

A leader, paratrooper and Prisoner of War in the first battalion of the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front Bay of Pigs operation, Orlando Urra remains nothing short of a hero and a legend in the Cuban South Florida community. A beloved friend and personal source of inspiration as he was, it is a surprise to no one that his wife, Miriam, should have taken up his mantle with equal strength, vigor, and dedication.

In 1981, Miriam's path took a pivotal turn as she embarked on a new role with the City of Miami, serving as a Counselor for the Entrant Assistance Program. Through her work, Miriam provided invaluable support to refugees, such as the Cuban Marielitos who sought refuge in our South Florida community, offering counseling, referrals, and guidance to ensure their successful integration into society.

Miriam's dedication to community development only grew stronger as she transitioned to the Department of Community Development, City of Miami, where she served as a Community Involvement Specialist. In this capacity, she tirelessly advocated for residents, disseminating information about vital city programs and services while championing citizen participation in policymaking processes.

Following the passing of her beloved husband, Orlando, Miriam retired from the City of Miami and embraced a new chapter as the Executive Director of Allapattah Community Action. Under Miriam's leadership, Allapattah Community Action has flourished, overseeing vital programs for the elderly and childcare while also championing affordable housing initiatives. Her visionary approach and unwavering dedication have transformed lives and uplifted communities.

Miriam's influence reaches well beyond her professional achievements. As a pillar of our community and a cherished friend, she embodies the essence of what makes Allapattah great. Serving as a true leader and mentor to countless individuals, myself included, it's with great pride that I recognize her today.

In recognition of her outstanding service and unflinching dedication, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest gratitude to Miriam Urra for her exemplary leadership, love, and commitment to South Florida.

RECOGNIZING BRENDAN PARDUE

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 2024

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brendan Pardue for being named the Royal Gorge Chamber Alliance's 2023 Distinguished Citizen.

Brendan was raised in Cañon City and has spent his life in Colorado. He attended Regis University and graduated with majors in history, philosophy, and religion and then went on to earn his master's degree in guidance and counseling from the University of Northern Colorado.

In 2005, Brendan purchased the Gibson Mansion and spent years restoring the house and reviving a historic part of Cañon City. Since completing the restoration, Brendan has offered free use of the house to nonprofit organizations for fundraisers and other events. He has also restored 12 other historic build-

ings in the area. Brendan's readiness to assist his community is one of many reasons why he is a fitting recipient of the Royal Gorge Chamber Alliance's recognition.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's 7th Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Brendan Pardue for earning this award and thank him for his long standing dedication to our community.

RECOGNIZING BETTY BURKE

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the unique contributions of one of my constituents, Betty Burke, who volunteers countless hours each week helping others. Betty Burke believes that one person can make a difference in this complicated world. Nearly 20 years ago as a Rotarian, Betty partnered with Farmworkers' Self Help Inc. to establish a mentoring program for young daughters of migrant workers. The Rotary Program ended in 2020, but Betty continued the program. She invested time, resources, and money to make certain weekly gatherings at the Clubhouse would continue to broaden the girls' horizons. The best estimate for the time she spent with them is a remarkable 5,400 hours.

Betty was also a founding member of San Antonio Rotary Club, served as President for two terms, and Assistant Governor for one. She spearheaded Rotary's taking over the Rattlesnake Festival. Along with others, Betty started a Farmer's Market, which created a wonderful sense of community. Additionally, she helped create St. Leo's Pasco County Fair Community Booths, made a giant gingerbread house for the St. Leo/SLU Christmas Village, and continues to support St. Leo. Betty also works to help children in foster care establish a sense of belonging as they transition from placements and works with partners to make sure their primary needs are met.

It is clear that Ms. Betty Burke has made a profoundly positive impact on our community, and I am grateful for her service.

HONORING SILVIA DIEZ

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 2024

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I rise today to recognize Silvia Diez, a community leader who has utilized her platform to amplify new voices and celebrate the strength and resilience of women in Southwest Florida.

Silvia first began her career in 2000 in the communications and media industry in the United States after graduating from a prestigious university in her native country of Argentina. Throughout her career, Silvia has been a dynamic force in the media, overcoming a variety of challenges, and redefining industry standards. Silvia was the host of the first local Spanish-language television show "Que Pasa SW Florida" on the Comcast Net-

work, and for 19 years, was the editor of the first leading Hispanic newspaper in Southwest Florida, *Nuevos Ecos*. Currently, Diez is the Journalist and Marketing Director of *El Mensajero*, the leading Spanish newspaper in Southwest Florida, and the host of the show *Power Latino TV*, a platform that highlights Hispanic businesses in Southwest Florida.

Silvia is devoted to ensuring that every woman in both Collier and Lee counties has the opportunity to reach their full potential. This commitment has culminated in her current role as owner and CEO of "Mujeres Emprendedoras" ("Women Entrepreneurs"), a business initiative that brings together talented and resilient women seeking to own their own businesses. In 2022, her passion for empowering women and inspiring change was recognized by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Florida, and she became a finalist in the "Women of Distinction" Awards.

Aside from being a trailblazing Hispanic entrepreneur, Silvia is a proud mother whose son, Emiliano, is currently in the Marine Academy. As a mother, she keenly understands and has sought to meet the needs of the children in the surrounding community. Every year, Diez dedicates her time to organizing a "3 Kings Day" toy drive for the children of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Silvia continues to build a lasting legacy of generosity and love through her drive to serve. Her relentless desire to foster strong leaders and build thriving communities has contributed to numerous successes for residents in Southwest Florida and my district.

Mr. Speaker, as a true leader in her community, Silvia Diez has proven her unwavering commitment to expanding opportunities for those in our community through her leadership and acts of selfless service. Today, in honor of this outstanding individual who has dedicated her time and expertise to our Southwest Florida community, I thank Sylvia for her invaluable contributions and work in advancing the futures of thousands of Floridians.

RECOGNIZING FREMONT OEM AND DOT

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 29, 2024

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Fremont County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Department of Transportation (DOT) for their life-saving work to keep roads clear and restore power during a record-breaking winter storm in March of 2024. This harsh winter storm brought over thirteen inches of snow and caused major power outages throughout the county.

Staff from the Fremont County Office of Emergency Management, led by Emergency Manager Mykel Kroll, and the Fremont County Department of Transportation, led by Director Mike Whitt, worked overtime and over weekends throughout inclement weather conditions to clear roadways and restore traffic to over 700 miles of mountainous roadways in the county. Together, they freed an elderly woman who had been trapped in her car by the snow, secured housing for a family who were victims of a fire, restored power to a residential care