

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND
SERVICE OF WILLIAM JOHN
BETTERS

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Mr. DEUTCH. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the late William John Betters for his distinguished service to our country and his community.

Born on December 1, 1924, William is a World War II veteran, having served in the U.S. Air Force from 1942–1945. Like many of his fellow Americans at the time, William was proud to enlist at the young age of 17. During his service he was awarded the World War II Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and the Purple Heart.

After returning from serving his country, William created a business as self-employed plumber and contractor, building housing in his hometown. He also devoted his life to family, marrying Eleanor Kurkoski in 1946, having 3 children, 3 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. One of his granddaughters has followed in his footsteps and is serving our country as a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and service of William John Betters.

CONGRATULATING BECKY SHEA

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Becky Shea, who recently retired from the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Shea worked with the Chamber for over 7 years and served as the Office Manager and Membership Director.

Although she was set to retire from the chamber last year, she decided to stay to help with the transition to the newest Chamber leader, who is now Andrew Cripps. Thanks to Becky's efforts to maintain the productivity and organization of the office as a whole, the Chamber was able to adapt to the leadership change and address the challenges from COVID–19 effectively.

Throughout Ms. Shea's service to the Effingham Chamber of Commerce, she delivered exceptional results for all who worked with her. Becky approached every day with a can-do attitude and always went above and beyond to help make Effingham live up to its full potential.

Her dedicated leadership set a positive example for all, and she will be greatly missed by the Effingham Chamber of Commerce.

HONORING KEN THOMAS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding achievements of Ken Thomas, a career Legislative Attorney with the American Law Division of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), who retired from CRS on August 28, 2020, after 36 years of distinguished government service. In his 33 years with CRS, Ken became the leading expert on constitutional law, and he made invaluable contributions to the work of Congress with his substantive knowledge in various legal areas. He advised Congress on statehood and other political status changes for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, federalism, individual and civil rights, criminal law and procedure, the federal judiciary and education law.

Over the years, House and Senate committees called on Ken to testify at hearings and share with them his expertise and non-partisan analysis of important issues. Last year, for example, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform invited Ken to testify at a hearing on the Washington, D.C. Admission Act (H.R. 51). During the course of this high-profile and contentious hearing, Ken answered numerous questions from Members about the constitutionality of granting statehood to the District of Columbia, key to passage of H.R. 51 by the House in June.

My staff and I, in particular, relied on Ken for his analysis of legal issues involving the uniquely complicated relationship between the federal government and the District of Columbia, ranging from constitutional law to the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to appropriations law. Ken always provided prompt, well-reasoned and well-researched legal analysis.

The following is a recommendation for one of the 28 CRS awards that Ken received:

During his tenure in the American Law Division, Ken Thomas demonstrated a level of energy and dedication to the mission of serving Congress that has been extraordinary. He has willingly and without hesitation undertaken challenging and difficult assignments from the Congress. He has been a prolific writer and has provided comprehensive and in-depth legal research and analysis in a number of legal areas He is always available for and capable of tackling new issues, especially those that pose complex constitutional questions. He regularly demonstrates a high degree of intellectual curiosity, a trait that inspires him to "go the extra mile" for his congressional clients.

During his career with CRS, Ken prepared over 200 written products for Congress, many of which have been cited in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, committee reports and congressional hearings. Academic law reviews and national publications, such as The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and The National Journal, have also cited his work. Ken has also delivered many keynote Con-

tinuing Legal Education lectures sponsored by CRS to positive reviews.

From 1996 through 2013, Ken was one of the key contributors to the Senate document "The Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation" (Constitution Annotated), serving as the Editor-in-Chief of the 2012 Centennial version of that volume, and he was the prime architect of the Constitution Annotated website. A public version of that website, constitution.congress.gov, was launched on Constitution Day 2019, and in the last 10 months, has had over 500,000 visits and one million page views.

Ken received a B.A. in philosophy from Colby College in 1980 and a J.D. from The George Washington University in 1983. He worked at the U.S. Department of Education and as a clerk to Judge Bruce Mencer of the D.C. Superior Court before joining CRS. Ken has provided exemplary service to Congress throughout his distinguished career at CRS. I believe that all in Congress who have benefited from his expertise and counsel join me in wishing him the very best in the years to come.

