

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING SAMUEL BEAMON

**HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 6, 2018*

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and celebrate the life of one of Waterbury's finest sons, Samuel K. Beamon, Sr., who died this past Sunday, October 28, 2018. With Sam's passing, we lost a great American, a proud Marine, and I lost a very dear friend.

A graduate of W.F. Kaynor Technical High School in Waterbury, Sam enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1965 and was deployed to South Vietnam. He became a helicopter mechanic, crew chief, and aerial gunner, flying more than 320 combat missions. Sam earned numerous awards while in the Marine Corps including 16 Air Medals and Combat Air Crew Wings, the Combat Action Ribbon, Navy and Presidential Unit Citations, and the Good Conduct Medal. He wrote about his time in the Marine Corps in his book, *Flying Death: The Vietnam Experience*, which was published in 2007.

After returning home, Sam worked at Pratt & Whitney before answering the call to service again—but this time, as a police officer. In 1970, he joined the Waterbury Police Department. He was the first African American Accident Investigator, radar operator and instructor, and member of the SWAT Team. As the first African American promoted to Lieutenant in the Waterbury Police Department, Sam paved the way for others. He mentored many in the department, including Vernon Riddick, who later became the first African American Police Chief of Waterbury and now West Hartford, and Patrick Riddenhour, now the first African American Police Chief of Danbury—both of whom credit Sam Beamon with teaching them how to be an effective leader. Sam's legacy includes his work to improve the lives of the youth of Waterbury. He served many years as the Commander of the Juvenile Division and was active in the Waterbury Department of Children and Families Extended Team and "Project Hometown Support." He served on both Governor Rowland's and Mayor O'Neill's juvenile task forces to identify the issues pertaining to the youth of Connecticut, implement policies to protect young people, engage in practices that promote character building opportunities for at-risk students, and work with law enforcement officials to encourage dialog in the community to identify issues that negatively impact at-risk students.

Sam was inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame in 2011. He was extremely active in the veterans' community serving as the Commandant of both Department of Connecticut and the Brass City Detachment of the Marine Corps League. He was a life member of VFW Post 201 and a member of American Legion Post 135. In 2014, he was named Chairman of the City of Waterbury's Veterans Memorial Committee. Sam also served for six

years on my Veterans Advisory Board, helping me better serve veterans in Connecticut and across the nation.

As a founding member of the "Forever Wave Program" that visits local schools to teach proper flag etiquette, he enjoyed passing on the love of his country, the military, veterans and Gold Star families. He was 19 years old when his Kaynor Tech classmate, Michael Kight, was killed in Vietnam. Upon Sam's return to Connecticut, he honored his friend Michael and his Gold Star Family by visiting the local schools during Memorial Day and Veterans Day to share his stories of service to inspire the students to serve others as well.

Sam's commitment to improving the lives and welfare of others extended well-beyond his involvement in veterans' organizations. A man who lived through some of the most divisive times in our country's history, Sam sought to inspire and unite today's youth. As a boy himself, he was a member of the country's first Young Marines Detachment, founded at VFW Post 201 in Waterbury. He knew the importance of community service, inspiring self-confidence, healthy living, and being true to one's moral compass. He understood the adversity some of our youth face in overcoming social, political, and economic barriers, but knew it can be done with hard work, a positive attitude, and moral grounding to overcome all challenges. He mentored countless students, teaching them about the value of education, and what it means to believe in one's country, and answer the call to service. For Sam, his call to service and leadership may have begun but did not end with his time in the military. It meant giving back to Waterbury, the city that gave him so much. A leader in every sense of the word, Sam was honored at our Black History Month Congressional ceremony in Waterbury in February 2016. His remarks were touching; a perfect blend of self-reflection, humility, and his ironic sense of humor.

In July 2016, he became the first Waterburian and African-American to receive UNICO National's John Basilone Freedom Award. Even though UNICO was founded in Waterbury, CT in 1922, it had yet to bestow this prestigious award on one of its native sons. While Sam may be the first non-Italian to receive the John Basilone Freedom Award, I wonder if UNICO heard the story about how he found a way to visit his good Italian friend Colonel Chiarella in the hospital. When hospital staff told Sam that only immediate family was allowed to visit the Colonel, Sam didn't miss a beat. He told them that he was the Colonel's brother.

This story perfectly encapsulates just who Sam was: he was the man who would stand by your side, offering his unwavering support when you needed him. To veterans across the State of Connecticut and his family and friends in the City of Waterbury, Sam was a man of conviction, honor, and leadership. Although cancer took his life far too soon, it did not take his spirit. His infectious positive energy

brought joy to the people around him. When I brought him apple cider donuts just a week before he died, he was full of plans about everything we had to do to set the country straight. He was and will always be my favorite Marine.

Sam Beamon helped teach me how to care for those who have worn the uniform, how to fight with everything you've got, and how to cherish every day we are blessed to be on this earth. He never gave up. He never gave in. Nor should we.

God speed, Sam Beamon. Our prayers, our thanks, and our love go with him.

HONORING STATE SENATOR JEAN LEISING

**HON. LUKE MESSER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 6, 2018*

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on behalf of the entire 6th Congressional District of Indiana, to recognize State Senator Jean Leising for her contribution to our state.

For nearly 18 years, Jean has represented East Central and Southeast Indiana with honor and integrity in the Indiana State Senate. As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Jean has been an advocate for farmers in her district, leading on issues that impact family farms across Indiana. She also continues to be a strong voice on education policy in the Indiana General Assembly, working to ensure our students and teachers are well equipped to succeed. Our state is better off today because of her extraordinary leadership and service.

On a personal note, I have known Jean and her husband, Frank, for decades. I would like to thank them for their friendship and support of my work in Congress. I wish them continued success in all that God has planned for their family.

HONORING COLONEL ROBERT A. CLIFFORD FOR HIS LIFETIME OF SERVICE AND INDUCTION INTO THE INDIANA MILITARY VETERANS HALL OF FAME

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 6, 2018*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I take this time to recognize Colonel Robert A. Clifford, a fellow Gary, Indiana native, who has been selected for induction into the Indiana Military Veterans Hall of Fame, Class of 2018. Robert's remarkable military career and his outstanding service to our country is truly admirable and worthy of the highest praise. Colonel Clifford will be honored at an induction ceremony taking place on Friday, November 9,

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