

community as a crossing guard for the School City of East Chicago. A further testament to her patriotism and her commitment to her city, she also served as a poll worker on election days.

A woman of tremendous faith, Mother Virginia Oliver has dedicated herself to serving her church community, first as a member of First Baptist Church where she sang in the choir and served as a secretary, and later at Greater First Baptist Church. Friends and family recall Mother Oliver's pride that Greater First Baptist Church "began in her home" after founding-pastor, Reverend P.C. Harrison, came to her home and convinced her husband, Deacon Robert Oliver, to join him in forming a new church. Deacon Oliver would go on to become the first and longest serving chairman of the Deacon Board, a position he held for thirty four years. At the first church meeting, Virginia was named as the church's Financial Secretary, which she faithfully served as for twenty seven years. Mother Oliver also has served her church as a deaconess, missionary, choir member, church decorator, and ultimately, church mother. She continues to serve as Greater First Baptist Church's oldest church mother.

Mr. Speaker, Mother Virginia Oliver has committed herself to her community and her church since she arrived in East Chicago, and has served as a mother and role model for many children throughout the years. She has taught every member of her family and her community the true meaning of service to others. I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in wishing Mother Virginia Oliver a very happy 100th birthday.

RECOGNIZING ELIZABETH BURKO

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Elizabeth Burko, who was a true and committed leader in the California State Parks who lost her life on August 22, 2015.

Elizabeth Burko was born in Ohio and attended college at the University of Colorado where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science before moving out to California.

She began her career as a volunteer docent at Año Nuevo State Reserve in 1985 where she was eventually hired on as a park aide. For 30 years, Burko dedicated her life and career to the mission and purpose of California State Parks. In 2007 she became the Superintendent of the Russian River District of California State Parks which includes parks in both Sonoma and Mendocino Counties.

Throughout her career Burko proved to be dedicated to the mission of the State Parks, but it was during the recession that she truly demonstrated the value of her leadership. Her management skills and creativity made it possible to avoid many park closures in the district and maintain the integrity of the State Parks mission. She was known for her willingness to collaborate with local non-profit groups in order to improve park access and management.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognition of Elizabeth Burko whose

contributions to the Russian River District of California State Parks will be valued by park visitors and staff alike for years to come. She will be greatly missed.

PAXSON "PACKY" H. OFFFIELD, CATALINA ICON PASSES

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, the community of Avalon, California was saddened to learn that Paxson "Packy" H. Offfield passed away on Sunday, June 14, due to complications from leukemia. He recently chose to return to his home in Michigan, and passed away there, with his wife and family by his side.

Mr. Offfield attended the Latin School of Chicago and the Catalina Island School for Boys, located in Toyon Bay. He graduated from the University of Denver in 1975 with a degree in Economics and then taught here at the Catalina Island School. In 1976, his family asked him to join the Santa Catalina Island Company, formed in 1894 and guided by the Wrigley and Offfield families since 1919. Beginning as property manager, Mr. Offfield gained experience in several departments, and served at various times as the company's chairman of the board, president, and CEO. He was a member of its Board of Directors from 1980 until his death.

Mr. Offfield was also chairman of the Benefactor Members of the Santa Catalina Island Conservancy, formed in 1972 by Philip K. Wrigley and Dorothy W. Offfield, and was the Conservancy's first chairman of the board.

A dedicated conservationist, Mr. Offfield was a director and chairman of The Billfish Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of billfish populations worldwide through scientific research, education and advocacy. He was a Board member and former chairman of The Peregrine Fund, a worldwide organization dedicated to preserving birds of prey. In 2006, Mr. Offfield received from the president of Panama the Commendador Award for work through the Peregrine Fund on the reintroduction of the Harpy Eagle, the national bird of Panama.

Mr. Offfield was also chairman of the Catalina Sea Bass Fund, dedicated to the restoration of sea bass and other fisheries in Southern California waters. He was active with the Conservation and Research for Endangered Species component of the San Diego Zoological Society. He was awarded the 2006 Conservation Medal from the Society for his work with the Peregrine Fund and satellite tagging of marlin. He also spearheaded a DNA sampling study with Rutgers University and The Billfish Foundation.

Mr. Offfield was very involved in developing satellite tags for tagging billfish in Pacific waters for over 20 years, to track migration and other data on billfish. He was the chairman of the Offfield Center for Billfish Studies and funded an archival tagging program for white sea bass in cooperation with the Pflieger Institute for Environmental Research. He was a founding member of the Marine Conservation Science Institute. Mr. Offfield was also a

director of USC's Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies and endowed the Paxson H. Offfield Professor of Population Ecology now held by Dennis Hedgecock at USC.

Mr. Offfield was president of the Offfield Family Foundation, which works predominantly on environmental issues around the world. He has worked with the Little Traverse Conservancy to protect the arboreal forests of Northern Michigan. He was a past president and board member of the Silver Creek Fishing Club in Northern Michigan.

Mr. Offfield was named to the International Game Fish Association Board of Trustees in 2007 and currently served as its chairman. He shared its belief in the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping. He was inducted into the IGFA Hall of Fame in 2011.

In Avalon, Mr. Offfield was a past president and member of the Avalon Tuna Club, the world's oldest sportfishing club and was the current president of the Tuna Club Foundation. He had in the past served as Chairman of the Avalon Planning Commission and as president of the Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce. The Tuna Club had twice recognized him as Angler of the Year, and he had three Tuna Club record fish using three-thread linen and 8-pound Dacron. Mr. Offfield also participated in the International Masters Angling Invitational Tournament in Cancun.

Mr. Offfield is survived by his wife, Susan, his children, Chase (Lena), Calen (Amber) and Kelsey, his stepson, Rex, three grandchildren (Christian, Owen and Capri) and his brother, James Offfield. A celebration of life will be held in Avalon later in the summer.

HONORING CPL. TIMOTHY GRACE, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION SOLDIER OF THE YEAR

HON. LOUIE GOHMERT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, the First District of Texas has been blessed as the birthplace of many remarkable individuals who have made notable contributions that have enriched lives well beyond the borders of Texas. It is a great pleasure to stand in honor of a man from Nacogdoches, Texas, who is young in terms of years but exceedingly senior when it comes to his patriotism, his caring, and his contribution to the ongoing of this country. His name is Corporal Timothy Grace and he has been named Soldier of the Year for the United States Army's 1st Infantry Division.

Cpl. Grace enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2013 at the age of 22, pursuing a dream born out of a family legacy of military service. Inspired by his grandfather Leo Acosta who served during World War II, Cpl. Grace knew as a young boy that the military would be his future. His heartfelt desire was to serve and protect the greatest country in the history of the world, precisely as his grandfather had done.

Cpl. Grace entered the military as a 19-Delta Cavalry Scout attached to the 1st Infantry Division in Fort Riley, Kansas. Regarding basic training, Cpl. Grace has remarked, ". . . I've always been mentally strong so they