

HONORING THE CAREER OF STEPHEN R. BAUMAN—DIRECTOR OF THE VA CENTRAL CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 31, 2019*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend and colleague, Stephen R. Bauman, as he retires from his position as Director of the VA Central California Health Care System in Fresno, California. Throughout his distinguished career with the United States Navy and the Department of Veterans Affairs, Stephen has dedicated his life to public service and the care of our nation's veterans. Stephen has left an indelible mark on the Central Valley through his commitment to the veteran community.

Stephen honorably served our country for 36 years in the United States Navy. He is a veteran of the Vietnam War. As a reservist, he was activated in support of Operation Desert Storm and completed a tour in Iraq and Kuwait in 2004 as a Command Master Chief in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He attended Grantham University in Lenexa, Kansas and obtained a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 2011.

Stephen began his career with the Department of Veteran Affairs in 1977 as a staff nurse at the VA Palo Alto Healthcare System. He has served at eight VA facilities throughout his career, including the Northern California Health Care System, Sierra Pacific Network and Los Angeles. He was appointed Director of the VA Central California Health Care System in November 2015. His proven experience and sound leadership qualities made him the perfect fit to guide the Fresno VA.

As director, Stephen was responsible for the delivery of health care for approximately 96,000 veterans throughout Central California, with an annual operating budget of \$212 million. He oversees both the main campus in Fresno and the outpatient clinics in Tulare, Merced, and Oakhurst, California. My staff and I have had the pleasure of working closely with Director Bauman throughout his tenure. Stephen has gone above and beyond to help veterans in need of assistance in the Central Valley. I commend him for his exemplary work on behalf of the veterans who have sacrificed so much for our great nation.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognition of Director Stephen R. Bauman, in honor of his remarkable career and contributions to the Department of Veteran Affairs. I wish Stephen the very best as he enters a new phase in his life. I ask that you join me in wishing Stephen and his family continued happiness and prosperity.

IN MEMORY OF FORMER EARLY COUNTY SHERIFF JIMMIE R. MURKERSON

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 31, 2019*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remem-

brance that I rise today to pay tribute to a great man and outstanding public servant, the former Sheriff of Early County, Georgia, Mr. Jimmie Ray Murkerson. Sadly, Sheriff Murkerson passed away on Sunday, January 27, 2019. Funeral services will be held on Friday, February 1, 2019, at 2 p.m. at the First Assembly of God Church in Blakely, Georgia.

The Blakely, Georgia native was born on June 7, 1947 to the union of the late Leon and Cherrie Murkerson. In addition to being a loving father, son, husband, and friend, Jimmie was also a Vietnam Veteran, store owner (Early Tree Service and Blakely Floor Covering), farmer, former Blakely City Councilman, and former Early County Sheriff.

Sheriff Murkerson was employed with the Early County Sheriff's Office for more than 34 years and he proved to be a strong and revered leader. As the chief law enforcement officer, he was responsible for patrolling and responding to calls within the 516 square mile area of Early County, where the population is just over 10,000 people. During his tenure as Sheriff, he spearheaded the consolidation of various law enforcement services in the county, which resulted in more efficient, resourceful, and proactive law enforcement for the citizens of Early County.

Sheriff Murkerson embodied the definition of a public servant through his strong leadership, steadfast dedication, and unwavering compassion. He served on the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council; the Governor's Children and Youth Coordinating Council; the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; the Board of Directors of the ABAC Police Academy; and the Executive Board of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. He also served as the 1997–98 President of the Georgia Sheriffs' Association and the President of the Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes.

Sheriff Murkerson's dedication to enforcing the law and protecting the public earned him several awards including the 2011 Georgia Sheriffs' Association's Sheriff of the Year award; the Georgia Sheriffs' Association's Distinguished Humanitarian Award (which he received twice); and the Governor's Peace Officers Award.

Maya Angelou once said, "A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies." Sheriff Murkerson is undoubtedly great because of his distinguished service to his community, devotion to his work, and the compassion he showed for his friends and loved ones.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah; children, Tracie and Jimmie, Jr.; and a host of family, friends, and loved ones who will miss him deeply.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the more than 730,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District in paying tribute to former Early County Sheriff Jimmie Ray Murkerson for his legacy of service to Early County and the great state of Georgia. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family, friends, and loved ones during this difficult time of bereavement. Moreover, we pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JOSH HARDER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 31, 2019*

Mr. HARDER of California. Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of meeting with several of my constituents in Washington, DC. Due to that meeting, I missed a vote during the vote series. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 065.

RECOGNIZING MS. RITA VIDAURRI EDEN

**HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 31, 2019*

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Ms. Rita Vidaurri Eden, who passed away on January 16, 2019. A true Latina musician and icon, Ms. Vidaurri Eden hails from my hometown of San Antonio. She is survived by her daughter, Linda Palewich Alvarado; her sister Henrietta Rodriguez; a stepbrother, Ruben Vidaurri; four step-sisters, Yvan, Rita, Sofia, and Ellena Vidaurri; numerous nephews, nieces, and 5 generations of grandchildren. She will be greatly missed.

