

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF PAT WOOTON

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of a long-time friend and advisor, Mr. Dennis Patrick "Pat" Wooton, one of Buckhorn, Kentucky's most beloved sons. His experience in education, law enforcement, coaching, local government operations and politics made him one of the most well-known and well-versed leaders in the Kentucky River area. It was his charming, encouraging and quick-witted personality that enabled him to become an instant friend to everyone he met along the way, and I count myself blessed to have been a part of his expansive friendship circle.

When I needed someone to transition field operations in Eastern Kentucky from my Congressional Office in Hazard, Pat Wooton was my top choice. As the former Pen-y County Sheriff, Pat was one of the first leaders in law enforcement to partner with Operation UNITE. He was determined to impact the prescription drug abuse epidemic that first ravaged our region 20 years ago. During a time when the stigma surrounding drug abuse paralyzed our communities, Pat stood strong in the face of adversity, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Operation UNITE to save lives and transform our region.

No one knew or loved the intricate facets of Perry County and life in the mountains, more than he did. As my Eastern Kentucky field man, Pat worked directly with local leaders across more than a dozen counties, bridging communications and funding resources for vital projects like infrastructure expansions, roadway enhancements, local emergency disaster response, economic development projects, and much more. His advocacy for improving communities in Eastern Kentucky was inspiring. When Pat entered a meeting, no one had to guess where he was from, because the City of Buckhorn was always at the top of his list for project needs. Naturally, when he retired from his post in my Congressional office, he served as mayor of his hometown.

Pat thrived on serving others throughout his entire life, starting in the Vietnam War, when the U.S. Army honored him with several service medals, including the Bronze Star. After returning to American soil, he dedicated his service to educating and coaching students at Buckhorn High School, where he became one of the most highly respected and loved principals in the school's history. He took education to a new level, focusing as much on mentoring and inspiring young people, as he did teaching textbook material.

Whether he was serving on local community boards, coaching young athletes, enhancing education and law enforcement in one of the most rural parts of the country, or simply meeting someone for the first time, Pat

Wooton made a lasting impression on everyone he encountered. His ability to recite memorable Eastern Kentucky expressions stirred many smiles and laughs over the years among friends and associates.

As we remember our dear friend, may we carry forward Pat's legacy of service and kindness in the years to come. My wife, Cynthia and I, extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Veda, their children, grandchildren, and all those who were blessed to know and love such a great man.

HONORING ROBERT H. DOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Robert H. Down Elementary School, which has been recognized as a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School for fostering an engaging, community-oriented learning environment for students on the central coast of California.

Robert Down School has created a dynamic learning environment with an educational philosophy that emphasizes academic enrichment through community engagement and individualized learning objectives, catered to the emotional, social, and academic needs of each of its students. In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum, Robert Down Elementary features programs that promote learning in social-emotional studies, character development, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics), foreign languages, vocal and instrumental music, journalism, visual/performing arts, and other subjects to provide students with a robust and multifaceted learning experience.

In 2018, with the help of dedicated staff, courageous leadership, supportive family, and engaged community, all students and significant student groups scored in the highest band of academic performance for both English Language Arts and Mathematics on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress—a testament to Robert Down School's deep commitment to fostering a comprehensive, transformative learning experience for all of its students.

Robert Down School is setting the bar for academic intervention programs across the country. The intervention program, which is fluid and adapts to students' individual needs, works both within the general education classroom and outside the core curricula time, in the community and at home, to ensure that all students are set on a path of academic success. Students enter reading, writing, and/or mathematics intervention based on diagnostic information, analysis of assessments, evaluation of the student's daily performance in the classroom, and teacher consultation. Students are given benchmark assessments three times

a year and are provided with monthly progress monitoring to ensure the program's criteria is responsive to the ever-evolving needs of its students.

The teachers and staff at Robert Down School are deeply committed to developing bright and high-achieving students. Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the achievement and hard work of Robert H. Down Elementary School and their well-deserved recognition as a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School.

HONORING COMMANDER MICHAEL D. CASSADY

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 13, 2019

Mr. STIVERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the work of a public servant who has spent his life in service to our country, Commander Michael D. Cassady. On March 1, 2020 he will retire from the United States Navy after nearly thirty-five years of active duty service.

Commander Cassady, a native of Millersport, Ohio, began his military career at the Naval Training Center, San Diego, California as a Seaman Recruit. During tours in the Philippines, Diego Garcia, Maryland, and Connecticut, Commander Cassady also dedicated time to pursue off-duty education at the University of Maryland, University College in 1991. He then received his commission as an Ensign, Medical Service Corps, United States Navy in 1993. Commander Cassady utilized his degree to better his community by supporting the health of his fellow servicemembers during tours in Iceland, Japan, Thailand, Australia, and Virginia.

In 2006, Commander Cassady deployed to Baghdad, Iraq to support combat operations as the Civil Affairs Public Health Section Lead, Multi-National Division. He later embarked on two tours of duty as the Environmental Health Officer, U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and U.S. Naval Hospital Naples, Italy.

A firm believer in the importance of education, Commander Cassady earned a Master of Science in Management from Troy State University, a Master of Public Health from The Ohio State University, a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategy from the Naval War College, and a Master of Science in Education from Old Dominion University.

He and his family have made incredible sacrifices and contributions in defense of our great nation. Endless support comes from his wife Rohini, and their children Rhyann, Kassandra, Briana, and David, and we owe them an additional debt of gratitude.

There is no doubt his contributions have made our community, Ohio, and our nation a better place. I offer my congratulations, and sincere appreciation, to Commander Cassady for his service. I wish him all the best in his next chapter.

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