

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF RITA  
BERTHAY

**HON. TRENT KELLY**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 23, 2020*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Rita “RiRi” Lilly Berthay, who passed away on October 6 after a courageous battle with an extended illness.

Rita’s life began on November 5, 1955 in Greenville, Mississippi. She went on to graduate from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in social work. After her marriage to Michael Berthay in 1979, she moved to Saltillo where she raised her two sons. A devoted Christian and member of First United Methodist Church of Saltillo, Rita was known for being extraordinarily strong in her faith and an inspiration to all who know her.

Her dedication to serving others was evident in her 28 years in social work, mental health, and counseling. Rita’s career was her passion and purpose. She took great pride in helping those in need and felt she never worked a day in her life. She was instrumental in implementing Crisis Intervention Training which trained local law enforcement how to handle mental health issues. Rita also served as CEO of the Lifecore Health Group until her retirement this past July.

Above all, Rita found the greatest joy in caring for and spending time with her family, particularly spoiling her two granddaughters, Ava and Mary. She was selfless and generous, and always looking for ways to help others. Her life was one of service, grace, and love for her family and community and she will be greatly missed by all whom she encountered.

Left to cherish her memory is her husband Mike Berthay; sons, Clint and Ryan Berthay, as well as many other extended family members.

HONORING SANTA CRUZ SHERIFF  
MARCO ANTONIO ESTRADA, SR.

**HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 23, 2020*

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Santa Cruz County Sheriff Marco Antonio Estrada, Sr., for his decades of public service to Nogales, AZ. The only Hispanic and longest serving Sheriff in the State of Arizona is retiring after a combined career of over 50 years in law enforcement.

A native to Ambos Nogales, Sheriff Estrada was born in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. In December of 1944, his family immigrated to the United States and made their home in Nogales, Arizona. Sheriff Estrada grew up from humble beginnings, and his family often struggled to put food on the table. With a tremendous work ethic, drive, and self-education through avid reading, he overcame poverty.

Sheriff Estrada’s law enforcement career began in 1966, when he first joined the Nogales Police Department as a radio dispatcher. He continued to move up the ranks

with promotions to Desk Sergeant, then serving as Captain from 1978 up to his retirement in 1991.

In 1992, he decided to continue his public service career and ran for The Office of Santa Cruz County Sheriff. He was elected and sworn in on January 1, 1993. Since then, Sheriff Estrada has been re-elected for seven consecutive terms and is finishing his “last rodeo”, as he so famously called it, with a distinguished legacy of service to Santa Cruz County. A proud immigrant himself, he always promoted the welfare of immigrants and is an advocate for the border town. One of his most notable accomplishments was the construction of a new sheriff’s department and county jail named after him: “Tony Estrada Law Enforcement Center.” His long exemplary career in law enforcement counts mainly accolades; however, as our country currently faces tensions between communities and local law enforcement, his greatest accomplishment could arguably be the longstanding positive relationship maintained between the local law enforcement agency and its community under his leadership. As a Sheriff who made it a point not only to enforce the law with strength, but to also enforce the law with compassion, empathy, integrity, dedication, commitment and passion, it’s understandable why residents identify Marco Antonio Estrada, Sr., as a Sheriff who truly reflects the values of their small border town. Sheriff Estrada publicly defended those values and the people of Santa Cruz County against those who would demean the community.

Sheriff Estrada also understood the importance of serving and giving back to his community after hours. He actively volunteers his time to many community-based organizations that include: United Way of Santa Cruz County (serving as a spokesperson for over three decades), the Boys and Girls Club, the Nogales Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, Way of the Heart Promotora Institute, Nogales Elks Lodge, is a lifetime member of the Fraternal Order of Police, and has always supported charitable organizations.

Congratulations on a job well done and time well served. He is a hero to his family and community and an example of good policing. There will never be another Sheriff Estrada, Sr., but the bar has been set high for The Office of Santa Cruz County Sheriff.

HONORING TOMAS T. ALEJO, JR.

**HON. JIMMY PANETTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 23, 2020*

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Tomas T. Alejo, Jr., a devoted pastor, educator, activist, and community leader from the central coast of California. Tomas will be remembered as a tireless advocate for social change in Watsonville and Phoenix, Arizona.

Tomas was born on March 16, 1946, in the southern Texas border region of Weslaco to a humble migrant farmworker family. Tomas and his family migrated from South Texas to California in the 1950s, where they worked in the Salinas, Santa Clara, Central, and Pajaro Valleys picking crops. They eventually settled and established roots on the Central Coast in

Watsonville. Tomas attended Gonzales High School and graduated from Gilroy High School in 1965. From 1966 through 1968, he proudly served our nation in the United States Army during the Vietnam War.

Tomas earned his teaching credential from San Jose State University and taught for 24 years at the Santa Cruz County Sheriffs Rehabilitation Center in Watsonville. There, he trained inmates in the trade of auto body repair and painting to help them positively transform their lives and have employment opportunities upon release. He also taught auto body repair and painting classes for six years at Hartnell College in Salinas.

Tomas was also a longtime pastor for the Apostolic Church and served five years doing missionary work in the poorest parts of South Texas and Mexico with his family. He later co-founded Hope Ministries Church in Watsonville, where he was heavily involved in many community events and activities throughout his life. Tomas contributed to countless policy advocacy efforts and co-founded the Annual Watsonville Peace and Unity March in 1994 to end gang and domestic violence. Tomas also served as a contract negotiator for the United Farm Workers in the late 1970s and was invited to lead the opening prayer at the California State Capitol in Sacramento in 2014 for the state’s Cesar Chavez Day Ceremony.

During his retirement in Phoenix, Tomas was heavily involved in community action defending immigrants. He was especially passionate about helping the homeless and less fortunate. In biblical tradition, Tomas deeply believed in the righteousness of defending the poor and most vulnerable in our communities.

Tomas will be remembered for his lifetime of community service and virtuous spirit. We, as a community, celebrate his legacy and all he has done for the central coast of California. Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the life of Tomas T. Alejo, Jr.

RECOGNIZING AND THANKING MR.  
ED PEREZ FOR HIS DEDICATION  
TO THE EISENHOWER MEMORIAL  
COMMISSION

**HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON**

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 23, 2020*

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Mr. Ed Perez who has served as the Director of Government Relations for the Eisenhower Memorial Commission. It has been a true pleasure and honor to work with Ed many years as I have served on the Eisenhower Memorial Commission.

Ed has proven himself to be a great ambassador in interacting with Members of Congress and their staff. His passion for this project combined with his diplomatic and interpersonal skills were invaluable in helping us get to the end goal of dedicating an incredible memorial to one of our greatest American leaders. Above all, Ed is a truly kind person.

As the commission winds down after completing this enormous task, I want to personally thank Ed for his great work. He and his family can forever look at the monument and be reminded of his job well done.