

D'Emidio, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Joseph D'Emidio has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

Over the last century, Joe has demonstrated the selfless service, dedication, integrity, and patriotism that have defined the greatest generation. As the world plunged into war, at just nineteen years old, Joe answered the call of duty, enlisted in the U.S. Navy, and soon found himself on the shores of England, preparing for one of the most pivotal moments in history: the D-Day invasion. His role aboard an LST, landing on the shores of Normandy, helped turn the tide in favor of the Allied forces and secure the freedom we cherish today. But his extraordinary service did not stop there; Joe went on to play a critical role in supporting the Allied forces during the Battle of the Bulge, standing firm in the face of overwhelming adversity.

Following the war, Joe returned home to his beloved Bristol Borough community, where he continued to seek ways to serve and make a difference. As a founding member of the Third District Volunteer Fire Company (and their very first Captain), Joe helped establish a legacy of protection and care that still serves Bristol today. He also founded Cameo Kitchens, a successful family-run business on Mill Street for decades, thereby shaping the future of Bristol's thriving small business community. In addition, Joe has been an integral member of the Bristol Borough Lions Club for over fifty years, where he has served his community with the same passion and spirit with which he defended our Nation and freedom.

At 100 years old, Joe continues to serve as an inspiration to us all. Whether woodworking at the Bristol Borough Senior Citizen Center or serving as a communicant at St. Ann's Catholic Church, he is a reminder that true greatness lies in selflessness, service, and love for family, faith, community, and country. Today, we honor Joseph D'Emidio not just for his remarkable deeds, but for who he is—a true hero, in every sense of the word.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to Joseph D'Emidio for his extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional individual, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May his example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

THANKING ERNEST WADE BALLOU
FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. BRYAN STEIL

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ernest Wade

Ballou on his retirement as House Legislative Counsel, after over forty years of service to the House of Representatives.

Wade joined the Office of Legislative Counsel after earning his J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1983. Throughout his tenure Wade has provided nonpartisan, expert support to members of Congress, committees, and staff on matters related to foreign affairs, Native American issues, federal land, intelligence, veterans' affairs, federal tax law, public debt, health care, Social Security, and more. I am pleased to have worked with Wade in his capacity supporting the Committee on House Administration.

Since 2016, Wade has served as the House Legislative Counsel, leading the office and managing a committed team of legislative experts to provide the House with impartial and confidential drafting and counseling services for bills, amendments, resolutions, and laws. Wade has also been a key partner on the Congressional Data Task Force, a group united in their efforts to modernize and improve data accessibility for the public. He played a critical role in developing the Comparative Print Suite tool for Members and staff and has worked closely with the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, as well as the Subcommittee on Modernization, to implement innovative ideas and recommendations that will help Congress work better for the American people. Wade's many accomplishments were recently recognized by the Congressional Management Foundation's Democracy Award for Lifetime Achievement. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that before going to law school and joining the Office of Legislative Counsel, Wade was a fire fighter, an experience that likely prepared him well for a career in the House.

Wade began his career serving under the fourth House Legislative Counsel and now he leaves as the eighth House Legislative Counsel. His expertise and dedication to helping us turn our policy ideas into concise legislative text will be sorely missed. On behalf of my colleagues and the entire House community, I thank him for his leadership and longstanding commitment to serving the People's House.

RECOGNIZING GIRL SCOUTS OF
NYPENN PATHWAYS ON THE
12TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF THE GIRL

HON. BRANDON WILLIAMS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Aarohi Rastogi, Mia Enders, and Rayna Reed, three Girl Scouts from Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, for demonstrating extraordinary leadership at the 11th Annual Girls Speak Out in commemoration of International Day of the Girl on October 11, 2024, at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, NY.

International Day of the Girl is an annual and internationally recognized observance on October 11 which acknowledges the importance, power, and potential of adolescent girls. This year's theme, 'Girls' vision for the future', conveys the need for urgent action and persistent hope, driven by the power of girls'

voices and vision for the future. With the right support, resources and opportunities, the potential of the world's more than 1.1 billion girls is limitless. And when girls lead, the impact is immediate and wide reaching: families and communities are all stronger, our future brighter.

