

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING MR. JOHN C. PITTS

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Mr. John C. Pitts of Evans High School in Orlando, Florida. Mr. Pitts, a Florida native, bravely served our country in World War II as a Navy Seal in the Underwater Demolition Team #25. In 1957, Mr. Pitts began teaching junior high at Evans High School, and in 1961, he moved into administration as the school's assistant principal. After temporarily leaving Evans High School to lead several other schools in Orange County, Mr. Pitts returned to Evans in 1977 where he served as principal until his retirement in 1988.

Educators like Mr. Pitts are shining examples of the fruits of selflessness. Their commitment to students models the life-changing impact a dedicated educator can have on a community and on the individual lives of students.

For more than five decades, Mr. Pitts has been a tireless advocate for the students, athletes and families of Evans High School. It is with sincere appreciation that I thank Mr. Pitts for his commitment to our nation's youth and for his service to our country. His leadership and dedication continue to be an inspiration to us all.

A TRIBUTE TO SONIA CLAYTON

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Sonia Clayton for her tremendous accomplishments with her business, numerous awards she has received and for being featured on the cover of Small Business Today magazine. Sonia is a perfect example of the American Dream.

Sonia was born in Colombia, where she spent the first part of her childhood, before moving to Venezuela and eventually the United States. Growing up, Sonia said life was not easy. She had no father figure, and grew up poor in an underdeveloped country. She said that living without a paternal figure, she had to figure things out on her own and learn how to survive. It is during this time that Sonia learned how to "think outside the box," as she put it.

She said that she learned to get creative and embrace the challenge, tackle it and overcome it. As she explained, when there is someone there to prevent chaos in your life, you learn nothing, but when you have to figure it out on your own, you learn how to survive, because you have to.

In 1984, Sonia moved to the United States. In order to support herself, she had three jobs. She first worked as a caretaker for an elderly

couple close to death. She then worked in a rest home and from that job, created a crew who cleaned houses around the Salt Lake City area. It was during this job that Sonia learned English. Sonia also worked as an interpreter; she is fluent in French, Spanish, Portuguese and English.

In 1990, Sonia came to Texas. She first worked for Air France and from there went on to work for Continental Airlines. She started out doing transit operations and later went on to work in corporate security. Sonia pioneered a team that put together Continental Airlines first security group.

It is during this time that Sonia began working with different databases and programs for training purposes, and first got into IT. Shortly after 9/11, Sonia created Virtual Intelligence Providers, L.L.C (VIP). VIP is an information technology company that focuses on oil and gas. It first started out as a way to help her friends find jobs that had been lost due to the events on September 11th. She began reaching out to different companies and as Sonia put it, she didn't just start with the little guy, she reached out to huge corporations and Shell Oil became her first client.

VIP grew very quickly, making \$300,000 in its first year and hitting the million dollar mark in its second. VIP has been in business for 13 years.

In all her success, Sonia always remembers to give back and promotes this spirit throughout VIP and its employees. She has started three nonprofits: The VIP Education Foundation, The Angels for Soldiers Foundation and The Cancer Foundation.

Sonia also continues to support the Mormon Church. It is through Mormonism that she grew to become familiar and be involved with Christian and American values, which she witnessed growing up through the works of missionaries and Red Cross workers.

Sonia said that Americans are very generous people and America is the only country in the world that worries about its neighbors and helps maintain their freedoms and liberties. She also knows that it takes genuine people who are willing to sacrifice that make this country great. She raised her children with the principle that they can either serve God or their Country. Her son is an officer in the US Navy and her daughter is a returned missionary in the Mormon Church.

Sonia believes all these works are a way to give back to America so that someone is able to benefit from her and her family's generosity, the same generosity that she once benefited from.

Sonia is a remarkable, successful woman, gracious and giving citizen and a cancer survivor. Her exceptional story reminds us that even in times of great adversity, we can succeed if we work with tireless determination. She teaches people everywhere the importance of giving back and I am thankful to have her as one of my many neighbors in Houston, Texas. Sonia embodies the character of a Texan through and through.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING THE CAMP MERRILL
CHOW STAFF

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2014

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the exemplary actions of the Camp Merrill chow staff during the winter storms that hit Georgia in January and February.

L & S Services employees serve the 5th Ranger Training Battalion in the Camp Merrill Chow Hall.

When winter weather crippled parts of Georgia earlier this year, members of this team volunteered their personal time and even risked personal safety to ensure that Army operations would continue without degradation.

Thanks to the sacrifice of L & S Services personnel, more than 300 students were able to successfully complete the mountain phase of Ranger school.

In addition, this experience led to the development of a procedure for folks to stay at Camp Merrill to support operations during severe weather—a plan that was followed just a few weeks later, when a dangerous ice storm struck the area.

Even in the face of significant challenges this winter, L & S Services employees provided consistent and outstanding service to Camp Merrill.

I commend these individuals for going above and beyond the call of duty to support our men and women in uniform, and ultimately, our national security.

HONORING MR. GEORGE A.
EMANUELSON

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 9, 2014

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of George A. Emanuelson, a World War II veteran who served as an Armed Gunner with the United States Navy aboard the S.S. *Mello Franco* as well as the S.S. *James S. Lawson*.

Mr. Emanuelson honorably and faithfully carried out his duties, and our country is indebted to him and his fellow sailors for their heroic service. As a member of our nation's "Greatest Generation," Mr. Emanuelson answered the call of duty during a perilous time of war. World War II was an event that shaped the trajectory of not only our country, but also the entire world. We owe service members like Mr. Emanuelson our eternal gratitude for standing up against fascism that threatened democracy and safety across the globe. Thanks to men and women like Mr. Emanuelson, our democratic ideals have persevered and led us to become the most influential nation in the world today.

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