

roles—she is truly multitalented. For instance, she served on the Montrose Chamber of Commerce, where she eventually led the organization as president. Her outreach and influence extends far beyond her professional life, too. Since 1980, she has been an active member of the Altrusa Club, a community service organization in Montrose. She has selflessly helped guide the club in multiple roles, most notably as president in 1986.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Mary's track record as a reliable public leader. She has given decades of her life in pursuit of improving local government and her community.

A TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL  
VANG PAO

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Mr. CARDOZA, Ms. BORDALLO and Mr. KISSEL to honor the memory of Major General Vang Pao of Fresno, California, who passed away Thursday January 6th after a battle with pneumonia.

Major General Vang Pao led the Royal Lao Army during the Secret War in Laos, fighting against the People's Army of Vietnam in cooperation with the Central Intelligence Agency and United States military forces. Bravely leading thousands of soldiers in a guerilla war against communism, Vang Pao became a hero, due to his leadership and dedication.

Growing up in the Xiengkhuang province, Vang Pao became interested in military service early in life. He left his family farm as a teenager to join the French Military in defense of his fellow Hmong as the Japanese invaded, and began a historic military career. At the end of World War II, and the departure of the Japanese, Vang Pao was recruited as an officer in the First Indochina War to fight the Viet Minh.

As he rose within the Royal Lao Army, Vang Pao was heralded for his valor and dedication and was the only ethnic Hmong to attain the rank of General in the Royal Lao Army. In the early 1960's, when the CIA recruited Hmong men in Laos to join a guerrilla unit during the Vietnam War, Vang Pao was chosen to be the commander. As his Hmong soldiers rescued downed American pilots from enemy territories and defended American outposts in Laos, he gained a reputation for being a disciplined, honorable leader.

The Hmong soldiers also attacked many North Vietnamese convoys that were using the Ho Chi Minh trail from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. By attacking these supply routes, thousands of U.S. soldiers' lives were saved in South Vietnam. Vang Pao and the Royal Lao Army valiantly fought for their cause throughout the entire Secret War.

Immigrating to the United States in May of 1975, Major General Vang Pao was instrumental in negotiating the resettlement of thousands of his fellow Hmong. Vang Pao continued his leadership after his exit from military service. He was active in fostering U.S.-Laos relations, and combating human rights abuses abroad, as well as serving as an icon and mentor to the Hmong-American community. A

widely respected figure, General Vang Pao was a constant feature at Hmong-American events and celebrations nationwide.

Major General Vang Pao is survived by his widow, Mrs. May Song Vang, 25 children, 68 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and numerous friends and community members.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join Mr. CARDOZA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. KISSEL and myself in honoring the life of Major General Vang Pao as we offer our condolences to his family and celebrate his memory and service to our country.

DR. S.K. RAO MUSUNURU

**HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. S.K. Rao Musunuru who will be recognized at the Community Aging and Retirement Services (CARES) Annual Benefit on February 5, 2011, for his continued philanthropic commitment to our community.

He began his formal study of medicine in 1968, but what is most noteworthy is his ability to couple his medical expertise with community involvement—enhancing the knowledge base, furthering the medical profession, and ensuring that local needs are met. While Dr. Musunuru boasts numerous memberships in nationally and internationally acclaimed organizations, including the American Medical Association, the International Society of Heart Transplantation, and the Society of Critical Medicine, he is still mindful of the medical needs in his own backyard.

He was instrumental in transforming a 50-bed rural hospital into a 290-bed Heart Institute, meriting recognition for its high standard of care. During his tenure as Chairman of the Board for Pasco Hernando Community College, the college had a 100 percent increase in nursing enrollment, and he has been vocal in his teachings of "proper prevention and prompt intervention, so that people can live longer and stronger."

Dr. Musunuru's involvement in the community certainly does not go unrecognized. He recently became the recipient of the 2010 Outstanding Physician Award and, for the second consecutive year, received Rotary International's highest honor, the Paul Harris Fellowship recognition. While his accomplishments and awards are extensive to list, words cannot adequately acclaim Dr. Musunuru achievements. The lives he has impacted are countless, and I applaud him for his resolve to use his talents to meet the growing needs of the community and the larger medical profession.

