

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE  
OF REVEREND PHIL LAWSON

**HON. JOHN GARAMENDI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2025*

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with Representative MARK DESAULNIER to pay tribute to the Reverend Phil Lawson, a distinguished civil rights leader, pastor, and tireless advocate for social justice. Reverend Lawson passed away on January 26, 2025, at the age of 92.

Throughout his life, Reverend Lawson dedicated his life to the pursuit of equality, compassion, and nonviolence. Growing up in a family deeply committed to faith and social justice, Reverend Lawson was instilled with values that would guide his life's work. He diligently pursued higher education, earning degrees from Kent State University, Butler University, Methodist Theological Seminary, and Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

Starting at the age of 15, Reverend Lawson committed himself to justice and peace movements, participating in the Fellowship Reconciliation and studying non-violent direct action (NVDA) interventions under the leadership of Bayard Rustin and George Houser in Washington, D.C. Later, he joined the Army band in a non-combatant status and served from 1953 to 1956.

In the late 1960's and 1970's, Reverend Lawson emerged as a powerful voice for the civil rights movement. He participated in significant events such as the historic 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a testament to his unwavering commitment to justice.

In addition, he served as the director of the Methodist Inner City Parish in Kansas City, Missouri, where under his leadership, the Inner City Parish played a pivotal role in organizing community initiatives, including working with the Black Panther Party and the Welfare Rights Organization to support and empower Black youth. Following his time in Kansas City, he transitioned to public service, working for the City of Berkeley as the Director of Program Development and Contract Administration from 1974 to 1980. Further, Reverend Lawson broke racial barriers as the first Black pastor of both El Cerrito UMC and First UMC in Vallejo.

In 1992, Reverend Lawson was appointed to lead the Easter Hill United Methodist Church (UMC) in Richmond, California, where he served with distinction for decades. He was instrumental in founding and supporting numerous organizations dedicated to social equity, including the East Bay Housing Organization (EBHO), the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP), and the Black Alliance for Just Immigration. His advocacy encompassed a broad spectrum of issues, from racial equality to immigration reform and homelessness.

Reverend Lawson's commitment to non-violence and social justice was evident throughout his life. He often emphasized that nonviolence was not merely an option but the only path toward true community. His contributions were recognized in 2003 when he was honored as Contra Costa County's Humanitarian of the Year.

Reverend Lawson will be remembered for his outstanding character and for the incred-

ible impact he's had on our community. Please join us in recognizing Reverend Phil Lawson for his many contributions to our community.

RECOGNIZING SHARON LAVONNE  
HARRIS RISCHER

**HON. MARC A. VEASEY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2025*

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I honor Sharon Lavonne Harris Rischer, a beloved member of our Fort Worth community, who passed away on February 12, 2025, at the age of 70. Sharon was a dedicated daughter, mother, sister, aunt, and friend, whose impact will be felt for generations to come.

Born on October 7, 1954, in Fort Worth, Texas, Sharon was a proud graduate of the Lake Como Class of 1973, having attended both Lake Como High School and Western Hills High School. She further pursued her education at Tarrant County College before beginning a distinguished career that spanned several decades. Sharon worked with unwavering commitment at Standard Meat Company from 1979 to 1993 and then with Tarrant County MHMR from 1993 until her retirement in 2014.

Sharon's faith was an integral part of her life. She was baptized at an early age and remained a devoted member of the Lake Como Church of Christ, where she was a constant source of love and encouragement to those around her. Beyond her professional and spiritual dedication, Sharon found joy in the simple pleasures of life. She was an avid cook, enjoyed shopping, and brought warmth and laughter to family gatherings, particularly during friendly card games that brought her loved ones together.

Her life was characterized by her deep care for others, and she will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her. I would also like to extend the family's gratitude to the Advanced Heart and Lung Disease Center at Baylor Scott & White Fort Worth Campus and Dr. Salmon Gohar for their compassionate care during Sharon's final days.

Sharon Lavonne Harris Rischer was truly a pillar of our community, and her legacy of kindness, faith, and family will endure in the hearts of those she leaves behind. May she rest in peace, and may her memory continue to inspire all who knew her.

RECOGNIZING THE CITY OF  
DOUGLASVILLE, GEORGIA ON ITS  
SESQUICENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY

**HON. LUCY MCBATH**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2025*

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the City of Douglasville on the occasion of its Sesquicentennial Birthday. For 150 years, Douglasville has contributed to the rich history of the state of Georgia, and I am honored to uplift today's remarkable milestone. Back home in my district, constituents will gather this evening at the Douglas County Mu-

seum of History & Art for a reflection on the history of the city and a celebration of the progress they hope to make in the future.

I want to commend Mayor Rochelle Robinson, the Douglasville City Council, and every resident who made this week's celebration possible. It is thanks to the devotion of public servants like them who make Douglasville such a wonderful community in which to live, work, and raise a family.

I congratulate the City of Douglasville on reaching 150 years, and Happy Birthday.

RECOGNIZING ANNETTE STOLBA

**HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2025*

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Annette Stolba of Buena Vista, Colorado for her 42 years of service with the Chaffee County Communications Center.

Annette began her career as a public safety dispatcher in 1983 before 911 emergency services were available. Over the next 40 years, Annette helped countless Chaffee County residents in their time of need. The Chaffee County community will remember Annette's role in keeping them and their loved ones safe.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to thank Annette Stolba for her four decades of service to the citizens of Chaffee County.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOSEPH  
M. BRISTOW

**HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 25, 2025*

Mr. KEAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Joseph M. Bristow, a former Councilman from Hackettstown. Joseph Bristow brought his passion for preservation and community to Fredon Township, New Jersey.

He was a true New Jersey icon whose legacy of kindness, service, and dedication to his community will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him. A graduate of the University of Connecticut, Joseph earned a Bachelor's degree followed by a Master's degree from Villanova University. He also pursued doctoral courses at the New School for Social Research, reflecting his lifelong dedication to education.

Joseph spent over four decades as a professor at County College of Morris (CCM), where his belief in the transformative power of knowledge inspired generations of students. Inspired by change, he saw the potential for enhancing his community. He was a founding member of the Committee for Crime Prevention (known as the DARE program), demonstrating his commitment to creating a safer and more just environment. His dedication extended to the younger generation as a devoted Little League coach, where he taught not just the fundamentals of the game, but also the values of teamwork and determination.