

J.R. Gallegos began his career as a public servant in 1989 when he was appointed to the Pleasanton Housing Authority Board of Directors. Three years later, at the age of twenty-eight, Mr. Gallegos was first elected to the Pleasanton City Council, representing the people of District Four. Since then, he has served on the Pleasanton City Council for twenty-three years. Mr. Gallegos has also been involved in a number of other community organizations and committees in Atascosa County and the City of Pleasanton.

Over the last two decades, Mr. Gallegos has dedicated his career to improving and enriching the lives of Pleasanton residents. During his time on the City Council, he has supported the construction of a municipal airport terminal, the police and public works departments, and a sports complex. Mr. Gallegos was also involved in plans for the wastewater treatment plant expansion, the Civic Center and Library, City Hall renovations, and a variety of other infrastructure improvements. His contributions have been described as "vastly improving the quality of life" for Pleasanton citizens. It is clear that he has helped to "pave the way to a bright future" for the City of Pleasanton.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize J.R. Gallegos for his twenty-three years of outstanding service as a Pleasanton City Councilman.

#### HONORING SAMUEL MCCRAY

### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 25, 2015*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor an extraordinary community advocate and activist, Samuel McCray.

He is a citizen of the Mississippi Delta, who was born on a plantation in a shack in the middle of a cotton field just South of Lambert, Mississippi. He attended the segregated schools in Quitman County, graduating in 1968 from Quitman County Industrial High School. On May 1, 1968, the infamous class of '68 led a walkout, protesting the arrest of Willie Bolden, a Southern Christian Leadership Conference organizer sent to prepare the upcoming March on Washington, the Poor People's Campaign. The first leg of the operation was to start in Marks with mule drawn wagons. An all white Mississippi Highway Patrol unit of twenty troopers attacked the gathering of over 500, and forced them off the jail lawn. For Samuel, this would be his first act of civil disobedience. After high school, he would attend Coahoma Junior College (now Coahoma Community College) and Delta State University (then Delta State College). While in the Delta, he helped to revive the Black Students Organization, becoming second in command in the organization. This organization managed to convince the administration to add African American Studies, to recruit black women to the Delta Bell Cheerleader Squad, to increase financial assistance, and to employ more of our people in the classroom.

While out on summer break in 1973, Samuel would join the local chapter of the NAACP and was chosen to head up the voter's league, the political arm of the organization. A few years earlier, the county purged the voter

rolls. His first charge was to get ready for the 1975 election so voter's registration was number one priority. During this period of history, the voter rolls and the poll books were coded by race which proved to be a valuable tool. The team discovered pretty quickly that the poll books would provide all the information needed. The consistence voters would be the priority group, believing they would be the easiest to get back on the books and to the polls on Election Day. By the deadline, the group had registered over 1500 black voters. The work had only begun; the decision was made to run a slate, a candidate for each position. Not because of the possibility of winning, there was no chance of that, the black vote was less than a third of the total. Will black voters vote for black candidates? About 80% of the black votes were cast for our candidates. The black leadership could not have been happier; we were on our way. Voter registration was a step-up, and an opportunity presented itself in 1978 with the death of the white county supervisor in District 1. The district had more black voters than another and they were concentrated in the Crenshaw and Darling Precincts. With an attractive candidate, and a good ground game we felt we could make history, and we did. The opposition accused the group of cheating; too many black voters received help with their ballot. They found themselves in court, which turned out to be a blessing. The ruling was that any voter with a physical disability, blind or illiterate could receive assistance from the person of their choosing. Another slate was put together for the Town of Lambert, which had an At-Large scheme where a voter had to case a five candidate's ballot in order for the vote to count. Again, the group looked for the most attractive candidates, one of whom was J.D. "Jake" McAdory. Everybody liked him, including both blacks and whites, and he was a standup guy. He was the first African American elected to the Board of Aldermen. As always, the group would run a slate in county elections, realizing that keeping voters engaged was the best tool to building a strong electorate.

