

CONGRATULATING THE UPPER PENINSULA LAND CONSERVANCY FOR RECEIVING LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to recognize the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy for receiving Land Trust Accreditation. Through its dedication to wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and its local community, the U.P. Land Conservancy has become an indispensable part of Michigan's First District.

Locally focused land conservation undertaken by community-based land trusts has become increasingly important across the country. Accreditation by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission is given to those organizations that have proven to be trusted, strong, and effective in their land conservation efforts. Through its tremendous work in Michigan, the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy has shown that it is more than deserving of this seal. First started in 1999, the organization currently protects more than 6,600 acres of forest and wetlands across the Upper Peninsula. Its work to protect wildlife habitats, water quality, working farms and ranches, and healthy communities has been invaluable for the people of Michigan's First District. Our region is home to some of the most pristine natural landscapes in the country, and I'm grateful for the U.P. Land Conservancy's efforts to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same natural beauty we so deeply treasure.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honor to congratulate the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy for receiving Land Trust Accreditation. Michiganders can take immense pride in knowing that the First District is home to such a trusted organization working to promote land conservation. On behalf of my constituents, I wish the U.P. Land Conservancy all the best in its future endeavors.

VIOLENT ATTACK ON JEWISH COMMUNITY IN PENNSYLVANIA

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 27, as worshippers gathered to celebrate the naming of a new baby at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood, a gunman burst into the temple wielding three handguns and an AR-15 assault rifle shouting "All Jews Must Die." He murdered three women and eight men before he was subdued by the police in what authorities are calling the worst attack on the Jewish community in American history.

The eleven congregants killed and the six others who were wounded in this act of pure evil were targeted because of one reason only: they were Jews. Peaceful law abiding Americans were killed in a holy place on the Jewish Sabbath simply for being Jews. That this would happen in 2018 is appalling and is a tragic reminder that anti-Semitism is unfortu-

nately alive and well. The Jewish American community dates back to before the founding of our country, as this often persecuted religious community sought shelter in the hope of the American promise. In his 1790 letter to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, George Washington famously wrote, "The government of the United States . . . gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance. May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid."

Mr. Speaker, what happened on Saturday was an assault on the very foundations of America. It was an assault on freedom of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. I always say that the First Amendment is first because it is the most important—it is the very basis of what historically has made this country different than all others. It is because of that amendment that Jews and people of all other faiths have made this country their home.

This deranged killer sought not only to kill Jews on the Sabbath, he sought to kill America as we know it. His violent and murderous actions should be treated as a hate crime, and he should be brought to justice swiftly. If he is indeed convicted, this man should be meted out the most severe punishment under the law.

Just days following this heinous attack, the Rabbi of the Tree of Life Synagogue summed up the significance of what occurred well. "Many just see this as an attack on the Jewish community. It's not. When American citizens cannot freely and safely worship in their house of worship and celebrate the Sabbath, it concerned me because it challenges the safety and security of all Americans in any house of worship. It was an attack on America."

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR CHRIS LAVAGNINO

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career achievements of Mr. Chris Lavagnino, a fourth-grade teacher at Ronald Reagan Elementary School in Chowchilla, California. Chris is being honored by the Madera County Farm Bureau with the 2018 Educator of the Year Award. This award is given to an educator who has guided and supplied their students and has devoted their time to teach about farming and agriculture. It is both fitting and appropriate that we honor Chris today for his years of service to our Valley.

Chris, a native of San Leonardo, moved to the Central Valley at age 8. He attended local schools in Fresno and Clovis, where his fourth-grade teacher at Viking Elementary School, Mr. Sepetjian, inspired him to become a teacher himself.

Chris attended California State University, Fresno, where he received a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies. He went on to obtain his teaching credential at National University.

Chris returned to Fresno State and received his master's degree in Education. After completing his education, Chris began to live his dream of teaching and taught at several schools throughout Fresno Unified School District from 2000 to 2005.

In 2005, Chris was hired as a fourth-grade teacher at Ronald Reagan Elementary in Chowchilla. Since then, he has made every school year a "unique learning experience" for his students. In the past three years, Chris began teaching his students about the importance of farming and agriculture. He strongly believes that agriculture is of vital importance to our region, therefore insists in teaching his students about farming and agriculture.

