

The naming of the Joseph R. Peterson Justice Building underscores Joseph Peterson's meaningful impact on the City of Wyandotte and serves as tribute to his leadership as a police officer, councilman, and mayor. Throughout all his work, Peterson has displayed an overwhelming commitment to the people of Wyandotte and endeavors to effect real change. Peterson is recognized by many as a dedicated, compassionate, and effective leader who humbly strives for excellence without seeking praise or recognition for any of his significant accomplishments.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the dedication of the Joseph R. Peterson Justice Building. Joseph Peterson has become a pillar of our community, and the naming of the new Joseph R. Peterson Justice Building serves as a testament to his important work. We are all grateful for Peterson's leadership and wish him continued success in the years ahead.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF AMARJIT SINGH BUTTAR

#### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 26, 2019*

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to observe and mourn the passing of an extraordinary American, Mr. Amarjit Singh Buttar of Vernon, Connecticut. Amarjit passed away surrounded by his loving family in Connecticut on Wednesday, November 20, 2019.

His life was a quintessential American story. Born in 1938 in the Punjab region of India, he was raised as a disciple of the Sikh religion. In 1965, he emigrated to the United States with his wife, Rajinder Kaur Thind, and immediately embarked on an epic, relentless effort to contribute and succeed in his new homeland. He was accepted to University of Michigan Law School in 1966 and after graduation used his degree to pursue a lifetime of work helping fellow citizens in need. He moved to Connecticut with Rajinder, his two sons, Gursimrit Singh Buttar and Angad Singh Buttar, and began a career applying his legal acumen at the State of Connecticut Workers Compensation Commission. This agency adjudicates all the work-related injury claims in the state, affecting thousands and thousands of on-the-job accidents and illnesses that can result in tremendous stress and hardship if not handled correctly. Amarjit assisted the quasi-judicial state Commissioners in the handling of claims, demonstrating total command of the law and its processes. His innate compassion for people was a huge help to workers and their families who often found the system frustrating and daunting. As a young lawyer who represented workers compensation clients years ago, I personally saw him in action, deftly resolving complex cases and issues before the Commissioners even needed to rule. His diligence and competence were respected and admired by all who came into contact with him.

Amarjit's other best known public service was his passionate dedication to our country's democracy. He valued the right to vote, to participate in elections, and to run for office. In Vernon, where we both lived, Amarjit and I met a long time ago as members of the local

Democratic Town Committee, and in every election, whether at the local level or for the U.S. Presidency, he was a stalwart volunteer showing up at every meeting, phone bank, "literature drop", or election night gathering to support the candidates. Sometimes I benefitted from his help, when I ran for State Representative from 1986 to 1992, and later for U.S. Congress 2006 to the present. But also Amarjit himself benefitted when he successfully ran for the Vernon School Board, where he served two terms, including a stint as Chair.

When he was first elected in 2001, it was an exciting moment, since he was the first Sikh-American in Connecticut to achieve the milestone of elective office and one of the first nationwide. It's important to note that as strong a Democrat as Amarjit was, in office he demonstrated total respect and comity for his Republican colleagues and was always focused on advancing the best interests of the school children of the town, not a partisan agenda. His other notable electoral highlight was when he was selected as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 2004 in Boston, Massachusetts. There, he witnessed in person Barack Obama's famous keynote address, a 20-minute speech that introduced him to the country, and that began his journey to the White House in 2008.

As busy as Amarjit was with his public service, he always found time for his family. They are a close-knit group, sharing time and activities (including volunteering at Democratic Headquarters). In August of this year his family celebrated 50 years of marriage to Rajinder. Amarjit was also intensely devoted to his two sons. His son Angad shared a story of his dad's devotion: "Though not a sports fan himself, he raised two sons who are avid fans. When he would take his oldest son to Hartford Whalers games when he was a child, he would playfully cheer for the opposing teams such as the rival Boston Bruins or the Montreal Canadiens, while his son would vigorously cheer for the hometown team." Madam Speaker, showing your playful love of your children in the middle of hostile hockey fans I believe is the ultimate proof of familial devotion! Both boys today are now grown and graduates of the University of Connecticut, pursuing successful careers—Gursimrit in New York and Angad in Virginia where he lives with his wife, Simmi Bhuller. Amarjit also found time for his fellow Sikh community in Connecticut and across the country. My casework staff in Connecticut can amply attest to his high volume of calls, asking for assistance for his many many friends—which we always welcomed.

Madam Speaker, I believe Amarjit's life can be summed up with a simple phrase: "He made a difference." For his family, his Sikh community, his Vernon community and his American community, Amarjit created a transformatory legacy that touched thousands of lives, for the better. That is a proud legacy, and I ask that the entire House join me in expressing our deepest condolences to his family and saluting his groundbreaking life.

#### RECOGNIZING JANYCE "JAN" HEDETNIEMI

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 26, 2019*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to announce the passing of a titan in Fairfax County, Janyce "Jan" Hedetniemi. I had the great privilege of knowing and working with Jan for many years and I was proud to call her a friend.

Jan was born and grew up in Sewickley, Pennsylvania and received her bachelor's degree in psychology and English literature from the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) followed by her master's degree in psychology and counseling and guidance from Indiana University in 1963. She moved to the Washington, D.C. area where she served in the early part of her career as assistant dean of women at the University of Maryland and director of development at Mount Vernon College.

Jan embarked on a long and illustrious career of Federal public service, first as a social science analyst with the President's Biomedical Research Panel and thereafter in a series of progressively responsible positions at the National Institutes of Health in program planning and development initiatives, including the NIH Research Agenda on Women's Health and the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer. She was appointed in 1994 as the first director of the NIH's newly established Office of Community Liaison, serving in that position until her retirement from the NIH in 2002. Jan's service there was recognized with two NIH Director's Awards.

Jan had an unquenchable passion for community service and civic leadership. She served as president of her homeowner's association for many years and as co-chair of the Braddock District Democratic Committee from 2009 to 2013. She served as a member of the Boards of the Fairfax County Park Authority and Park Foundation and was appointed to the Planning Commission where she served from 2013 to 2017. Jan also chaired the Fairfax County Transportation Advisory Committee and four separate Bond Referendum Committees. In recognition of her countless contributions and dedication to our community, Jan was named the Board of Supervisors' Lady Fairfax for the Braddock District in 2004, Braddock District Member of the Year for 2013, and the 2014 Citizen of the Year by the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations.

Jan was also an avid outdoors sports-woman, both as a tennis player and as an equestrian. She served as captain of two United Tennis Association Adult Women's Teams. As a horse owner, she participated for many years in dressage training and competition and served as a member of the Fairfax County Equestrian Services Task Force.

Jan was loved by many and respected by all. I was proud to name her to serve as Presidential Elector of the 2012 Electoral College from the 11th Congressional District of Virginia for the re-election of President Barack Obama. Her service to her community and country is expansive and commendable and her presence will be deeply missed.