

TRIBUTE TO DEVON LAMONICA

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Devon LaMonica, the Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year at Fort Walton Beach High School in Fort Walton Beach, FL.

Teaching was not the career Devon imagined for herself when studying forensic science biochemistry at the University of Central Florida, but now she cannot imagine any other career for herself. Devon loves the opportunity to ignite a passion for science in her students and views teaching as a joy. She launched the biomedical science program at Fort Walton Beach High School and continues to teach the entire program.

Devon earned her master's degree in education at the University of West Florida and returned to work as an educator at Fort Walton Beach High School, her own alma mater. She is nationally recognized as a Biomedical Science Master Teacher and trains new teachers in this field across our Nation. She has been a teacher for 13 years.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Devon for her work to teach her students. I look forward to learning of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH MANN

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Elizabeth Mann, the Santa Rosa County Teacher of the Year at Oriole Beach Elementary School in Oriole Beach, FL.

Elizabeth believes children learn best when they are working together. She provides opportunities throughout the school year for her students to team up with one another to accomplish a goal. She accepts each student for who they are and holds high expectations, viewing their small victories as the most rewarding part of her work. Whether it is their first time counting to 20 or helping a friend, she believes these moments make her job fulfilling.

Elizabeth comes from a family of educators. Both her parents were teachers and instilled in her the drive to help others. Her colleagues consider her to be every parent's dream teacher for their child because of her dedication to the children's success.

Elizabeth is a student education inclusion teacher for first grade at Oriole Beach Elementary School. She works with special needs students throughout the school year and offers group and one-on-one instruction across all subject areas.

I am grateful for Elizabeth's great work with her students. I extend my best wishes to her and look forward to learning of her continued good work in her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO KELLI McGAHEY

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Kelli McGahey, the Putnam County Teacher of the Year at James

A. Long Elementary School in Palatka, FL.

Kelli's colleagues note that she has an innate ability to connect with students struggling academically or developmentally. She often spends extra time helping those students better understand assignments. Kelli seeks to impart her love for reading to her students and is passionate about inspiring the next generation of avid readers.

Kelli has taught first grade at James A. Long Elementary School for 6 years. While Kelli was surprised to learn that she received this prestigious recognition, her students and colleagues consider her an inspiration and know it was well deserved.

I would like to thank Kelli for the good work she has done for her students and extend my best wishes to her. I look forward to hearing of her continued success.●

TRIBUTE TO JONATHAN MOTTA

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jonathan Motta, the Osceola County Teacher of the Year at NeoCity Academy in Kissimmee, FL.

Jonathan believes it is important that his students be prepared for life after high school and challenges them to apply the principles they learn after they leave his classroom. He works to incorporate upper level math into practical business models, technology, and other areas that are important to students. He considers this integration to be the most rewarding part of his work.

Jonathan also seeks to fill what he views as a gap in the traditional teaching format by teaching his students other life skills, such as organization and public speaking.

Jonathan finds the unique environment and approach to learning at NeoCity Academy to be a great place for his teaching style. He teaches mathematics and has incorporated a variety of concepts to students in Osceola County for the past 7 years. During his tenure, he developed a project-based learning curriculum that creates assignments involving real-world scenarios such as architecture, finance, design and manufacturing, and health.

I thank Jonathan for his passion and creative efforts to implement a lifelong approach to learning. I wish him all the best in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO KAREN NEADS

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize Karen Neads, the DeSoto County Teacher of the Year from Memorial Elementary School in Arcadia, FL.

At Memorial Elementary School, Karen strives to develop a positive environment in which she is able to motivate her students. As she prefers to teach in a way where she is more behind the scenes than upfront, Karen was shocked to receive this important recognition. She credits her colleagues and administrators on their work to

help teach the school's youngest students to her success.

Karen was named Teacher of the Year in her 25th year of teaching, all of which she has taught kindergarten and in DeSoto County. Her favorite aspect of teaching is watching her students grow throughout the year. She notes they enter her classroom with a blank slate and, by the end of the school year, are able to read and write.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Karen for her dedication to her students, and I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO JACOB POELMA

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to honor Jacob Poelma, the Monroe County Teacher of the Year from Coral Shores High School in Tavernier, FL.

Jacob believes that, as a teacher, his impact is greater than the sum of his students' test scores and homework grades. He strives to honor a student's individuality while fostering a sense of community in the classroom. He knows that every student has a unique story and focuses on tailoring his teaching to engage each student in the best way they are able to learn. Jacob works to provide real-time language translations of his lectures so all of his students can master the material in their native language.

Jacob has taught biology in Monroe County for 4 years. He works with students in and out of the classroom by offering personalized teaching and mentorship opportunities, sponsors Coral Shores High School's Gaming Club, announces sporting events, and volunteers at extracurricular and other community activities.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Jacob for his dedication to his students and efforts to improve the learning experience. I look forward to hearing of his continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN RULING

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Kathleen Ruling, the Union County Teacher of the Year from Lake Butler Elementary School in Lake Butler, FL.

Kathy believes that every child is worthy of respect, as they have a unique story to tell. She views her job not as a line of work, but a place where she is preparing each student for their future. Her colleagues describe her as having a natural gift for teaching and working with children.

Whether by creating hands-on classroom experiences or diligently tracking each child's progress, Kathy supports her student's educational careers and is always willing to help, even after they leave her classroom.

As an elementary special education teacher for 38 years, Kathy has left a lasting legacy in Union County. In 1985,