

drama, though, and after I left the State Capitol she, Ken, and I always had a lot of laughs reminiscing about that fun time in our lives.

The other special view I had of Linda was through the eyes of my former District Director, the late Jenny Contois, who was Linda's closest friend. Jenny was First Selectwoman in their hometown of Colchester for 15 years before taking the helm at my district office. The two of them were inseparable and were so close they could practically finish each other's sentences. Some of their friends nicknamed them "Laverne and Shirley" since the non-stop banter they engaged in when they were together resembled the memorable comedy duo of sitcom fame. During election season, when Linda and I shared campaign headquarters, Jenny and Linda would hold court in front of the staff and volunteers, always with lots of snacks, drinks, and many times even full meals. It gave the headquarters a special feel that kept morale high which translated into a lot of happy successful Election nights. Jenny sadly passed away four years ago, which was a terrible loss for many, many fellow public officials and townspeople, but it was extremely hard for Linda. At a difficult time like this, it is maybe some small consolation to think that Linda and Jenny are together again, looking down on us all, with lots of new funny banter commenting on all of us who knew them.

Madam Speaker, I would ask the entire body to join me in expressing our deepest condolences to Linda's husband Dennis, and her entire family for their loss and salute her inspirational example of a life well lived in the service of others. I include in the RECORD the text of her obituary, which perfectly captures her life and legacy.

CT State Representative Linda Ann (Smith) Orange, 69, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her loving husband, sons, family, and friends, on November 20, 2019 after a sudden and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. During this time, she continued to put family, friends and community first. Linda's grace and courage never faltered. Linda and her family are grateful for the outpouring of well wishes that brought her joy and smiles. She never lost her sparkle.

She was born in Hartford, CT on September 25, 1950 to the late Arthur L. and Anna (Gemeasky) Smith. Linda grew up in Marlborough and attended RHAM High School, became a respiratory therapist, and had a distinctive public service career. Linda was very dedicated to her two sons and always active in their lives, especially as they were growing up. She was very active in their schools, Boys Scouts, baseball games and as a second grade catechism teacher. She served as a member and chair of the Colchester Board of Assessment Appeals, the Colchester Police Commission, the East Haddam Historical Society, and as a corporator of William W. Backus Hospital. She also was an honorary member of the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company and a Major in the Connecticut Civil Air Patrol, Legislative Wing. Linda was an enthusiastic member of the Colchester Democratic Town Committee and the Colchester Democratic Women's Club which led to her eventual career at the State Capitol.

In 1991, she became assistant clerk of the Human Services Committee and later became clerk of the Public Health Committee.

She made many friends and learned the working of the legislature so well that she ran as a candidate for State Representative of the 48th District in 1996. She went on to serve twelve terms in Hartford, becoming one of the longest serving members at twenty-three years.

The interests of her constituents were always her priority without regard for political labels. As a legislator, Linda served on many committees and currently was a member of Legislative Management, General Law and the Public Safety and Security Committee. She became a knowledgeable authority on public safety issues and the legislature's chief advocate for work of first responders—police, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel, dispatchers and others. Linda also was Deputy Speaker and often presided over the House of Representatives controlling the process by recognizing members wishing to speak, putting all questions to a vote, and directing the business of the legislature. While presiding, her charming personality, ability to add a quip or joke, and her booming voice endeared her to all her colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

The staff at the Capitol, the Senators and Representatives, and all those associated with the Connecticut General Assembly will remember Linda for being such a kind and warm-hearted person, friendly to everyone, and always ready for a good laugh at herself or playing a joke on others. Over the years, Linda was recognized by many organizations too numerous to mention all. She humbly accepted such honors and was grateful to those who appreciated her work.

Some of her distinctions included awards from the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, the Coalition of Connecticut Sportsmen, UCONN Advocates, the Middlesex County and New London County Medical Associations, the Connecticut State Fire Fighters Association, the Connecticut Council of Police Unions, the National Guard Association, the Eastern Connecticut EMS Council, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers. Recently, the charter of the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut was changed to make Linda the only life-time honorary member.

Linda was known to end her many encounters on the phone and in person with: "Bye, Bye, Now!" Her spirit will live on with her many friends, using this phrase to remember her extraordinary life.

Linda is survived by her husband of 43 years, Dennis Orange, Sr.; her son Patrick Orange and his partner Jennifer Nadeau; step-son Dennis Orange, Jr., all of Colchester; step-daughters, Denise and Darleen O'Neal of Arkansas; her beautiful grand-daughter, Dezarae Ann Orange, whose love is everlasting; brothers, Brian and his wife Linda Smith, of Marlborough, George and his wife Phyllis, of Windham, ME; god-daughter, Lorna Smith, of Marlborough; sisters-in-law, Genevieve Lescoe, of Meriden, and Marion Coriaty, of Willimantic; many extended family members; and a host of amazing long-time friends. In addition to her parents, Linda was predeceased by her son, Matthew Orange who passed away in 2018 of pancreatic cancer, her brother Bruce Smith, parents-in-law William and Rose Orange, brother-in-law Henry Coriaty, and her sister-in-law Rosemarie Hart.

## RECOGNIZING THE GRADUATION OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT'S 145TH RECRUIT CLASS

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 26, 2019*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the graduates of the 145th Recruit Class. As they prepare to join the ranks of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, I encourage the 20 graduates to reflect on the history of the department and the contributions and dedication of the brave men and women who have served before them to protect our community.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Recruit School consists of an extensive and demanding 24-week program. In addition to two weeks of orientation, recruits completed seven weeks of EMT training and fifteen weeks of fire suppression training. Upon graduation, these recruits will be certified at the level of Firefighter I/II by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

These recruits have the distinct honor of joining one of the best Fire and Rescue Departments in the United States. The efforts of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department have been recognized across this country. Members from the Department serve on the elite VA Task Force 1, which is among the first units called to disaster zones to provide search and rescue support. Members of that Task Force were recognized by the International Association of Fire Chiefs with the Benjamin Franklin Award for Valor as a result of their efforts in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes that struck Nepal in 2015.

They also saw extensive work in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands as part of disaster relief and rescue efforts in the aftermaths of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. This summer, the team deployed to the Southeast in support of relief efforts for Hurricane Dorian.

Fairfax County is fortunate to have such excellent ambassadors for our community and I commend them for all that they have done to protect lives and property not only here in Fairfax County, but around the world. As the newest members of the Fire and Rescue Department, the 145th Recruit Class graduates join the department as integral parts of our community's emergency response and public safety team. I am confident that this graduating class will serve the residents of Fairfax County with honor and distinction. It is my great honor to include in the RECORD the names of the 145th Recruit Class:

Adriana Caruso, Sharly Clavel Tobar, Luiz Costa, Sean Dolan, Lucas Groff, Andrew Hackett, Jenny Huh, Benjamin Jacobeen, Matthew Kahle, John Lilley, Sean Mack, Aaron Marsh, Andrew McCandliss, Jackson-

McEachin, Steven Ratliff, Matthew Rieder, Bradley Schuyler, Christopher St Clair, Allison Updike, Priscilla Vickery.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the newest members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. I thank them for their service to their

community and to all members of the Fire and Rescue Department, past and present, I say: "Stay safe."