HONORING MR. LEE BOND AND THE SINGING RIVER HEALTH SYSTEM

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Mr. PALAZZO. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mr. Lee Bond and Singing River Health System for their outstanding service to the community of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Mr. Bond has significant family roots on the Gulf Coast. He was born at Singing River Hospital in Pascagoula, Mississippi. His great, great grandfather was Fernando Upton Gautier, the first settler of the City of Gautier, and its namesake. Mr. Bond earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from the University of South Alabama, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude.

Mr. Bond is currently the Chief Executive Officer at Singing River Health System. Outside of work, he has held community leadership roles in both Jackson and Harrison Counties. He has served on the Gulf Coast Business Council, the Bacot McCarty Foundation, the Pascagoula River Audubon Center, Ducks Unlimited Gulf Coast Chapter, the Board of Directors for the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Past President of the Gulf Coast Chapter of Mississippi Society of CPAs. Mr. Bond is a graduate of Leadership Jackson County, and was humbly recognized as a Top 10 Outstanding Community Leader for South Mississippi.

During these unprecedented times, Mr. Bond and the entire Singing River Health System has gone above and beyond to help the community suffering from this global pandemic.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Singing River Health System is the largest COVID-19 provider on the Gulf Coast. It has cared for over 2,200 patients diagnosed with the virus. In response to the increased demand, it continues to make improvements to its critical care nursing units to meet the needs of the most ill patients, has established community-based clinical patient navigators to conduct local contact tracing, and supports patients recovering at home.

Mr. Bond credits the entire Singing River care and support services team for their efforts to deliver lifesaving care to those hit hardest by the virus and continue to be their greatest advocate. Despite all the long hours and very difficult days, he and the Singing River team have remained "Singing River Strong" and dedicated to their mission of improving health and saving lives.

CONGRATULATING PATRICK ROMEO

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Patrick Romeo, of Boardman, Ohio, on completing the Hoka Hey Motorcycle Challenge in Panama City, Florida, this August.

Being one of a hundred motorcyclists traveling 10,000 miles on a country-wide, 13-day journey, Patrick embarked on an excursion intended to raise awareness for veterans with traumatic brain injuries. This endurance challenge was aimed at testing the physical, mental, and emotional limits of all participants.

Mr. Romeo demonstrated extraordinary leadership along with outstanding integrity and values, qualities that empower and inspire individuals and families to overcome their physical, mental, or financial challenges.

Resurrecting Lives Foundation, an Ohio-based nonprofit founded by Youngstown native Dr. Chrisanne Gordon, was Patrick's designated charity. So far, Mr. Romeo has been able to help raise \$16,000 for the charity, which advocates for veterans with traumatic brain injuries.

The dedication and enthusiasm Patrick directed towards this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity has left a positive impact upon the community. Patrick, you are truly an inspiration to all of us who serve the public, and for that, I am forever grateful.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF UGA MARINE EXTENSION AND GEORGIA SEA GRANT

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the University of Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant for celebrating the 50th year since its founding.

In 1970, the University of Georgia initiated a marine extension service program with startup funds to assist the Cooperative Extension Service provided to agriculture. Edward Chin

led the original program, and also had responsibility for coordinating the university's marine programs on Sapelo Island and Skidaway Island.

Today, the UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant provides research, education, and training in science to assist Georgia in solving problems and recognizing opportunities for its coastal and marine environments.

Because of all the exceptional work they have done throughout the years, they have helped promote the economic, cultural, and environmental health of Georgia's coast. They have also aided in preparing Georgians to become good stewards of coastal ecosystems and watershed resources.

The Georgia Sea Grant College Program is part of a national network of 34 Sea Grant programs located in every coastal and Great Lakes state, Puerto Rico, Lake Champlain, and Guam. This program is among a network of over 300 institutions involving more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, educators, students, and outreach experts.

As the Representative for Georgia's coast, I can't thank them enough for the work they have done to help improve our environment to support Georgia's short- and long-term prosperity.

REMEMBERING RONNIE KOLE

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I would like to take the time to remember Ronnie Kole for his contribution to the musical community and his charitable work. I include in the RECORD the following article "Ronnie Kole, renowned New Orleans pianist who performed for 6 presidents and a pope, dead at 89" by Dominic Massa on August 28th from the The New Orleans Advocate:

Ronnie Kole, the renowned New Orleans pianist who performed for six presidents, a pope and audiences around the world, died Thursday. He was 89.

