

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PHYLLIS WEBSTER 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize Phyllis Womack Webster on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

A lifelong resident of St. Albans, West Virginia, Phyllis is known for her joyful approach to life and compassionate and kind nature. A member of St. Albans Baptist Church for more than half a century, Phyllis has impacted many lives for the better through her ministry with her church and the American Baptist Association. She was recognized in 2010 for her dedicated involvement in her church with the American Heritage Award.

Her outreach to people extended beyond her church family. Her door has always been open to host family, friends or anyone in need of a good listening ear or warm meal. Thanks to her hospitable nature, I would not be surprised if, as Scripture says, she hosted Angels unaware.

She can, and has made everyone and anyone feel special. Her love for family and people and sharp mind, she can remember the names of every family member through multiple generations. Phyllis' life, efforts and love for others are an example for us all of a life well-lived serving others.

It is my pleasure to recognize my beloved Aunt Phyllis on this momentous occasion. I wish her a very happy 90th birthday and may God continue to bless her.

HONORING SUPERINTENDENT MICHAEL WATKINS

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools, Michael Watkins, on his retirement after serving the Santa Cruz County Office of Education since 1980. Mr. Watkins was the first African American elected as a School Superintendent in the State of California in 2006. An outstanding citizen and educator, Superintendent Watkins made an unparalleled impact in the educational community of Santa Cruz County through 35 years of service.

Superintendent Watkins began his career with the Santa Cruz County Office of as the Learning Handicapped Program Specialist, a position which set the tone for Superintendent Watkins' career as a visionary advocate for change and accessibility in education. After one year, he was offered the role of General Administrator in charge of the Special Education Programs for Santa Cruz County,

where he worked to mainstream educational opportunities for students with special needs across the district. In addition, Superintendent Watkins pioneered and developed community and vocational programming through his role as Director of Alternative Education. Under Superintendent Watkins's leadership, the schools he developed have received acclaim and statewide recognition for their commitment to excellence. With the backing of his tremendous record as an educator, Michael Watkins was elected Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools in 2006 and is currently serving his third term.

Superintendent Watkins' expertise in education also led to his appointment by the California Senate Rules Committee to the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence and the Special Education Task Force. He has also held statewide office as President of the Juvenile Courts, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California for three years. In addition to his service in education, Superintendent Watkins has been an exemplary citizen and community member. He has coached multiple youth sports and sits on several significant local boards.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize the dedication and work of Superintendent Watkins. I ask my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing Superintendent Watkins and to congratulate him on his well-earned retirement. I extend my earnest appreciation to Superintendent Watkins for his service to our community.

RECOGNIZING ALICJA EDWARDS OF EUREKA

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Alicja Edwards of Eureka, a Montana artist, author, and World War II refugee, who overcame the atrocities of war and recorded her family's journey as part of the historic diaspora of the Polish people.

When she was a teenager, Alicja's small town in eastern Poland came under attack by Nazi Germany and suffered a brutal Soviet occupation. She and her family were forced into a Soviet gulag where they endured mistreatment, illness, and hunger.

Three years later, Alicja and thousands of other Poles were exiled to Iran. It was there where she met American Army Lieutenant Ernest Edwards who she married in 1945. The couple raised two children, lived in Japan, France, and America, and were married for 50 years before Ernest's passing.

Alicja is renowned for her memoirs, *And God Was Our Witness and They Called Us D.P.'s*, that detailed the suffering of her family and hundreds of thousands of Poles displaced during and after World War II.

In *And God Was Our Witness*, she describes the value of freedom and liberty:

"Priceless Freedom has never been perceived or truly understood by anyone, till it was lost or forcibly taken away. Only then, one becomes aware of the magnitude of its potency and power in directing one's life and fate."

Alicja is a noted artist and owns an antique and art shop in Eureka, where she continues to paint, play the piano, and inspire others.

Madam Speaker, for her indomitable resolve, strength and courage, and her inspiring memoirs of the Polish diaspora, I recognize Alicja Edwards for her spirit of Montana.

IN RECOGNITION OF DENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER BOBBIE MITCHELL

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Denton County Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell, who will receive the 2019 Dr. Bettye Myers Humanitarian Award on January 19, 2019 after more than 30 years of dedicated service to Denton County.

Commissioner Mitchell has served her fellow North Texans in a range of leadership roles since 1985, when she began her tenure on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. During the last three decades, she served on the Lewisville Planning and Zoning Commission, as Mayor Pro Tem, and on the Lewisville City Council. A resident of Lewisville since 1971, she led the city as its mayor from 1993 to 2000 before being elected as a Denton County Commissioner.

During her many years as a devoted public servant, Commissioner Mitchell undoubtedly has made Lewisville a better place to work and live. In addition to her official service, she has had a significant impact on more than 30 nonprofit organizations in our community.

A longtime supporter of the United Way of Denton County, Commissioner Mitchell was a charter appointee to two of the organization's key initiatives: the Denton County Behavioral Health Leadership Team in 2016 and the Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team in 2017. She is the sixth recipient of the Dr. Bettye Myers Humanitarian Award, which was established by the board of directors and lifetime members of United Way of Denton County in 2014 to recognize outstanding community leadership, philanthropy, and impact.

On a personal note, I have had the good fortune of knowing Commissioner Mitchell since I began my medical practice in 1981. Throughout my medical career and my time in public service, whether solicited or not, she has never hesitated to provide wise counsel and guidance.

It is a privilege to recognize my friend, Commissioner Mitchell, for her dedication and commitment to her fellow North Texans, and I congratulate her on this well-earned honor.

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