Ms. Rita Vidaurri Eden was born in San Antonio on May 22, 1924 to Juan and Maria Castillo Vidaurri. At an early age, Ms. Vidaurri Eden showed a keen interest in the performing arts and was encouraged most notably by her mother who passed when she was a teenager.

Left with the care and responsibility of her younger siblings, Ms. Vidaurri Eden persisted, keeping her passion for singing alive while attending night school by performing on Mexican radio, competing in music contests, and working as an advertising model.

Ms. Vidaurri Eden was known for her unrivaled performance in Ranchera, a traditional Mexican country music genre that often features love ballads and odes to home. She soon earned the nickname "La Calandria," or the "Lark" whose powerful voice resonated throughout every venue where she performed. By the late 1950s and at the height of her career, Ms. Vidaurri Eden retired from the stage, only later reviving her singing career at the age of 80. In 2001, Ms. Vidaurri Eden along with Beatriz Llamas, Blanca Rodriguez and Janet Cortez, formed a group of elder cantantes—referred to as "Las Tesoros del Westside," or the beloved "the Treasures of the Westside."

Ms. Vidaurri Eden performed across Latin America and the nation. She performed on stage with Mexican artists such as Jorge Negrete, Cantinflas, and sang alongside Nat King Cole, Eydie Gorme, and Celia Cruz. She continued to sing until the end of her life.

Madam Speaker, I stand with confidence knowing that the passing of Ms. Rita Vidaurri Eden does not mark the conclusion of her legacy. Ms. Vidaurri Eden's journey will be forever carried by her timeless music, by fans, and the countless aspiring singers who look to her as a beacon of possibility.

Ms. Vidaurri Eden's passion for music could only be matched by her perseverance. Her

legacy will forever be marked by countless admirations and accolades. I am proud to call "La Calandria" a pillar in our San Antonio community.

IN MEMORY OF MR. WILLIAM  
"W.T." THOMAS HENRY, SR.

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 31, 2019*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a loving husband, dedicated father, doting grandfather, distinguished educator, and committed servant to humankind, Mr. William "W.T." Thomas Henry. Sadly, W.T. passed away on Monday, January 28, 2019. His funeral will be held on Thursday, January 31, 2019, at 2 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Albany, Georgia. He leaves behind a host of family and a legacy of service that will never be forgotten.

William "W.T." Thomas Henry, Sr. was born on October 7, 1938, to the union of the late Jeff and Ludie Gray Henry in Colquitt, Georgia. He graduated from Miller County High school in 1956, where his athletic prowess allowed him to letter in several sports. W.T. went on to attend Young Harris College and Troy State University where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Education. Never one to rest on his laurels, he went on to earn Mas-

ter's degrees in Physical Education and Administration Supervision from Florida State University.

W.T. found his true calling and purpose in life by working with our most precious resource, young people. His prodigious career in education spanned 46 remarkable years in both public and private schools. W.T. positively impacted the lives of students at Arlington High School, Damascus High School, Miller County High School, and Albany Junior High School. He taught math and coached basketball, track, football, and basketball. W.T. taught his athletes how to be successful on the courts and athletic fields, but more importantly he taught them skills that would help them to succeed in the game of life. W.T. left the classroom and the athletic fields to conquer his next challenge, School Administration. He became the principal of Miller County High School and blazed the trail for others by becoming the founding headmaster of Southwest Georgia Academy in 1970.

He left his true love for a short time and worked in the peanut industry. But, he quickly realized this endeavor was not for him and returned to education. He moved to Albany, Georgia and became the Lower School Director for Deerfield-Windsor School. Because he excelled in this position, he became the Headmaster of Deerfield-Windsor School, retiring after 20 years of extraordinary service in 2009.

His tentacles of service stretched far beyond the schools at which he served with distinction. He was a former President of the Georgia Independent Schools and he also served

on the Georgia State Board of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Georgia Accrediting Commission.

Most importantly, W.T. was a man of God and was guided by his faith. He was a faithful member of the First United Methodist Church and served on its Board of Directors.

W.T. loved his family and instilled in them the values of faith in God, hard work, and a commitment to serving their fellow man. He had an infectious personality and never met a stranger. He had a special gift of saying the right thing to someone who was in distress at just the right time.

W.T. Henry was a great man and accomplished many things in his life, but none of these things would have been possible without the love and support of his family. His legacy lives on through his wife, Ruth; his children, Lea, Bo, and Kristin; his grandchildren, and all of those whose lives he touched.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the more than 730,000 constituents of the Second Congressional District of Georgia in saluting and honoring the life of Mr. William "W.T." Thomas Henry for his commitment to young people and humankind and in extending our deepest condolences to Mr. Henry's family during this difficult time of bereavement. We pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.