TED VALERIO TRIBUTE

**HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Detective Ted Valerio of Montrose, Colorado. The Montrose Police Department recently awarded him the Employee of the Year for 2010, as well as a Merit Citation.

Detective Valerio was hired on April 30, 2001. Since then, his superiors and coworkers have recognized him as a respected individual of exceptional character and integrity. Detective Valerio has taken the lead and solved a number of important felony cases in the past decade and continues to prove himself an asset to the force. Aside from his responsibilities as a detective, he administers pre-hire polygraph exams for all police department employees—he is the second polygraph examiner to ever work in the Montrose Police Department. Detective Valerio also serves on the Montrose Special Weapons and Tactics team (SWAT), which carries a great risk of personal injury.

Mr. Speaker, Detective Valerio is consummate law enforcement professional and I am proud to congratulate him on his recent awards. I would also like to thank him and the countless other officers who continue to serve their communities.

IN RECOGNITION OF MELVIN E.  
FERRO

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Corporal Melvin E. Ferro, who is retiring after more than 28 years of law enforcement service to the City of Fairfield. As his colleagues, friends and family gather together to celebrate the next chapter of his life, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting this outstanding public servant and defender of peace and safety.

Mel started his law enforcement career when he was hired as a Police Officer with the Fairfield Police Department on March 19, 1982. As an officer, he worked in various capacities including Patrol, Investigations, and Field Training. He earned awards for his performance, including Police Officer of the Year for 1994, and twice he was named Police Officer of the Quarter—June through October 2000 and again for July through December 2007. Mel served as a Field Training Officer beginning in 1995 and was later promoted to Police Corporal on December 31, 1999.

One of Mel's most significant contributions to the Fairfield Police Department has been his expertise in investigating and solving major crimes. His knowledge and memory pertaining to the activity and association of criminals in the area was a resource for the entire Police Department. He took community-orientated policing to a new level because he made an effort to learn where criminals lived in Fairfield, and he tracked their travel and associates. Additionally, as a trainer of fellow police officers, he taught what most police officers rarely develop—the craft of being a police officer.

Mel was a valued employee and leader in the Fairfield Police Department. His commitment to the community was unwavering. He was a loyal representative of the law enforcement community and admired amongst his peers for his hard work, dedication and positive work ethic.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly honored to pay tribute to this dedicated public servant. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in wishing Melvin E. Ferro continued success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, JR.**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 18, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

MARIANNA RAFTOPOULOS  
TRIBUTE**HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege as the representative of Colorado's 3rd district to rise and pay tribute to the inspirational life of Mrs. Marianna Raftopoulos. Mrs. Raftopoulos was a woman with a deep sense of civic conviction, a loving wife and mother of three.

Marianna Raftopoulos was raised on a sheep ranch in Western Colorado, and the spirit of the west remained with her for the duration of her exemplary life. After graduating from the University of Colorado, Marianna pursued many passions. Most notably were her efforts to improve Moffat County, and the Colorado Republican Party. She was a champion of many causes including chairwoman of the Republican Central Committee, The Moffat Tunnel Commission, The Moffat County Economic Development Partnership, and served as a Moffat County commissioner and chairwoman of Colorado Wildlife Commission. With the passing of Marianna Raftopoulos, Western Colorado has lost an inspiring leader, and our nation has lost a great patriot.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a true honor to stand in tribute and pay respect to the life of Mrs. Marianna Raftopoulos. She was a great leader, who is still greatly missed.

RECOGNIZING BONNIE ARD AS  
WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA'S  
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PERSON  
OF THE YEAR**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Bonnie Ard as the 2012 Walton County, Florida Educational Support Person of the Year. I am honored to recognize her achievements and her dedication to the students and teachers of northwest Florida.

