

as Tax Collector was to research and implement Mississippi's first fully automated online county tax sales and online payments. Leading the charge in Madison County, Kay opened the door for easier ways of paying taxes and supporting the local community.

Kay is a member of the former First Methodist Church of Canton, now called First Church of Canton. Kay was a member of Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson where she sang in the choir. Church has been an important part of Kay's life and service to Madison County outside of her job as Tax Collector.

Another way of service has been through her leadership in the Madison County Republican Women. Kay has served in various roles in the organization, including as President and as an officer.

While politics is an important role in her life, Kay also served the Jackson Symphony League as co-chair for Sub Debs. Additionally, she served in other clubs and organizations over the past 30 years throughout Madison, Jackson, and other local communities. She also has been a member of the Madison County League and Foundation.

While Madison County is her home and her lifelong place of service, Kay says her most important relationships are her family. Kay was married to the late W. K. Pace, Jr. for 40 years. Kay is the mother of four children and the proud grandmother of twelve grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Kay is retiring from her role as Tax Collector and is looking forward to spending more time with her family. I am thankful for all the service Kay Pace has given to Madison County through the years. I wish her well in retirement.

HONORING ROBERT COKER

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2024

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a long-standing friend and community leader, Mr. Robert Coker, as he retires in his 42nd year of service from U.S. Sugar, working on behalf of farmers across South Florida.

Mr. Coker began his successful career with U.S. Sugar in 1982 in its Community Affairs Department. By 1993, he became Vice President of Community Affairs, ascending to Senior Vice President by 2000. For 23 years, Mr. Coker served as senior Vice President, elevating U.S. Sugar and its Public Affairs department to a new, nationally recognized standard of excellence.

A man known across government, industry, and the South Florida community as a consummate professional; a man of integrity and unwavering dedication to his community, Robert Coker leaves behind a legacy of legislative victories for Florida's agricultural sector. From transportation, tax, and trade to agriculture, environment, and labor policy, Mr. Coker ensured that farmers' needs were well-represented, from Tallahassee to Washington, D.C.

A loving husband to his wife Mendy and dedicated father to his three children, Mr. Coker's impact both personally in his community and professionally has left an indelible

mark on us all. I know his work will serve as the foremost example for all those to follow, and I wish him the very best as he steps into this next stage of his life.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to address the House on behalf of my dear friend, Robert Coker, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this outstanding individual.

HONORING CHIEF RONALD JON SIARNICKI ON HIS RETIREMENT AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2024

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a tremendous firefighter, invaluable leader, great Marylander, and dear friend: Chief Ronald Jon Siarnicki. After 22 years of faithful service as the Executive Director of the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation, Ron recently retired. We ought to pay tribute to Ron and his commitment to serving his community and his country.

I've known Ron and worked with him ever since we met decades ago over lunch at a drug store counter below my law office. Even then, it was clear that Ron was a man of strong character, good humor, and selfless devotion to serving others. Indeed, service was a family tradition. Both Ron's father and grandfather were volunteer firefighters. Ron followed in their footsteps, becoming a volunteer firefighter with the Monessen Volunteer Fire Department, Hose House No. 2, in western Pennsylvania as a young man.

In 1978, Ron brought his talents to the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department. Over the following 24 years, he rose through the ranks to become Chief of the Department, overseeing all fire, rescue, and emergency medical services in the county. In that time, he also became a revered leader in our community. Prince Georgians knew they could rely on Ron to protect the safety and prosperity of their community. Firefighters and first responders trusted that Ron would always do everything possible to provide them the resources, tools, and direction necessary to do their crucial work as safely and effectively as possible. Ron also served on the county's Joint Fire and Police Pension Board for four years. Additionally, starting in 1997, Ron served as a faculty member for the Fire Service Curriculum at the University of Maryland University College (UMUC)—where he had previously earned both a BS in Fire Science Management and a master's degree from the School of Management and Technology.

Ron's leadership and career in fire services extended beyond Maryland. In 2001, he became the Executive Director of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. For 22 years, he managed the foundation's day-to-day operations, supported the families of our fallen firefighters, and fought for policy reforms to keep our firefighters and first responders safe. As a co-chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, I was pleased to work closely with him on that mission. As Executive Director, Ron also oversaw the construction of the Na-

tional Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park and the renovation of the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Year after year, I've had the great—and solemn—privilege of standing with Ron in Emmitsburg during the annual National Firefighters Memorial Weekend to honor the courageous men and women who gave their lives to protect others.

Ron has received many awards and accolades from a variety of organizations for his contributions to the fire services, including the Fire Engineering Lifetime Achievement Award, Alan Brunacini Fire Services Executive Safety Award from the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Metropolitan Fire Chiefs' Presidents Award of Distinction, UMUC Distinguished Alumnus, American Burn Association's Moncrief Award, and the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Silver Medal of Valor. Ron is a man of great humility, however. He did not become a firefighter out of a desire for recognition or reward. He became a firefighter because he wanted to help others. He became a firefighter because that's who he is.

Ron may be bringing his career as Executive Director to a close, but his contributions will forever endure. Men and women throughout the fire services will continue to look at Ron as a leader and to rely on his wisdom and expertise for many years to come. Knowing Ron, he'll be happy to help however he can. He exemplifies a firefighter's best traits: selflessness, courage, dedication, and intelligence. For that, he has the gratitude of his community, country, and Congress. I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking him for his continued service. We wish him and his family well as they start this next chapter.

RECOGNIZING FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH WEST POINT

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2024

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the First Baptist Church of West Point, Virginia. December 21st marked the Church's 150th anniversary.

Since its founding in 1873, the First Baptist Church established itself as a cornerstone of West Point and the surrounding communities. Today, we recognize the First Baptist Church's service to the people of West Point as a place for the faithful to gather in worship, for those in need to receive help, and for the young to be nurtured and educated.

It was from modest beginnings that the First Baptist Church came into being. In 1870, there were fewer than four hundred people living in the village of West Point. Among them was Mrs. Sue Davis, who dreamed of a Baptist Church in her community. Mrs. Davis travelled to Stevensville to contact Rev. Alfred Bagby about starting a Baptist Church in West Point, which he and a group of fifteen other Baptists did when they met on December 21st at 2 o'clock to baptize Clarence Anderson as the first member received into the Church.

Over the next 150 years, the First Baptist Church has had many great pastors. Among them was Rev. Marvin Kerby, who stood as a true example of Godly integrity during his tenure of more than 31 years as Senior Pastor.