

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Cynthia Wilbanks and her tremendous work on behalf of the University of Michigan and the community at large. She has distinguished herself through her outstanding professional and volunteer efforts.

RICHARD BLANKENSHIP

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of Richard Blankenship of Hillsboro, Ohio.

Richard's time here on earth will be remembered by many as serving both his community, and his country. He was a U.S. Army veteran, having served his country with dedication.

And that dedication and passion was felt in the Cincinnati and Hillsboro communities, where Richard served in a number of different roles, influencing the lives of many.

From the Cincinnati Bengals, to the Southern State Community College, to East Clinton High School, where he served as both a coach and a teacher. At Finneytown Local Schools, where he taught and held various coaching positions, teaching students important lessons of teamwork and leadership.

When Richard retired from teaching in Finneytown in 2003, he said "I will miss being with students and parents, but it's time to hang up my gym shoes."

Richard, our communities are better for having you here, teaching our children, students, and those around you, and changing their lives for the better.

My thoughts are with the Blankenship family.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MICHAEL
F. RING

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable man who dedicated his life to serving the 21st District of New York.

Michael Ring was a loving father and a successful business owner, but he was also a man who believed in public service and the importance of participatory government. Michael worked as a broadcast engineer throughout New York's North Country. However, this is only a portion of his immense contribution to the community.

Mr. Ring worked for the betterment of others during his time as an advisor to the Jefferson County Board of Cooperative Education Services as well as through his efforts as Co-Chair of the Watertown Area Emergency Alert System. His guidance and care could be seen in his time as a volunteer teacher, college student mentor and PTA member as well as through his participation in a multitude of groups that advocated for the importance of national security.

I first met Mike when he was a fellow candidate for Congress in 2013. I was immediately struck by Mike's genuine kindness,

generosity, warmth, and dedication to mentoring others. Mike made friends with people from around the globe and advocated on their behalf. He also was a self-published author of wonderful books. I will miss seeing Mike's smile at community events in Jefferson County.

I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Michael Ring, especially his beloved wife Penny. Thank you for sharing him with us all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONGRESSMAN
ELIGIO "KIKA" DE
LA GARZA

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Congressman Eligio "Kika" de la Garza, who passed away this Monday, March 13, 2017.

De la Garza served as the federal representative for the 15th District of Texas from 1965 to 1997. During his Congressional service, he was Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture from 1981 to 1994 and Ranking Member of the Committee from 1995 to 1997. De la Garza was a founding member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

At the age of 17, de la Garza joined the United States Navy and served for two years, including the final months of World War II. Upon returning home, he completed his high school education before attending Edinburg Junior College and St. Mary's University in San Antonio. While at St. Mary's, de la Garza was again deployed, this time to the Korean War where he was an artillery officer in the United States Army. He then earned his Juris Doctor from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. De la Garza was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1951, at the young age of 24, serving six terms before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

During his tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives, de la Garza endeavored to improve the lives of rural Texans, working to expand and improve federal support for farmers and ranchers. He also stood up for the disenfranchised, supporting landmark civil rights legislation that led to important progress for our society. Born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, de la Garza understood the importance of maintaining strong international relations and was a staunch supporter of the U.S.-Mexico relationship. He was the first Member of Congress to receive Mexico's Order of the Aztec Eagle Award and Israel's Vulcan Center's Lifetime Achievement Award—both awards recognized his efforts to cultivate stronger, more constructive ties between the United States and its allies. As a founding member and chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the first Hispanic to chair a standing committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, he is an inspiration for the next generation of Latino leaders.

Mr. Speaker, this week our country lost a statesman, public servant, husband, father, grandfather, and friend, but his legacy will live on. It is a privilege to follow in the footsteps

of Eligio "Kika" de la Garza, who was genuinely committed to empowering rural areas and the Hispanic community.

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS HOLINESS
THE GYALWANG DRUKPA JIGME
PEMA WANGCHEN

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa Jigme Pema Wangchen on the occasion of his birthday.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa is the head of the 1,000 year-old Drukpa Lineage of Buddhism, which originates from the Indian Scholar-Saint Naropa, an unbroken ancient lineage that continues to thrive. The Drukpa Lineage has over 30 million followers worldwide and has a profound cultural influence throughout the Himalayan region.

Inspired by a strong belief that all individuals can work for the benefit of their communities, His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa is a world-renowned humanitarian, environmentalist, and champion of gender equality. His good works have been recognized by the United Nations and the Indian Government. The international non-profit Waterkeepers Alliance named His Holiness the Guardian of the Himalayas.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa and his followers provided relief services to tens of thousands in the Himalayas following the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal and continues to rebuild the community. Additionally, he supports and organizes clinics which provide access to medical services in remote communities.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa works tirelessly to empower, educate, protect and inspire girls and women in the Himalayas and around the world and has led efforts to ensure that the rights of peoples of all faiths and nationalities are equally respected and protected.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa personally trekked and bicycled thousands of miles across the Himalayas to further the goals of gender equality and of environmental stewardship.

His Holiness supports myriad educational initiatives which seek to improve people's lives through education while simultaneously fostering respect for and knowledge of indigenous cultures. In furtherance of this aim, His Holiness has led efforts to preserve local art and to disseminate globally knowledge about the local cultural heritage.

His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa has led multiple initiatives to protect the environment in the Himalayas. As part of the One Million Trees project, His Holiness organized in 2012 the largest simultaneous tree planting initiative to support clean air and protect against soil erosion.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the spiritual and humanitarian leadership of His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa Jigme Pema Wangchen on the occasion of his birthday.