Bonnie Ard is the secretary for Maude Sanders Elementary School in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. Mrs. Ard considers the faculty and staff at the school to be a team and part of her family. She sets the tone for the rest of the school's faculty and staff, using her space in the front office to establish a professional, caring, and family-friendly environment that epitomizes the work of the faculty and staff at Maude Sanders Elementary. Tracey Dickey, Principal of Maude Sanders Element-

tary, extols Mrs. Ard's excellent rapport with the parents and students of the school and her steadfast desire to seek to serve the parents and students of Maude Sanders Elementary as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Bonnie Ard as the Walton County Educational Support Person of the Year. Her passion for the students of Maude Sanders Elementary is laudable and her dedication to her profession is exemplary. My wife Vicki joins me in congratulating Mrs. Ard, and we wish her all the best.

HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
OF SARAH BRACHMAN**HON. RALPH M. HALL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a fellow Texan; Sarah Brachman, who has been named the National Down Syndrome Society's 2011 Advocate of the Year.

This young lady is one of more than 400,000 Americans living with Down Syndrome, but that has never slowed her down. She is more engaged than many in our political system—having interned here in Washington and in both Federal and State legislative offices in Kentucky where she's in school. And she truly is an advocate for the disabled, happily talking to anyone who will listen about her life and what it means to live with a disability, and personally recruiting over thirty Members of Congress, myself included, for the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you and all of our colleagues will join me in congratulating Sarah for this well deserved honor.

CELEBRATING THE CITY OF  
BROOKLYN CENTER'S CENTENNIAL**HON. ERIK PAULSEN**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a wonderful community in my district, Brooklyn Center. 2011 is no ordinary year for Brooklyn Center, as next week they will celebrate their centennial.

A quaint suburb located west of Minneapolis, throughout its 100-year history, Brooklyn Center has embraced growth, the importance of family values, and the development of industry, all while maintaining its small-town charm.

Brooklyn Center's residents take great pride in its many diverse and successful residents, its great schools, many shops and recreation options—including the famous Dudley/Budweiser Minnesota Classic Softball Tournament.

As an avid biker, I appreciate Brooklyn Center's acres of picturesque parks and miles of trails. The city's many nature areas are a great representation of the community's pride and commitment to civic improvement.

Congratulations Brooklyn Center on 100 years of being "a great place to start and a great place to stay." I'm sorry I won't be there

to celebrate with you, but I hope your Centennial Celebration is truly the "Party of the Century."

RECOGNIZING VANESSA BUMP AS  
WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA'S  
TEACHER OF THE YEAR**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Vanessa Bump as the 2012 Walton County, Florida Teacher of the Year. For twenty years, Mrs. Bump has been an inspiration to her students, colleagues, and community; I am honored to recognize her achievements.

During her career as an educator, Vanessa Bump has served as the Media Specialist at Bay Elementary School, the Library/Media Specialist at Walton High School, and as a Social Studies Teacher in the Escambia County School District. She currently teaches Social Studies and Journalism at South Walton High School. Her outstanding performance was recognized there when she received the 2004 Walton High School Teacher of the Year award.

In addition to her distinction in the classroom, Mrs. Bump serves in myriad other capacities, including Yearbook Sponsor, School Technology Coordinator, Junior Class Sponsor, Prom Sponsor, History Fair Coordinator, and Project-Based Learning Trainer. She has also been presented with the Herff-Jones Outstanding Journalism Educator of the Year award and holds a National Journalism Certification.

Teachers are amongst our most valuable public servants, as they are responsible for educating the future of our country. To be honored as Teacher of the Year, selected from a pool of exemplary educators, is an immense honor. This honor is a reflection of the impact Vanessa Bump has had on her students and the difference she has made in their lives. She has proven herself to be among the many great teachers in our nation, and I am proud to have her as a constituent of Florida's First District.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor Vanessa Bump for her accomplishments and her continuing commitment to excellence at South Walton High School and in the Walton County School District.

HONORING LIZ BURNS, RECIPIENT  
OF THE 2010 WESTERN SPRINGS  
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD**HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 26, 2011*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Liz Burns, who will receive the 2010 Western Springs, IL Citizen of the Year Award on January 30, 2011. A resident of Western Springs for 47 years, Mrs. Burns has been an invaluable asset to her community in large part due to her contributions to the local library system.