Co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Canada, Peru, and Turkey, UN Women, UNICEF, and UNFPA, the 11th Annual Girls Speak Out for International Day of the Girl Child called for a push for accountability for girls' rights and investment in girls' leadership and vision for their futures. This year's Girls' Speak Out at UNHQ provided an opportunity for girls to hold direct dialogue with Member States and UN Agencies through a girl-led town hall discussion, followed by a Girls' Action conference, hosted by girls, for girls.

Aarohi, Mia, and Rayna were selected to not only participate as Girl Activists but also as moderators for the town hall to engage with policymakers and emphasize the importance of girls in bringing change to their peers and communities, and facilitators for the Girls' Action conference learning labs.

In their roles as Girl Activists, Aarohi and Rayna shared the work they have done in pursuit of the prestigious Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting.

For Aarohi, the Gold Award is an opportunity to create and deliver a comprehensive mental health education program for 7th–12th grade students in India. Inspired by her family members and peers in India, Aarohi collaborated with NGOs and mental health experts from around the world to create a curriculum covering topics such as stigma, stress and anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention.

For Rayna, the Gold Award is an opportunity to establish a peer mentoring program with three of her friends, including Mia, and her school's Assistant Principal to mitigate learning loss and the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. With the launch of the Middle School Mentor Program, Rayna and her peers seek to build community and increase access to free tutoring and mentorship programs at their school.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of New York's 22nd Congressional District, I thank these three outstanding young women for their leadership and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN
HERO: BILL RIDLER

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize Bill Ridler as one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

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people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Bill has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

Bill's journey has been one full of challenges: Bill has tuberous sclerosis, a disease that causes tumors to form all over the body, reduced his one working kidney to functioning at 15 percent, causes seizures due to the tumors on his brain, high blood pressure from the ones growing in his kidneys, and on top of that chemotherapy treatment has caused him to be immunosuppressed. Yet, despite these hardships, Bill is the embodiment of joy, compassion, optimism, and resilience. Since the age of six, Bill has competed in the Special Olympics and worked tirelessly to raise awareness about the impact of the games while serving as a beacon of inspiration for those facing similar challenges. Remarkably Bill gives away his hard-earned medals to other athletes, advocates, and community members to inspire them, motivate them, and bring joy to them when they need it most. Bill's efforts earned him the prestigious Sheetz Family Award of Excellence for his resilience and dedication—an honor bestowed upon the Special Olympics athlete whose determination and efforts demonstrate the power of the human spirit to overcome obstacles and inspire greatness.

Bill is a testament to the impact of positivity and a reminder that even in the face of immense challenges, we have the power to rise, inspire, and make a difference. Today, we honor Bill Ridler not just for his remarkable deeds but for who he is—a true hero in every sense of the word.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to Bill Ridler for his extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional individual, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May his example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

RECOGNIZING THE RIVER HILLS AND LAKE WYLIE LIONS CLUB

HON. RALPH NORMAN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the River Hills and Lake Wylie Lions Club for its continued record of service to the 5th District of South Carolina, and to congratulate the club for their celebration of their 50th anniversary.

The River Hills and Lake Wylie Lions Club was chartered in 1975 and since its inception, has been a force in the Lake Wylie and Clover communities as the largest and most effective Lions Club in the state of South Carolina. The club's 142 members have raised over \$200,000 annually. Each year, the entire amount raised goes directly to support over 20 charities and services.

The Lions Club has created several of their own projects and organizations that focus on

supporting and serving South Carolina. The River Hills, Lake Wylie Community Foundation was established by the Lions to receive funds and distribute the proceeds to charities in tandem with the organization's goals and with the needs of the community. The foundation's motto is "For Good. For Others. For Ever" and that sentiment can be felt in the impact of this program throughout South Carolina.