This school year, Chris and his students have conducted experiments and planted plants at their school's onsite greenhouse, where they plot and track the growth of their plants. Also, last year, his students transplanted a variety of succulents, which were entered into the Chowchilla Fair and received a first-place ribbon.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in recognizing Mr. Chris Lavagnino for receiving the Educator of the Year Award. Chris has been an inspiration, not only to his students, but also through his community leadership. I ask that you join me in wishing Chris and his wife Jennifer continued success and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO NORMA AND RON DANT

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Norma and Ron Dant of Atlantic, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Norma and Ron's lifelong commitment to each other and their family truly embodies Iowa values. As they reflect on their 50th anniversary, I hope it is filled with happy memories. May their commitment grow even stronger as they continue to love, cherish, and honor one another for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together, and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

COMMEMORATING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN DISTRICT OF THE ORIGINAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Middle Eastern District of the Original Free Will Baptist Church, which is headquartered in my congressional district in Wilson, North Carolina. The Middle Eastern District has been

a beacon of light in its community and has positively impacted generations of families in eastern North Carolina for a century and a half.

The Middle Eastern District of the Original Free Will Baptist Church is one steeped in family, fellowship, and faith. Founded in 1868, two years after the U.S. Congress passed the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery, Brothers Daniel Davis, R.C. Jackson, T.H. Harrison, J.M. Barfield, and Reverend C.C. Forbes led the verification of the founding principles upon which the Middle Eastern District was rooted. In the early years, the Middle Eastern Conference was small, but that did not deter its leaders' devotion to spreading the word of God. The oldest components of the Middle Eastern Conference are the Bible Church School, the Women Home Mission, the Sunshine Band, and the Usher's Convention.

Mr. Speaker, much of the Middle Eastern District's growth over the years can be attributed to the dedication and vision of its leadership. In the early 1950's, Reverend D.W. Dupree became Moderator, with Rev. G.W. Little serving as Vice Moderator. In 1957, Reverend K.L. Smith, who succeeded Reverend G.W. Little as Vice Moderator and would later become Moderator, organized the Young People Christian League (YPCL) Convention. Brother L.N. Forbes (now Bishop L.N. Forbes) was elected President of the YPCL Convention.

In 1968, my personal friend, Elder L.N. Forbes, became Moderator and Elder Bernard Newsome served as Vice Moderator. The title "Moderator" was then changed to "Bishop." Under Bishop L.N. Forbes' leadership, the Middle Eastern District of the Original Free Will Baptist Church continued to prosper and serve its community. In order to accommodate the rapidly growing attendance, the Conference meetings were moved to the Auditorium of Charles H. Darden Middle School in Wilson, North Carolina. As the Presiding Bishop, Bishop Forbes spearheaded the construction of the L.N. Forbes Tabernacle in Wilson, North Carolina, which was dedicated in 1975. The Choir Convention was organized in 1983, recommended by Sister Sallie Dupree. In 1984, Brother Haywood Waters became the Editor of the quarterly Original Free Will Baptist news publication. In 1985, Bishop Forbes established the L.P. Manning Scholarship, which supported the educational pursuits of countless young people through the years. Bishop Forbes was the longest serving leader of the Middle Eastern District.

Mr. Speaker, by the grace of God, the Middle Eastern District of the Original Free Will Baptist Church has been standing strong for 150 long years. Her outstanding leadership and devoted members have created significant growth in its membership and ministry, as well as, its continued outreach in the Wilson community and beyond. The Middle Eastern District's faithfulness and good deeds will ensure that it continues to experience God's blessings for years to come.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives and the people of the First Congressional District of North Carolina, I commemorate the 150th anniversary of Middle Eastern District of the Original Free Will Baptist Church and extend my best wishes to its leadership and members (many of whom are dear friends) on this auspicious occasion.

ALEX GALOR EARNS RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Alex Galor of Sugar Land, TX for earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Eagle Scout is the highest honor a Boy Scout can earn.

Only a small percentage of Boy Scouts reach the rank of Eagle Scout. This honor requires years of effort to develop the necessary leadership, service and outdoor skills. To earn it, Alex developed and provided leadership to others in a service project. For his project, Alex worked with his synagogue to design, plan and build a genizah, which is a place to hold outdated and unused prayer books and other sacred texts. He also raised funds and organized volunteers to build the project and plant a garden surrounding it. His dedication to our community has prepared him to be a leader in his future career. The leadership skills he has learned through Boy Scouts are already benefiting our community.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Alex for becoming an Eagle Scout. We are proud of his continued success and thank him for his dedication to making our community a better place.