Kole, a consummate entertainer known for his boundless energy, had been in declining health but stopped performing only recently, according to his son. Kole's wife of 36 years, Gardner, died this past January.

Kole's career spanned nearly 70 years and took him to Carnegie Hall, concert venues and music clubs across the United States, Europe and Asia. He recorded dozens of albums and was a frequent performer in New Orleans, where he settled in the 1960s before moving to Slidell some 30 years ago.

Kole—who was tall, lanky, goateed and always immaculately dressed—entertained six U.S. presidents during his career. In 1987, he performed "Amazing Grace" for Pope John Paul II during the Holy Father's visit to New Orleans. Kole performed at the outdoor Mass celebrated by the pope near the UNO Lakefront Arena. Accompanied by a symphony orchestra and a 350-voice choir, Kole called the performance "the way I've always envisioned doing 'Amazing Grace,'" mixing the hymn with bits of "Jesus Christ Superstar" and the "Hallelujah Chorus."

The song was a hallmark of most every Ronnie Kole concert. His set lists showcased a diverse range of musical genres from modern and traditional jazz to show tunes, clas-

sical music and everything in between. A typical show might feature "Rhapsody in Blue," "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," "What a Wonderful World," selections from Mozart or Beethoven, "Ave Maria" and a souped-up version of "When the Saints Go Marching In," just to name a few. In between songs at his concerts, he would frequently entertain his audience with jokes, anecdotes, self-deprecating asides and musical history lessons.

"My feeling is, anything your mind can think of, you can put down on a piano," he said in a 2004 Times-Picayune profile. "To me, a piano is an orchestra. It's a very imaginative instrument that you can do most anything on, which I try to do. I try not to have limitations. I have a lot of fun with it. I love to entertain."

According to Times-Picayune music writer Keith Spera, Kole was renowned for his showstopping, all-request Broadway medley, which concluded with him playing the main melodic theme with his left hand and a succession of requested melodies with his right—simultaneously.

Kole was a founder of French Quarter Festival, performing at the first event in 1984 and every festival since. He was scheduled to perform at this year's French Quarter Fest, as well as at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, both of which were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Kole had performed at nearly every New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival since its inception in 1970 and played at the modern event's precursor, the 1968 New Orleans Jazz Festival.

Born Ronald Kuhn, Kole was a native of Chicago. He suffered from a heart condition as a child, which limited his outdoor activities. "When I was feeling good, I wanted to go outside and play ball, but when I was sick I was sometimes laid up for a month and a half, two months in bed," he said in a 2012 WWNO-FM interview. "My aunt played piano by ear and she had a big old upright piano. She showed me how to play 'Chopsticks' . . . and my mother and father said, 'Maybe we should get him a piano. That would keep him from wanting to go outside to play baseball.'"

Kole recalled first tickling the ivories around the age of 13 and considered himself largely self-taught. He went on the road in the Midwest to perform when he was just 16.

Kole first came to New Orleans in 1957 to audition as part of a jazz trio. He didn't get the job but he fell in love with the city.

While back in Chicago, he crossed paths with New Orleans music great Al Hirt. Although Kole had already toured the country and made somewhat of a name for himself as a young jazzman, he was uncertain of his career path. Hirt, a nationally known jazz trumpeter, encouraged Kole's career and gave it a major jump start by asking him to bring his ensemble to New Orleans in 1964 to serve as the house band for Hirt's Bourbon Street club.

"I guess I owe everything to Al for bringing me down," Kole said in 1987. "And also for kicking me in the fanny a year or so prior to that, when I had totally given up and decided to play solo in a restaurant piano bar thing."

Kole worked at Hirt's club for several years before opening his own club, Kole's Korner, where he performed for six years.

"Man, I'm treated like a hometown boy here," Kole said of the city in a 1967 Times-Picayune profile. "The people are wonderful—even the club operators on Bourbon Street—there's none of the cutthroat competition here that I've found elsewhere. To us, New Orleans is the ideal place."

Before coming to New Orleans, Kole, who performed solo but also with a trio or septet, frequently played Las Vegas and on national