

around the clock. Currently, as we head into the new year, I rededicate myself to being their partner in making towns and communities even safer, more prosperous, and more affordable.

Alpine Mayor Paul Tomasko  
 Bergenfield Mayor Norman Schmelz  
 Dumont Councilman Carl Manna  
 Emerson Mayor Lou Lamatina  
 Fair Lawn Councilwoman Lisa Swain  
 Franklin Lakes Mayor Frank Bivona  
 Glen Rock Mayor Bruce Packer  
 Hackensack Mayor John LaBrosse  
 Harrington Park Mayor Paul Hoeschler  
 Mahwah Mayor Bill Laforet  
 Montvale Mayor Mike Ghassali  
 Oakland Mayor Linda Schwager  
 Paramus Mayor Rich LaBisciera  
 Park Ridge Mayor Keith Misciagna  
 Ramsey Mayor Deirdre Dillon  
 River Edge Councilman Thomas Papaleo  
 Rochelle Park Committeeman Michael Warren  
 Teaneck Mayor Mohammed Hameeduddin  
 Westwood Mayor John Birkner  
 Wyckoff Mayor Rudy Boonstra  
 Wyckoff Administrator Bob Shannon

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF WALTER HOWLETT, JR.

**HON. TERRI A. SEWELL**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 21, 2017*

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and legacy of the late Walter Howlett, Jr. Walter was a beloved member of the Birmingham community, investing not only in the city's business development but in community development as well.

Walter was born to Walter Howlett, Sr. and Laura Richardson Howlett, the second of seven children. Walter grew up understanding the importance of a good education. His parents often stressed that a quality education was the key to improving one's lot in life.

A proud graduate of A.H. Parker High School in Birmingham, Walter took his parents' advice to heart, holding dreams of attaining a business degree. But those dreams were put on hold when he was drafted into the United States Army shortly after finishing high school.

After serving for a year in the military, Walter returned home and completed his college education. Attending both Jefferson State Community College and the University of Alabama in Birmingham, Walter attained a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and went on to earn his Certified Public Accountant license.

As his parents had said, Walter's education would indeed impact his lot in life. Soon after graduation he became a beloved protégé of civil rights activist, A.G. Gaston. Mr. Gaston created the first black bank and the first African American funeral homes along with countless other firsts for the black community.

It was his endearment and admiration for Mr. Gaston that helped to spur a more than 30-year career with the Gaston Corp., devoting countless hours to the development of some of Birmingham's most affluent and successful black-owned businesses. In 2003,

Walter was appointed CEO of the A.G. Gaston Construction Co.

In spite of all his success in business, Walter still considered his family and faith to be his highest priorities, specifically his four children: Mondra Howlett, Cadeshia Howlett Samuel, Tameka Howlett, and Damien Howlett, and his wife, Deborah Howlett.

The Howletts' love story began in 2012. Shortly after the loss of his mother, friends and family say the meeting was a true blessing in Walter's life, and that she put a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face. Two years later, in September of 2014, the couple exchanged vows. Mrs. Howlett says her life's greatest joy was the time they had together. Walter was an active member of Bethel Baptist Church in Collegeville, participating in various areas of ministry from the choir to serving as an usher. Walter lived by the motto, "find a need and fill it," a lesson learned by Mr. Gaston. He believed service to one's community was not an obligation but a privilege. In the course of his life Walter served on numerous boards including the United Way of Central Birmingham, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. He considered it a great joy to give back to the community he said gave him so much.

In his passing Walter leaves behind four siblings including: Birdie Lee Howlett, Patricia Howlett Peterson, James Lee Howlett, and Fredia Gail Howlett, his other siblings Willie Maud Jenkins and Jay Jerome Howlett are both deceased.

On a personal note, Walter was a cherished mentor and a dear friend. He was a dedicated servant-leader who knew the importance of "each one, teach one." Walter believed in mentoring young people and I was grateful that he was so supportive of my candidacy and always offered his wise counsel. His commitment to excellence and passion for business and entrepreneurship will live on through the many lives he touched.

On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, the State of Alabama, and this nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Walter Howlett, Jr. We pay tribute to his distinguished career and contributions for the betterment of the State of Alabama, and extend deep appreciation for his exemplary service to the community of Birmingham, Alabama.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHARLES BURRELL

**HON. DIANA DeGETTE**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 21, 2017*

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the contributions of an extraordinary Denverite, Charles Burrell, who on November 28th was inducted into the Colorado Music Hall of Fame.

I've known Charlie my whole life. His distinguished career included playing in the Al Rose Trio founded by my uncle, Al Rose, together with Lee Arrelano. It was the first racially integrated jazz group in Colorado, and in the 1950s and '60s, they played at some of Denver's best-known destinations for music. When my uncle died unexpectedly at a relatively early age, Charlie volunteered to be my "honorary uncle," a role he has embraced.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1920 and raised in Detroit, Charles Burrell studied music at Cass-Technical High School, then one of the most prestigious music schools in the nation. Although a dedicated student of classical music, Charlie and his friends embraced jazz and practiced it whenever possible. At seventeen, he was even asked to join the Lionel Hampton Big Band, affording him the opportunity to travel the country with some of the jazz greats of the time.

Charlie attended the New England Conservatory of Music and then joined the Navy, where he was selected to join the first-ever all-Black Navy band, which was used in recruiting to help encourage African-American enlistment. After an honorable discharge, he attended Wayne State University with an eye toward teaching music in the public schools, and eventually made his way to Denver to do just that in 1949.

A chance meeting with John VanBuskirk, the lead bass player with the Denver Symphony Orchestra, led to an audition, and Charlie became the first person of color in the nation to be hired by a major orchestra.

Charlie is equally comfortable in an orchestra or a jazz band. He was known to finish a performance at the DSO and then wrap up his evening playing jazz at the Rossonian Hotel in the Five Points neighborhood.

In 1959, Charlie became the first person of color to join the San Francisco Symphony, fulfilling a childhood dream. He played under conductor Pierre Monteux until 1965.

Always a generous man, Charlie has been an inspiration and mentor to many, including his niece, the two-time Grammy award-winning vocalist Dianne Reeves, and his cousin the renowned pianist George Duke.

At ninety-seven, Charlie has proved that age is just a number, frequently playing live bass on KUVU, Denver's preeminent jazz station.

Charles Burrell has been called the Jackie Robinson of classical music for his ability, class, and poise, helping forge change in American institutions that weren't always inclined to widen their circles.

It is my honor today to add to the accolades of this accomplished trailblazer.

IN HONOR OF BOB AND DONNA FRYER'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**HON. LIZ CHENEY**

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 21, 2017*

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Bob and Donna Fryer on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

This significant benchmark is a symbol of their commitment to each other and to their family. I am happy to join their friends and family in extending my best to them on this special occasion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Bob and Donna on the celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. I wish them the best today and for many more blessed years to come.