RECOGNIZING SGT. PHILLIP
WAYNE BELL

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ran into my longtime friend Wayne Bell at Barnes Barber Shop in Knoxville recently and decided that I wanted my colleagues and others to learn of his great service to our City, State, and Nation.

Sgt. Phillip Wayne Bell is a veteran of the United States Marine Corp. While the importance of his military service cannot be downplayed, he is especially known for his 53 1/2 years of service to the Knoxville Police Department. In fact, he is the longest serving officer in the City of Knoxville and the State of Tennessee.

Wayne began as a patrol officer and moved to supervising the parking ticket division before moving to the court under the honorable Judge Rosson. He also supervised all of the crossing guards for the city of Knoxville for decades.

The average person can go through life not knowing many police officers, but in Knoxville over the past several decades, the one police officer, who was probably the most known to the general public, other than maybe the Chief of Police, was Sgt. Wayne Bell in his role as the original "Eye in the Sky."

The Eye in the Sky program in which Sgt. Bell delivered traffic reports from a helicopter was an innovative joint effort between the Knoxville Police Department and radio stations WNOX and WIVK. This type of collaboration between a private business and government was a novelty when it started and remains a rarity today.

Sgt. Bell earned numerous proclamations and awards for his traffic reports but he is also credited with unraveling traffic snarls, catching criminals and assisting in the betterment of our community. In one especially notable instance, he even landed the copter in the middle of the interstate to stop a chase and saved countless lives in the process.

Knoxville is located at the junction of two of the longest Interstates in the Nation, I-75/I-40. Unfortunately, the original I-75/I-40 interchange at one time was also the biggest traffic bottleneck in the region. It was Sgt. Wayne Bell in his traffic reports who bestowed the nickname "Malfunction Junction" on this interchange.

The interchange and the traffic jams it created are so legendary that there was even a song called "Malfunction Junction" that frequently played on local radio in the 1980s. Even though this interchange has since been reconstructed and improved in recent decades, most people in the Knoxville area still refer to it as "Malfunction Junction."

Sgt. Bell entertained radio listeners for years and he was especially good at cutting up with then-WIVK morning OJ "Claude the Cat" and his cast of characters. Although the radio station eventually changed from a helicopter to a plane, Sgt. Bell continued for a total of over 20 years with the station.

Sgt. Bell's service to the community extends well beyond his professional life. He is a life member and past master of Burlington Masonic Lodge. He is a member of the Eastern Star as well as a life member and past Monarch of Zelmar Grotto and the past president of Southeastern Grotto Association. He is a member of the York Rite and Scottish Rite. He is a life member of the York Rite and Scottish Rite. He is a life member of the Shriner's Hospitals for Children and Kerbela Shriners where he served as Treasurer, Recorder and Potentate. He is a member of the Order of the "Q" and past director of the Royal Order of Jesters.

As a Shriner and a Mason for over 50 years, Sgt. Bell literally helped hundreds of children and families get the medical and burn assistance they needed through the Shriners Hospital and Burns Institutes. If he received a call in the middle of the night of a burned child three states away, by the time the phone was hung up that child was on a plane on the way to wherever they needed to be for their care. When he first began as a Mason and Shriner he entertained children for years as was "Danny the Clown." While Potentate of Kerbela Temple during the annual Shrine Circus, Sgt. Bell entered the ring every show riding an elephant.

Wayne is especially remembered for the patriotic programs that he has performed for over 60 years with his wife Mary. The two entertained and educated children and adults with a program to help understand and appreciate our Flag and Country. During the 1970's, Sgt. Bell performed this patriotic program during the dedication of the bells at the International Peace Garden on the border of North Dakota and Manitoba, with representatives from both Canada and the United States in attendance.

I have personally worked with Sgt. Bell for over 20 years when he has represented KPD as an escort and chaperone for the annual AAA Safety Patrol trip to Washington, D.C. The Safety Patrol trip is a tradition that goes back over 60 years in which middle school students come to our Nation's Capital for a