In the late 70's Samuel would align himself with people like Attorneys: Frank Parker & Margret Carey; the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Victor McTeer & Willie Bailey, Johnnie Walls, Senator Henry Kersey, and others that were challenging the legal schemes hindering blacks from the ballot box. Sam was certified as an expert witness on white block voting, voting harassment, voter's intimidation and at-large voting. The effort would lead to redistricting or redrawing county supervisor and municipal lines to give black voters a fair chance to elect candidates of their choosing. By 1983, with creating three black majorities districts and getting rid of the at-large voting practice, they began getting much closer to achieving the goal set many years earlier. By 1987, they controlled the Quitman County Board of Supervisors. Today, all the municipalities with the exception of two are headed by African American mayors, and all of the governing boards are black majorities. While an activist in Quitman County, Sam worked at Coahoma Opportunities, Inc. (COI) in Clarksdale where he started as a community driver, but quickly moved up in the organization into middle management. He was promoted to Coordinator of Nutrition Access and to an Equal Opportunity Officer. In those posi-

tions, the organization would open the first WIC & food bank on site and help to bring free breakfast to public school cafeterias. While with COI, Samuel was serving on the Sub-Area Advisory Council, the group that made recommendations on health facilities in the State. His works on the council led to the creation of Aaron Henry Community Health Services Center in Clarksdale.

In 1986, Michael "Mike" Alfonso Espy hired him to organize the northern counties of the district where he applied what he had learned from his work in Quitman County, and applied that to a multi-counties model, resulting in some of the best turnout. In 1988, Governor Ray Mabus named Samuel to the Mississippi Housing Finance Corporation. The board later re-named the organization to the Mississippi Home Corporation, where he was elected Chairperson of the Program Committee. In this role, Samuel worked with local nonprofits to access programs such as USDA's Community Self-Help program, the 504 repair loan/grant and the 502 home ownership, which is the program used by Samuel to purchase his home.

In 1993, Congressman Mike Espy would step down to accept the Secretary of Agriculture in the Clinton Administration, the first African American ever to hold this position. The community was happy to have one of its own, but it put the 2nd District at risk. Thankfully, the leadership agreed to a mini convention process that led to a consensus candidate, Honorable BENNIE THOMPSON, County Supervisor from Hinds County, who was one of the single most respected, elected officials in the State, black or white. THOMPSON would go on to win and take office in April of 1993. Samuel never envisioned holding office or working for a politician, but this is BENNIE THOMPSON, he's a living legend. After lobbying his District Director almost daily, Samuel was hired on June 1, 1993 as a Field Representative and Caseworker, the greatest job on the planet. The Congressman assigned him the counties he had worked over the last twenty years. Samuel's office was located in Marks, his home town. Armed with marching orders to assure Federal Agencies deliver services fairly to his constituents, Samuel served as a resource to non-profits, governmental agencies and small businesses. In the years that followed, the Clinton Administration would institute the Empowerment Zone and the Enterprise Community Initiative. Part of Samuel's assigned counties received the Enterprise Community designation. North Panola would receive a portable water system that provided safe drinking water for hundreds of families. Local limited resource farmers would get a vegetable processing plant so they could better market their produce. An unexpected benefit to an unexpected group of about fifty families living in the Cotton Street Community, got sewer services for the first time. A street separated the town of Marks from this community, and because of their activism in the 60s, they were still being punished. The residents of Cotton Street found out and met with the governing body, and had them resubmit their application to include Cotton Street. On March 17, 2008, then candidate for President of the United States Barack Obama came to Greenville for breakfast with the Congressman and staff. Upon his election, the Congressman took his entire staff to the Inauguration of the first African-American President in his lifetime.

After nineteen and a half years as a Congressional Aide being a part of some of the greatest advancements, right here in the Mississippi Delta to be a part of it is a prayer, answered. Samuel and his wife of 32 years, Bernestine, still live in Quitman County. Their three children: Barbara, Johnathan, and Shonari are all grown and gone, with their 12 grandchildren whom Samuel and Bernestine love from a distance. On December 31, 2012 Samuel retired, the time had come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Samuel McCray for his dedication in being a respected community servant.

#### A TRIBUTE TO SUZANNE HULL

### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 25, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Suzanne Hull for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, *Business Record*.

Since 2000, *Business Record* has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Suzanne has the determination and drive to be successful in anything she does, and her exemplary work with *Contemporary Business Solutions* is a testament to that. As the owner of *Contemporary Business Solutions*, Suzanne utilizes her communication skills to assist people in developing their social media presence as a networking and job-seeking tool. She also is active and passionate about organizations she believes in, donating her time to non-profit organizations like the Des Moines European Heritage Association. In all aspects of her life, Suzanne is an example of the hard work and service that makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Suzanne in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Suzanne on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at *Business Record* for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 135TH ANNIVERSARY OF GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA

### HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 25, 2015*

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize the 135th anniversary of Gethsemane Baptist Church of Eustis, and commend their strong heritage of service within Lake County, Florida.

