

With this title, Jimmy will represent the Veterans Council at various events throughout the year.

Jimmy is a past commander of the American Legion Chatham Post 36, which is an organization dedicated to advocating for patriotism across the United States.

Among his many lifetime achievements, he helped spearhead the fundraising and construction of the World War II Memorial on River Street in Savannah.

He has also been an active member of the Savannah St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee for 35 years, and was even the 2013 parade Grand Marshal.

I can't thank Jimmy enough for his outstanding service to our nation throughout his life, and I congratulate him again on this wonderful accomplishment.

CELEBRATING NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBIN L. KELLY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 30, 2020

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today for myself and Members of the Illinois delegation to speak about Northern Illinois University, my alma mater and a major contributor to the life, health and future of the Midwest and beyond.

This year, NIU celebrates its 125th anniversary. Like so many state universities across our great country, NIU began as a "normal school," or teachers college. In the late 1800s, 11 million people had moved from farms to cities, and our country had welcomed 25 million new immigrants. The need for better access to education was exceeded only by the need for more teachers—and schools like NIU were created to meet those needs.

From the beginning, NIU has been an institution committed to providing opportunity for underserved students—students who are the first in their families to attend college, students of color and students with high financial need. Today nearly 75 percent of NIU students fall into one or more of those categories, with about 45 percent Pell grant-eligible, 50 percent students of color and 50 percent first generation college students. At the same time, NIU excels in the creation and dissemination of new knowledge. In 2017, the Brookings Institution gave NIU high rankings for excellence at the intersection of research accomplishments and the creation of social mobility for students exposed to hands-on research and other opportunities they might not otherwise experience.

NIU faculty are not only great teachers, but many are world-renowned scientists, authors, and policy experts. They study climate change, look for ways to improve physical and mental health, create fuel-saving vehicles, expand the boundaries of visual and performance art, explore ancient and modern cultures and much more. A host of federal agencies have expressed confidence in NIU through grant awards for study of such diverse areas as Southeast Asian languages and cultures, assistive technologies for people who are blind or visually impaired, and new devices for the Department of Homeland Security to keep air travel safe.

Nearly 250,000 alumni in the northern Illinois region and around the world are making a difference in their chosen fields. The impact of this outstanding institution has earned the respect and attention of a grateful state and nation. As a proud alumna, I am honored to join my colleagues to congratulate Northern Illinois University on this, its 125th anniversary.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 97TH
TURKISH INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 30, 2020

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Turkish-American Cultural Association of Michigan on the celebration of the 97th Turkish Independence Day on October 29, 2020.

The Turkish-American Cultural Association is a valued member of Michigan. The group serves as a bridge that unifies our communities to promote, plan, and execute programs that improve humanitarian and cultural welfare of the Turkish community in Michigan and abroad. The organization has been a strong voice for the Turkish people, and its efforts have been paramount in fostering a meaningful relationship between Turkey and the United States. Its leadership has made a true difference in Michigan and in communities across the nation.

As we celebrate the 97th Turkish Independence Day, I am proud to recognize the many Americans of Turkish descent who have contributed significantly to our state, especially Michigan's 12th Congressional District. Turkish-Americans enrich our communities and continue to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to making Michigan a more inclusive, vibrant, and prosperous place for all.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 97th Turkish Independence Day. We thank the Turkish-American Cultural Association for its commitment to Michigan and look forward to celebrating this special anniversary for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO RETIRED BRIGADIER
GENERAL FRANK TONEY, JR.,
UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL
FORCES

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 30, 2020

Mr. WALDEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Retired Brigadier General Frank Toney, Jr., United States Army Special Forces, who passed away on August 6, 2020, at the age of 70.

Frank Toney was born in Tampa, Florida, on March 1, 1950, where he was raised until he graduated from Henry B. Plant High School in 1968. He attended Arkansas State University on an athletic scholarship and was a part of Arkansas State's championship football team that went undefeated in 1970. He graduated in 1972 as a Distinguished Military Graduate with the Red Wolf Battalion ROTC program and received an active duty commis-

sion as an infantry officer with the United States Army.

As a Lieutenant, Toney served with the 7th Psychological Operations Group, 1st Special Forces Group, and the 51st Infantry Regiment. After graduating the Advanced Infantry Officer Course, Captain Toney assumed his first company command with the highly esteemed 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Lewis, Washington. Following this command, Toney became a Special Forces officer after earning his green beret. Toney was then promoted to Major in 1981 and served four years with the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He graduated from the Command and General Staff College in 1986 and was assigned to the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School where his incredible leadership shaped the intensive Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course responsible for evaluating and selecting the best candidates to attend the Special Forces Qualification Course.

Toney was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1989, and his leadership would shape special operations in the Middle East and Africa throughout the 1990s. He led 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group in combat during Operation Desert Storm. He was promoted to Colonel after attending the National War College and commanded the 10th Special Forces Group between 1992 and 1994. Toney then served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and then as Deputy Commander of Army Special Operations Command before he was promoted to Brigadier General and commanded all Special Operations Forces under Special Operations Command Central during Operation Desert Fox.

