

IN HONOR OF GEORGE E.  
NORCROSS III

**HON. DONALD NORCROSS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my brother, George E. Norcross III, on his 60th birthday.

George is a longtime advocate for South Jersey, philanthropist, and a superb husband, father, son and older brother.

George was born in Cooper University Hospital in Camden, the hospital he now leads as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The oldest son of a labor leader and a home maker who later went on to work in social services, our parents, Carol and George E. Norcross, Jr., George has paved a path fundamentally his own.

After briefly attending Rutgers-Camden, my brother received his real estate and insurance licenses and started his own company. That company known today as Conner Strong & Buckelew, has become one of the nation's premier insurance, risk management and employment benefits brokerage and consulting firms.

But as successful as George has been in business, it has been his commitment to Camden and all of South Jersey that will be his defining legacy. As Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Cooper University Health System and Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey, where he has been a trustee since 1990, George has lead the transformation of Cooper into a top-tier tertiary academic medical center and launched the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University and opened the MD Anderson Cooper Cancer Center. George and his wife, Sandy, serve as co-chairs of The Cooper Gala, the largest fundraising event in South Jersey each year.

Through the Norcross Family Foundation, George is working to improve education for youth, funding research to help cure diseases, supporting the arts and culture, improving the community's safety, and helping people with disabilities. The Norcross Foundation also partnered with KIPP to open the KIPP Cooper Norcross Academy and George has been a longtime benefactor of the Larc School in New Jersey, which serves children with disabilities.

Accordingly, George has been honored with numerous awards for his contributions to the community including the Annual Champion of Children Award by the Camden Children's Garden and the Tree of Life Award from the Jewish National Fund. In 2013 he was honored by the New Jersey March of Dimes at the organization's Born to Shine Gala, and he recently was awarded the 2015 Haas Regional Champion Medal by the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my wife, Andrea, and with love from my brothers, John and Phil, I wish my oldest brother, George E. Norcross III, a happy birthday, congratulate him for a brilliant first 60 years, and hope he has many more to come.

TWO TIME PURPLE HEART—J.H.  
HICKS

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, it is my honor to pay tribute to an American hero and longtime Texan: J.H. Hicks. J.H. served his country bravely during World War II, receiving two Purple Hearts. He was born in Woodville, Oklahoma on January 10, 1922, but got to Texas as fast as he could—moving to Houston in 1927, at the age of 5, and settling in Spring Branch for the next 88 years. In 1941, J.H. graduated from Reagan High School, however, the months following his graduation would be anything but conventional.

On December 8, 1941, one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hicks bravely enlisted in the Marines at the age of 18. He was sent to basic training in California in 1942 and subsequently deployed to the Pacific, where he served with the United States Marine Corps aviation unit, MAG-1, over the next 4 years. During his time with MAG-1, Hicks was commissioned to a Marine Torpedo Bomber Squadron or a VMTB Aircraft. Flying with this VMTB Aircraft, Hicks fought in the Solomon Island Campaign, on Munda Island, and in the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942.

While fighting in the Battle of Guadalcanal, Hicks's plane was intercepted by enemy combatants and attacked. The attack resulted in his plane crashing in the jungle near the Munda airstrip. This crash left him with a broken leg, 8 bullet wounds, and was labeled M.I.A. For two days, Hicks was missing in the jungle, wounded. After he was found, J.H. received a Purple Heart and a battlefield promotion to First Sergeant for his sacrifice.

After four years with MAG-1, a Purple Heart, and a battlefield promotion to First Sergeant, Hicks moved back to Houston where he lived for two years. After two years of job hunting, he decided to reenlist. The Marines were naturally his first choice, given his history, but, when the Marines wouldn't recognize his rank of First Sergeant upon reenlistment, he opted for the Air Force. While with the Air Force in 1945, J.H. fought in one of the most important battles of WWII, the battle of Okinawa. As a result of the battle, Hicks received his second Purple Heart.

It is heroes like J.H. Hicks who remind us freedom isn't free—remind us that day in and day out brave men and women put their lives on the line, and often sacrifice all, to protect our freedoms. Hicks's loyalty, leadership, and patriotism is unparalleled and stands as a shining example to the type of people who call Texas home.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING MR. PAUL BONDERSON

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Paul Bonderson,

President of the Ducks Unlimited (DU) conservation group, for his tireless commitment to educational and conservation initiatives in the State of California.

Mr. Bonderson's passion for wildlife and the environment began early in life, accompanying his father and grandfather on early-morning duck hunting trips throughout his childhood. As he put it, "I have always been an outdoor person. I have a great appreciation for the outdoors and am aware of how much it's been destroyed." A lifelong Californian, Mr. Bonderson graduated from Sacramento's Encina Preparatory High School before attending California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. He began working with Ducks Unlimited in 2000, and became the group's 43rd President in June 2015.

From 2001 to 2006, Mr. Bonderson oversaw the acquisition of 2,500 acres of land in Butte County. The land had previously been used for rice production, but Mr. Bonderson has restored the property to its natural habitat. Today, the property—known as Birdhaven Ranch—is home to thousands of ducks, and provides invaluable wetlands educational opportunities for local high school and college students. These conservation and education efforts are especially critical in California, which has lost over 95 percent of its historic wetlands. And as President of DU, he has set forth an admirably ambitious agenda: Mr. Bonderson hopes to raise \$2 billion for waterfowl and wildlife conservation as part of the group's "Rescue Our Wetlands—Banding Together for Waterfowl" campaign.

Mr. Bonderson has also helped lead efforts to restore North America's Boreal Forest. The forest, over one billion acres of pristine wildlife habitat, is home to 14 million ducks during breeding season, and is threatened by expanding energy, mining and agriculture sectors. In partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts, DU has permanently protected millions of acres of forest, aiming to eventually preserve at least 50 percent of all Boreal territory on the continent.

Mr. Speaker, Paul Bonderson has worked tirelessly to preserve our nation's natural beauty. His commendable efforts will ensure that our country's pristine lands will be enjoyed by future generations, and it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for votes on Tuesday, March 15, 2016. I would like to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on roll call votes 114, 115, and 123. I would have also voted "yea" on 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121 and 122.