

The Traveling Wall is a replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington and brings the names of the fallen to cities across our great nation. According to Mena VFW Post 4451 Commander Linda Johnson, "Bringing the Wall to communities across the country spreads its healing legacy to millions."

I want to thank Commander Johnson, members of VFW Post 4451, and the citizens of Mena for their leadership in bringing this important piece of history to the Fourth Congressional District of Arkansas. May the lives of those killed during the Vietnam War never be forgotten.

HONORING THE LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENTS OF MR. JIM
PARDINI

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my dear friend, Jim Pardini of Pardini's Banquet and Catering for being awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Central California Restaurant Association—Fresno Chapter. For the past thirty-six years, Pardini's Banquet and Catering has dedicated their facility to providing the utmost exquisite food service to all in the community. Jim is a pillar in the Central Valley, known not only for his success as a restaurateur, but also for his generous and giving spirit.

Jim was born to Albert and Mary Jane Pardini in Santa Cruz, California. The Pardinis would make Fresno their home in 1952. Jim graduated from San Joaquin Memorial High School in 1964 and went on to earn his Bachelor's degree in Social Science from Fresno State in 1968. Following in the hard working footsteps of his father, Jim carried on the family restaurant business started in 1948 by Al. By 1981, Jim and his wife Marie opened Pardini's Banquet and Catering and went on to acquire a Rubio's and four Tony Roma restaurants. Over time, Pardini's Catering has become the well-respected caterer of the Big Fresno Fair, the Fresno Convention Center and Fresno State's Bulldog Stadium.

To further his statewide impact in the restaurant industry, Jim helped to create the restaurant Political Action Committee. Then, as the president of the California Restaurant Association, he aided in developing the Grass-roots Program. Jim's accomplishments created new ways for restaurant owners to truly connect with law makers in California.

In addition to his impact on the restaurant industry, Jim has dedicated his time to philanthropy work within the community. He is a longtime supporter of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program and the Boys and Girls Club. In addition, he was presented with the honor of the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Muscular Dystrophy Association. With his many accomplishments thus far, Jim's success was fittingly recognized when he was inducted into the California Restaurant Association Foundation Hall of Fame. Through relentless hard work and dedication, Jim Pardini continues to leave a substantial mark in the restaurant industry and within our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the lifelong achievements of Jim

Pardini. I congratulate Mr. Pardini for this great achievement and ask that you join me in wishing him and his family continued success.

IN HONOR OF GARY SCHNIEDERS

HON. ROD BLUM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable teacher and citizen from Waterloo, Iowa. Mr. Gary Schnieders has taught History, Social Studies, and Economics at Waterloo Columbus Catholic High School for 39 years. Over those 39 years, Mr. Schnieders has made an enormous impact on the lives of his students and members of the community.

Mr. Schnieders's devotion goes beyond the classroom with his annual trip to the hallowed ground of Europe's battlefields. This trip is no European vacation. Students walk the trenches of the Western Front and explore battlefields with a twelve-mile hike one day and twenty-mile bike ride another day. Prior to their departure, students are given reading assignments and must complete a 20-page essay. While in Europe, the students have nightly homework assignments. This annual trip is highly anticipated and one that many Waterloo Columbus students work toward their entire high school career.

The itinerary also includes visits to several American cemeteries and memorials honoring our fallen heroes, and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. On the final day, the students visit the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial where they clean the grave markers, plant an American flag, and lay a rose on the grave of every Iowan. At the end of the day, students lay their final wreath of the trip at Normandy as Taps sounds in the background.

Upon their return to Iowa, the students give presentations to their families, fellow students, and residents of Waterloo and Cedar Falls, with a special invitation extended to the local Veteran community.

Over the past 39 years, Mr. Schnieders has shown his students what cannot be taught in a classroom—the meaning of sacrifice and love of country. Today, we honor his devotion that extends far beyond the classroom and helps to ensure the preservation of American values for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ANDEWEG

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Robert Andeweg of Urbandale, Iowa, for being named the 2017 Forty under 40 Alumnus of the Year.

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. Robert was a member of the 2002 class and has not only continued being an active member of his community but he has expanded upon it since being honored in 2002.

Robert is known for being a leader within his community, which is why in 2005 he was elected Mayor of the City of Urbandale. He has been committed to overseeing the economic growth and development of Des Moines' largest suburb. When Robert isn't busy leading his community, he works as a lawyer at Nyemaster Goode P.C. He also works to improve his community by dedicating his time and serving on the Greater Des Moines Partnership Board, the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Bravo Greater Des Moines Board and the Metropolitan Advisory Council.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Robert in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Robert on receiving this outstanding award and wishing him nothing but continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRENDA L. LAWRENCE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, on March 10, 2017, I was not able to cast my vote on final passage of H.R. 720. Had I been in attendance, I would have voted NO on H.R. 720—Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2017.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANTHONY G. BROWN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 159, YEA on Roll Call No. 160, and YEA on Roll Call No. 161.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. BRETT
FRENCH

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to recognize Mr. Brett French as this year's individual recipient of the Distinguished Service Award (DSA). The Lake Superior Community Partnership's Distinguished Service Award is extended to businesses and individuals who support economic development in Marquette County.

After earning bachelor's and master's degrees from Central Michigan University, French served as a public policy and environmental consultant before settling in Ishpeming and beginning his career with American Transmission Co. (ATC), a high-voltage electric transmission system company. As the external affairs manager for ATC, French contributes to Marquette County's development by streamlining and enhancing access to affordable electricity for hundreds of communities across Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Having been with ATC for 16 years now, French is responsible for developing, coordinating, and managing relationships between ATC and the Michigan-based customers and stakeholders who make ATC's work possible.