Toney is best known as the Commander of the United States Special Forces Command during the initial push into Afghanistan where he radically shifted the Special Forces mission towards unconventional warfare to effectively fight the Taliban. Under his command, Special Forces were able to rally together and lead the Northern Alliance of tribes to liberate Afghanistan from the Taliban.

Toney retired from the United States Army in January 2002, but even in retirement he continued to serve as an advisor upholding United States interests throughout Africa and the Middle East. In fact, in February 2012, the United States Army Special Forces Regiment recognized Toney as a Distinguished Member in the Regimental Honors, Awards, and Affiliation Program. This was an honor that had been given to less than 80 men before him.

Even after he retired to Medford, Oregon, he continued to serve his country and the military he loved. Over the last decade, Toney assisted me in the assessment and recommendations of the best potential candidates for our nation's military service academies. His pointed and expert guidance in his role as Chairman for my annual Service Academy Nomination Boards was invaluable. He will be missed.

Toney is survived by his wife Sally and his son, Frank Toney, also a United States Army Veteran. Toney's decorations and awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Master and Military Free Fall Parachute Badges, among other distinguished awards. Overall, Toney dedicated more than 40 years of service to our country.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me and Toney's family in honoring the life and service of Brigadier General Frank Toney, Jr. For a man of his caliber, who demonstrated superb leadership, dedication, and sacrifice throughout his service to our great nation, it seems no amount of recognition is sufficient to say thank you but he will always be remembered as a highly respected leader and warrior.

HONORING LASONJA HARDY
MOORE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 30, 2020

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lasonja Hardy Moore, who is the wife of Deaundra Moore, and mother of one daughter, Faith Hannah Moore.

Mrs. Lasonja Hardy Moore is a member of Hudson Missionary Baptist Church in West, Ms. Lasonja serves as a Sunday school teacher, youth leader, and church announcer. A graduate of Mississippi and Jackson State Universities with a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, Mrs. Hardy Moore is a Pre-Kindergarten teacher at William Dean Jr. Elementary School, which is a part of the Holmes County Consolidated School District.

Mrs. Hardy Moore has been recognized and awarded numerous awards, including Teacher of the Year 2006–2007 under the leadership of Mrs. Lillian Mitchell, and the 2014–2015 Teacher of the Year at William Dean Jr. Elementary under the leadership of Mr. Charles Lacy.

Mrs. Hardy Moore has been educating children in Holmes County for 15 years. Lasonja is a member of Holmes County & Mississippi Association of Educators, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority (Rho Nu Zeta Chapter) and serves on the Hippy Council.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and congratulating Mrs. Hardy Moore for being actively involved and making great accomplishments in Holmes County.

RECOGNIZING THE 97TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 30, 2020

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the government and people of the Republic of Turkey on the 97th anniversary of October 29, 1923, when Turkey became a Republic.

It was on this day in 1923 when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the visionary leader of modern Turkey, became its first President. Under his leadership, Turkey rose from the ashes of a war-torn country into a confident, stable, and growing democracy.

Turkey and the United States have been NATO Allies since 1952. Our soldiers have been serving side by side for almost seven decades in crises and conflicts in a vast geography, ranging from Afghanistan to Kosovo.

Turkey is an important ally and partner of the United States in facing 21st century challenges.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Turkey is now the largest refugee-hosting country in the world.

Turkish Americans are an important part of the fabric of the United States, as evidenced by their contributions to the arts, science, academia, and business.

Turkish Americans serve as goodwill ambassadors promoting greater understanding between the United States and Turkey, by educating people in the United States about Turkey's rich cultural heritage, and the impor-

tance of the partnership to advance mutual interests between the United States and Turkey.

I rise today to congratulate my friends in the United States and Turkey on the 97th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

HONORING DEBRA SMITH WRIGHT
AS A BELOVED EDUCATOR AND
MENTOR

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 30, 2020

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Debra Smith Wright was a beloved educator and mother, whose legacy is the countless minds she opened and hearts she touched.

Ms. Smith Wright was born in 1953, to Eddie Lowe Smith and Essie Mae Jackson. She graduated from Lakeland High School in 1970, and Florida Memorial College in 1973. Afterwards, she went on to earn her master's and Specialist in Education Leadership from Rollins College in 1984.

Ms. Smith Wright began her long and influential career in education as an elementary music teacher. She went on to serve as a principal, and in 2007, she retired as an education consultant. Even after her retirement, her dedication to the field endured, and she served as a Polk County School Board member.

Ms. Smith Wright took the time to mentor me on the history of Polk County Schools, the struggles and reforms, and improvements made over the years. We worked together to improve justice for all students regardless of their background, expand trade program opportunities for young people to help them develop skills, and increase teacher pay to retain and recruit top talent at our schools. For this and more, we honor her.