade levels over his 40 years of active and reserve military service. He officially retired in 2006.

At the time of his passing, he had served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the nonprofit Center for Veterans Issues, Ltd. (CVI) for over 14 years. In addition to advocating for the needs of veterans, CVI services include housing for low-income, homeless, minority and women veterans including their families. CVI is distinguished as the largest private provider of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing for veterans in Wisconsin.

Robert served as Deputy Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs from 1994 to 2002. He had the overall responsibility for the Department's day-to-day operations, which included administration and management of 900 full-time employees, departmental administrative services, as well as, coordination and direction of strategic planning and program development.

Robert was the immediate past National Commander of the National Association of Black Veterans (NABVETS) which was established in 1973, through the combined efforts of Robert Cocroft, Willie Sims, and Thomas Wynn (deceased) to advocate on behalf of its members. NABVETS currently has chapters in 80 cities throughout the United States and is certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a claims representative for veterans.

He was a life-long learner and continued his training/education while working and going to school full-time to earn a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Business Management, Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration both from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Officer Candidate School, U.S. Army Paratrooper Airborne School, and the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, P. A.

Robert leaves behind his beloved wife of 49 years, Jacqueline D. Cocroft to mourn his passing. Additionally he leaves a strong legacy of leadership for his children, Dianna Killins (Cocroft), Robert H. Cocroft and his adopted daughter Annette (Michael) Miller, Grandsons—Devin Tyree Cocroft, Isiah H. Cocroft, Robert T. Cocroft, Jonavan M. Cocroft, Michael A. Killins, Malik A. Killins, Mekhi A. Killins. Granddaughters—Arianna I. Cocroft, First Lieutenant Michelle A. Killins, USAR. Great-grandchildren—McKayla A. Killins and Morgan A. Killins and a host of other family and friends.

Brigadier General (Ret.) Robert Andrew Cocroft was a true servant leader, as demonstrated by his commitment to veteran affairs, as well as, serving on numerous boards and committees both locally and nationally. Robert was my friend and a Milwaukee and Wisconsin treasure. I valued his service to the 4th Congressional District, including his service as Co-Chair of the 4th Congressional District Academy Advisory Committee, his commitment to building safe transitional housing for veterans in the district, and his advocacy on behalf of low-income minority and female veterans. I urge my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in a salute to late Brigadier General (Ret.) Robert Andrew Cocroft.