French participates in numerous community development organizations and remains devoted to improving American infrastructure and the quality of life in the Upper Peninsula. His commitment to economic development is exemplified through his service with Marquette County's Economic Development Corp., Dickinson Economic Development Alliance, and Operation Action U.P., where he works to identify and address regional opportunities that advance economic development in our state's most rural areas. French also understands the importance of learning the skills needed to succeed in today's economy. In conjunction with the Midwest Skills Development Center Advisory Board and NICE Community Schools, he has provided the guidance to equip the next generation of great leaders with the skills they need to succeed. French's commitment to his profession, community, and neighbors has been essential to his success, and I am confident that he will continue to inspire others in the community to take an active role in improving the quality of life in the Upper Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, French's accomplishments in service to the Upper Peninsula cannot be understated, and his family and community can take pride in knowing that Northern Michigan is a better place thanks to his work. On behalf of Michigan's First Congressional District, I congratulate Mr. Brett French and wish him well as he continues to make a difference in the lives of others.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS COFFELT

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Chris Coffelt, Superintendent of Central Decatur Community School District, for being named one of Education Week's 2017 "Leaders to Learn."

Each year, Education Week searches across the country for some of the most innovative and forward thinking educators our schools have to offer. Chris certainly fits that mold. His tireless dedication to educational excellence has given rise to a new culture of student growth and success in the Central Decatur Community School District.

Prior to Chris's arrival, the school district had a difficult time retaining high-quality teachers for extended periods of time, which contributed to lower student achievement. Since

taking over, Chris has made Central Decatur a destination for some of Iowa's best teachers. His innovative programs have helped turn the school district around and for the first time in years they are seeing student tests scores grow in a number of key areas. Chris' ability to empower teachers in his district has brought about a new level of success for not only his teachers, but the students as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Chris in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better his students, teachers, community and the great state of Iowa. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Chris on receiving this outstanding recognition and wishing him nothing but continued success.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CARMEN DELGADO VOTAW

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commemorate the remarkable life of Carmen Delgado Votaw, one of my constituents who passed away on February 18, 2017 at the age of 82. Ms. Votaw was a civil and human rights giant and passionate participant in the global women's rights activist community.

Ms. Votaw, who was born in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, spent her career acting upon a vision of empowerment and inclusion for all women, especially in Latin America. She was a born community organizer, using immense tact, intellect, and grace to educate and enlighten others in order to open up cultural and political avenues for the advancement of women. Due to her years of work and advocacy in Latin America, she is credited with an increase in the number of countries that have signed the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; a greater number of women in political and appointed offices; improved access to technology for rural women; and a higher literacy rate among women and girls.

Ms. Votaw received on multiple occasions presidential appointments in recognition of her outstanding abilities, including being appointed as Deputy Chair to the National Advisory Committee for Women. She served as Chief of Staff to Jaime Fuster of Puerto Rico in the House of Representatives, marking the first time a Hispanic woman had held that title. She was a founding member and President of the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women and a board member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. Ms. Votaw traveled around the globe to promote her agenda of civil and human rights. She visited 70 countries to participate in and speak at women's rights forums, including five United Nations World Conferences on Women. She is a published author, most notably having written the biographies of other distinguished Puerto Rican woman.

Among the organizations that have honored Ms. Votaw for her contributions to women's rights are the U.S. Marshals Service, the Instituto de Puerto Rico of New York, the Na-

tional Institute for Women of Color, Hispanic USA Magazine, Federally Employed Women (FEW), and the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women. She has received the Hispanic Heritage Award for Education, a Civil Rights Award from NASA, MANA's Las Primeras Award, the National Cuban American Women's Association Award, and the National Council of Hispanic Women's Outstanding Achievement Award. She was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame.

Even with her chock-full schedule of global engagement and leadership, Ms. Votaw was deeply devoted to her family and to her role as a grandmother. Please join me in extending condolences to her family and expressing gratitude for her life of dedication to helping all people find their voices. She made tangible contributions to the civil and human rights movements, the effects of which will be felt for generations to come.

COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAMP FIRE'S ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE KID DAY

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 20th year of Camp Fire's Absolutely Incredible Kid Day, which observed the third Thursday in March and is devoted to sending uplifting messages to the youth in their lives.

Founded in 1910, by Luther Gulick, M.D., and his wife, Charlotte Gulick, Camp Fire is a leading national youth development organization that guides "young people on their journey to self-discovery."

As founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's caucus, I understand the importance of encouraging and supporting our youth to grow and thrive in this world.

Camp Fire's Absolutely Incredible Kid Day honors our nation's youth by asking adults to write letters of encouragement and inspiration to the incredible kids in their lives.

This is a simple and impactful way to let the youth know how much people care and support them.

There are numerous ways for adults to participate in this call to action including using social media to tag, tweet, post, and write letters of love and support to kids.

The campaign has received the critical acclaim of child and family care experts, award winning authors, noted psychologists, and adults and kids everywhere, including Dr. Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*; Tipper Gore, who is a leading child advocate; and the famous Astronaut, the late U.S. Senator John Glenn.

Celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Jim Carrey, and Cindy Crawford have also given their support to Absolutely Incredible Kid Day.

In Houston, Texas we know that it truly takes an entire community to raise a child.

Houston has a distinct history of uplifting the youth in our community so they can excel in any area they choose.

A few examples of Houstonians who have benefited from community support are: the entertaining Beyoncé Knowles Carter; the hilarious Jim Parsons, from the Big Bang Theory;