

RETIREMENT OF BISHOP T. LARRY  
KIRKLAND FROM THE AFRICAN  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**HON. KAREN BASS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 7, 2016*

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to make note of the retirement of The Right Reverend Theodore Larry Kirkland, Sr. from active service after over a half century of ministry, as he steps down at the African Methodist Episcopal Church Fifth District General Conference today.

Bishop Kirkland's ministry of over 50 years has often placed him in the public eye and in the company of dignitaries. For example, he presided over the Homegoing Services of Deaconess Rosa Parks at Brown Chapel AME Church in Montgomery, Alabama, an event broadcast worldwide, and he welcomed then-Senator Barack Obama to the Ninth District's observance of Bloody Sunday, in Selma. He is the author of several books on church growth and he has become known for developing strong relationships across denominational and cultural lines.

Educated at Alcorn State University, University of Mississippi, Claremont School of Theology, and California School of Theology, Bishop Kirkland was the founding pastor of Brookins Community AME Church in Los Angeles, California. Arriving in 1977, he grew the congregation from twelve early members to over eight thousand during his twenty-year tenure.

Elevated in 1996, he became the 114th elected and consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. His first assignment was to the Seventeenth Episcopal District encompassing the countries of Zaire, Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi and Zimbabwe. In 2000 he returned to appointment as Ecumenical Officer for the Denomination, served a term as President of the Council of Bishops, and from 2002 led the Ninth Episcopal District in Alabama, where he sought to support the community beyond the pulpit through a range of programs including computer literacy training and high-quality health services for the needy.

For the past eight years, Bishop Kirkland has presided over the Fifth Episcopal District which includes fourteen western states. During this time, Bishop Kirkland has focused on inspiring ministry and serving the greater community. I would like to salute Bishop Kirkland and his family, especially his wife Mrs. Mary Kirkland, and thank him for his service to the faith and the community.

HONORING MICHAEL IRWIN SEARS

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 7, 2016*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Michael Irwin Sears. Michael is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1351, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Michael has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Michael has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Michael has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Michael Irwin Sears for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE 28TH ANNIVERSARY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY SUMGAIT, AZERBAIJAN

**HON. KATHERINE M. CLARK**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 7, 2016*

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, February 27 marked the 28th anniversary of harrowing violence against the Armenian community in Sumgait, Azerbaijan.

I am proud to stand today with the Armenian-American community, including many of my constituents in Massachusetts, in remembrance and mourning of this unspeakable tragedy.

In February of 1988, anti-Armenian rallies through Azerbaijan gave way to waves of ethnically-motivated violence, death and destruction. In the aftermath of these terrible events, Azerbaijan's Armenian community all but disappeared, with thousands displaced, culminating in a war against the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

That war resulted in almost 30,000 dead on both sides. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were forced to flee their homes. And to this day, those who lost their lives or were displaced by this violence still seek resolution and justice.

Many displaced Armenian families have sought refuge in America, and are now making vital contributions in the Fifth District of Massachusetts. Proudly, our diverse District is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the nation. Together, our community is a thriving example of strength and perseverance in the face of extreme adversity.

Like the persecution of too many others before it, the lessons of the Sumgait Pogrom must not be forgotten.

We have a moral obligation to promote tolerance and justice, and we have a duty to recognize the atrocities that have kept us from our common goal.

RECOGNIZING KIRK ADAMS FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND, INC.

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 7, 2016*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Kirk Adams, President and CEO of the Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., for

his contributions and service to the blind community as he brings his leadership to his new role as President and CEO of the American Federation for the Blind.

In 2008, Kirk became the first blind CEO and President of the Lighthouse for the Blind, an organization which provides independence and self-sufficiency through employment for people who are blind, deafblind, and blind with other disabilities. During his tenure as CEO, Kirk oversaw significant growth of the Lighthouse for the Blind's footprint across the country by expanding to eleven new locations. Each location added to the sustainability of the Lighthouse, while also empowering new groups of individuals to be gainfully employed.

Prior to his executive role at the Lighthouse for the Blind, Kirk served as the General Manager of Administration and as the Director of Public Relations and Resource Development at the Lighthouse. Kirk is credited for crafting the Lighthouse's successful fundraising strategy, which has greatly magnified their range of services offered and the number of individuals who are lifted up through employment opportunities.

Outside of his work at the Lighthouse for the Blind, Kirk is deeply involved in the community. He is a member of the Governor's Task Force on Disability and Employment and the Seattle Public Library's Strategic Plan Advisory Committee. He has served on the boards of the Aerospace Futures Alliance, the Association of Washington Business, and the American Federation for the Blind. He is also the former Treasurer and member of the Board of the National Association for the Employment of People Who Are Blind.

Kirk graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Economics from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. He earned his Master's Degree in Not-For-Profit Leadership from Seattle University, and is working toward his doctorate in Leadership and Change at Antioch University.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize Kirk Adams for his admirable leadership and congratulate him on his role as President and CEO of the Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. His unrelenting dedication to the blind community serves as an example of the tremendous impact one person can have.

HONORING MATTHEW C. GAGER

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 7, 2016*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Matthew C. Gager. Matthew is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1412, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Matthew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Matthew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Matthew led his troop as the Senior Patrol Leader and has earned the rank of Warrior in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say and become a Brotherhood member of the Order of the