Founded in 1880, Gethsemane Baptist Church of Eustis was the first place of worship for African Americans in Eustis, and has served as a beacon of hope in our local community. Many lives have been impacted through the church's ministry, and I am honored to recognize their long history of dedication and service. This is a momentous year for Gethsemane Baptist Church of Eustis, and I am pleased to commemorate it with them.

It is my pleasure to join Reverend William Hawkins and the congregation at Gethsemane Baptist Church of Eustis in celebrating this historical milestone. It is truly an honor to serve the residents of Central Florida in the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### THE TRAGIC KILLING OF RUSSIAN OPPOSITION LEADER BORIS NEMTSOV

### HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 25, 2015*

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last month, while many of us were working late to prevent the shutdown of our own Department of Homeland Security, a tragedy occurred in Moscow.

Boris Nemtsov, famed leader of Russia's opposition, was fatally shot four times in the back near St. Basil's Cathedral and the Kremlin. He was 55 years old. That night the fateful image of his body lying dead, on a bridge, facing the Kremlin, sent shivers across our world.

Shivers of sorrow. Shivers of anger. Shivers of cold remembrance of a place with no room for real liberty. No free speech. No tolerance for contrary opinions. No experience of what it means to live in an open society.

Russia is a nation that spans eleven time zones. It holds enough nuclear arms to obliterate life on Earth. How sad that such a nation is still unsafe for a peaceful advocate of freedom and representative governance.

Boris Nemtsov was killed just hours before a non-violent demonstration he was preparing to lead, protesting Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. What courage he showed in speaking for Ukraine, a young and energetic nation seeking peace and opportunity for its people. Ukraine is a sister to Russia and has not deserved the brutality that Russia has heaped upon her over the past year. During that short span, more than 6,000 people have died in the fight for an independent Ukraine.

Mr. Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister of Russia, a vice premier, fought every day for a more open society in his home country. He championed reform ever since the collapse of the old Soviet order twenty years ago. It was a valiant, if often lonely, struggle against a vast and oppressive totalitarian state. More and more, he must have felt the creeping shadow of his own mortality due to the danger in which he placed himself.

Boris Nemtsov was assassinated by cowards lurking in the shadows as he crossed a bridge in front of the Kremlin. The murderers, driven to such a craven and despicable act, were too small and too afraid to let his voice rise.

As I read the news of his tragic fate, I see the first threads of a history that will hold him up as a leader of unparalleled courage and unprecedented faith in his people. This is remarkable in the face of one of the most persistent tyrannies in the world.

Boris Nemtsov's life is prophetic, like Alexander Solzhenitsyn and others who have suffered to move Russia out of its historical imprisonment of liberty.

No part of our world has suffered more in the last century than Russia and the subjugated Soviet territories, as Dr. Timothy Snyder recounts in his extraordinary book "Bloodlands."

In the middle of Europe in the middle of the 20th century, the Nazi and Soviet regimes murdered some 14 million people . . . all victims of murderous policy rather than casualties of war.

Yet not a single one of the 14 million murdered was a soldier on active duty. Most were women, children, and the aged; none were bearing weapons; many had been stripped of their possessions, including their clothes.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights has called the situation a "merciless devastation of civilian lives and infrastructure."

His report points out that heavy weaponry and foreign fighters continue to pour in from Russia and that the conflict has "dramatically deteriorated" in the past two months.

In 2010 Nemtsov founded the Coalition for Russia without Lawlessness and Corruption, a party notable not only for its ambitious name but also because it was refused registration as a party by the Kremlin. In recent years, as a leader of the Russian opposition, Nemtsov had written several highly credible reports exposing corruption at the highest levels of the Russian government.

Our own Gettysburg Address, one of the most revered statements in American history, says, in part, "that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

This is a message I now commend to the people of Russia: let the sacrifice of Boris Nemtsov inspire your own devotion to the cause of freedom.

Because of Boris Nemtsov, millions inside Russia can imagine liberty, a more democratic society, and a life better than the one now permitted to them. Ordinary citizens can make that life for themselves if they are only allowed real representative governance. Nemtsov strove to give every Russian a chance at that better life, even from inside the belly of a frozen whale. We honor his ideals and his sacrifice.

#### TRIBUTE TO SHERYL SOUNDAR

### HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 25, 2015*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on