

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