The Lions Club also created a partnership with Clover Schools that led to the establishment of Roaring Readers, which provides books for elementary school classrooms, and donates annual scholarships for Clover High School seniors. In addition, the club supports the youth throughout York County and Clover through Kidsight, an eyesight program that screens over 13,000 annually and helps pay for new glasses, eye surgeries, and hearing aids as needed.

The motto of the Lions Club is "we serve." The River Hills and Lake Wylie chapter carries out this mission daily and their impact can be seen and felt throughout our great state. Each of the people that make up this great organization lead with honor, joy, and compassion. They are the people who help make our Nation the greatest in the world. The Lions Club members willingly give up their time, tithe, and talent and live out the South Carolina motto, "While I Breathe, I Hope." Please join me in expressing my heartfelt gratitude for all of their great work and celebrating 50 years of exemplary service.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF IRENE DEVAN PELOIAN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Irene DeVan Peloian, a remarkable individual whose journey from Belleville, New Jersey, to Fresno, California, was filled with love, family, and a deep commitment to serving others. Irene, born on June 27, 1927, in Belleville, New Jersey, was an astonishing individual whose life touched many hearts. Her legacy, marked by grace, resilience, and unwavering devotion to her loved ones, will forever be cherished.

Irene's early years were shaped by her parents, George and Armen DeVan. Her father, an Armenian-Turkish immigrant, and her mother, a survivor of the Armenian genocide, instilled in her a strong sense of heritage and determination. She carried this with her throughout her life's adventures. Completing her high school education in 1945, Irene's fondest memories included attending dances featuring Frank Sinatra. These dances, enjoyed with her best friend and cousin, Alyce, added a touch of magic to her youth.

Driven by dreams of a career in film, Irene pursued her passion by enrolling at the New York American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Manhattan. Her aspirations led her on a unique path. After two years, she relocated with her family to Fresno, California, where she embarked on a career in retail, notably working at Cahns Women's Clothing store on Fulton Street. Additionally, Irene ventured into the world of runway modeling. In 1952, Irene

married Simon (Sam) Marootian, and together they raised their family on a vineyard ranch in Fowler, California. Irene's warmth and culinary talents made her a beloved hostess, and the couple enjoyed their evenings playing card games with close friends. The close-knit community of Fowler held a special place in her heart, and she often reflected on those years as the best of her life. Irene had a desire to travel, with Hawaii and Las Vegas being among her favorite destinations; she had quite an impressive reputation as a blackjack player.

Passionate about politics, Irene dedicated 30 years of her life to various Democratic Party campaigns. She organized numerous political events at her home, where she would cook Armenian delicacies for visiting governors and senators, showcasing her remarkable hospitality. Beyond her political involvement, her heart belonged to the San Francisco Giants, and she had a deep love for rescue dogs and stray cats. Irene held a special affinity for children and young people, often adopting "sons," "daughters," and "grandchildren" into her extended family. Above all, Irene was a devoted wife, mother, daughter, sister, cousin, "aunty," and friend. Following the loss of her first husband, Sam, Irene found love and companionship with Edward Peloian, whom she married in 1988. Their enduring love and partnership lasted almost 30 years until Ed's passing in 2016. They shared a passion for the arts, providing support to the Fresno Philharmonic and Fresno Art Museum.

Irene DeVan Peloian's legacy lives on, leaving behind cherished memories in the hearts of her loved ones. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Marcus and Anchalee Marootian; daughter, Robyn Marootian; sister-in-law, Scotty DeVan, of Washington; nieces Jaymie DeVan of Los Angeles and Jordan DeVan of Washington; and three nephews, Mike Shahbazian, Steven Shahbazian, and Robert Shahbazian. She is also survived by her godson, Dr. Jordan Howard, of Atlanta, and her best friend, Diane Mosesian, of Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I extend an invitation to my esteemed colleagues to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Irene. Her remarkable time, filled with resilience, love, and devotion, leaves an indelible mark on our hearts and in the tapestry of our community. Irene's enduring spirit will forever hold a cherished place in our memories and the lives she touched.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: ELIZABETH TODDERUD

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize Elizabeth Todderud, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

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