

As a member of Open World's Board of Trustees, I have seen firsthand the impact of Ambassador O'Keefe's visionary leadership. As Chairman of the House Democracy Partnership, I have worked with him to increase the synergy between our two programs, greatly increasing the number of Parliamentarians with whom we can interact.

Under Ambassador O'Keefe's leadership, Open World expanded to seventeen countries and created direct agreements with fourteen American embassies in Open World program countries, thus strengthening the United States legislative branch's relationship with U.S. missions abroad. Open World also expanded programming to bring Members of Parliament from Central Asia to the United States by virtue of Ambassador O'Keefe's knowledge of the region.

John O'Keefe became ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic in 2000. As Ambassador, he made lasting contributions to the country and the region. He negotiated the treaty that established a military base in Kyrgyzstan that could be used by Coalition forces in support of operations in Afghanistan. He worked with the President of Kyrgyzstan to establish an investment advisory council to attract foreign capital to the country, and he worked with the Minister of Education to ensure merit-based university acceptance for students. Ambassador O'Keefe also helped to create an outreach program to the Kyrgyz Muslim community.

After serving as Ambassador, Mr. O'Keefe returned to the State Department, where he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of the Director General, Bureau of Human Resources, and head of the Office of Career Development and Assignments. He served as Acting Director General in 2006 and then as Deputy Director of the Foreign Service Institute of the Department.

Ambassador O'Keefe's commitment to diplomacy earned him many awards and accolades for his service throughout his career at the State Department, including the Distinguished Honor Award and the Presidential Performance Award. He was later recognized with the prestigious Replogle Award for Management Improvement, the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, and the Secretary of State Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Madam Speaker, I am privileged to know John O'Keefe as an exemplar of our country's values, an accomplished diplomat, and a valued partner in many endeavors. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring him for his long and dedicated service to the State Department, to the Open World Leadership Center, and to our country.

IN HONOR OF THE EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY OF MALCOLM THOMAS

**HON. TERRI A. SEWELL**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 15, 2019*

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable legacy of Malcolm Thomas, a selfless community servant and business leader, whose many contributions to the state of Alabama have served to uplift the state socially and economically. From his impressive career as CEO of his

own engineering service firm, to his support for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), to his exemplary leadership as Exalted Ruler of R.E. Nelms Elk Lodge No. 977, Malcolm Thomas has spent much of his life in the pursuit of success and excellence, not only for himself, but for the greater community.

Born in Selma, Alabama to the late Reverend George Thomas and the late Mrs. Lovie Thomas, Malcolm Thomas was taught the importance of high-quality education from an early age. He attended college at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama, where he earned his bachelor of science degree in business administration. It was during his time at Alabama A&M that two lifelong interests were sparked, in business and in the preservation and continued vitality of HBCUs.

Founded in 1875 by a former slave, Dr. William Hooper Council, Alabama A&M is a proud member of the HBCU system. As a student there, Mr. Thomas saw first-hand the importance of ensuring that A&M and other institutions like it, historically established for the African American community who had been barred entry to traditionally white institutions, be fully funded, providing students with top tier professors and facilities. Mr. Thomas' commitment to ensuring the continued vitality of HBCUs was recognized by Governor Riley, who asked Mr. Thomas to serve on the Governor's Commission on Historically Black Colleges and Universities between 2003 and 2008.

After graduating from Alabama A&M, Mr. Thomas worked in several corporate positions before becoming the owner and CEO of Malcolm Thomas Industries, a certified engineering services firm. Now semi-retired, Mr. Thomas has extensive expertise in marketing, negotiating and event planning. Today, he works part-time as an event planner, based in Huntsville, Alabama.

A selfless community servant, Mr. Thomas boasts membership (past and present) to countless boards and charitable organizations, including the Huntsville Housing Authority Board of Appeals, the North Alabama Sickle Cell Board of Directors and the Vocational Education Advisory Council for Huntsville City Schools. He was formerly Chairman of the Engineering Technology Advisory Committee at Alabama A&M, a founding board member of the Alabama A&M University Foundation and a charter member of 100 Black Men of Huntsville. Politically active, Mr. Thomas served on the Executive Committee of the Madison County Republican Men's Club and on President George H.W. Bush's Personal Advisory Committee. Further, he claimed membership to the Black Americans for President George H.W. Bush Committee of 100.

Mr. Thomas has been a member of the fraternal organization the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks since June 17, 1957. Mr. Thomas has held many positions within the organization, including serving as state photographer, Chairman of the State Nominating Committee, First Vice President of the Alabama Association of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks of the World and ultimately State President. Mr. Thomas served as President for twelve years, during which time the organization introduced a state choir, the Past State President degree and a golf tournament. He has been further recognized as an Esteemed Lecturing Knight, a trustee and Exalted Ruler of R.E. Nelms

Elks Lodge No. 977. His tenure as Exalted Ruler spanned 1983 through 2008 and 2009 through 2019, during which time the Lodge gave money to the Boys and Girls Club, the Harris Home for Children and Homeless Persons and the Boy Scouts of America, in addition to providing scholarships for students at Alabama A&M. Mr. Thomas is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Fraternity Inc., Delta Theta Lambda Chapter.

A man of steadfast faith, Mr. Thomas has been a dedicated member of Phillips Christian Methodist Episcopal Church where he serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He is married to the love of his life, Dr. Mattie Daniels Thomas with whom he shares two children, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

On a personal note, I have known "Uncle Malcolm" all my life and count him as both a mentor and an extended part of my family. His business acumen and legendary leadership in the Elks has been an inspiration to us all. As a beloved mentor and political advisor, Uncle Malcolm ensures his legacy in investing in the hearts and minds of the next generation. I know that I would not be Alabama's first Black Congresswoman without the love, support and guidance of dear family friends like Uncle Malcolm and Auntie Mattie. As you prepare to succeed from your many years of service to the R.E. Nelms Elks Lodge No. 977, know that your work has strengthened the organization and set a high bar for others to follow.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and great works of Mr. Malcolm Thomas that has left an indelible imprint on the Huntsville community and the State of Alabama.

IN RECOGNITION OF WAYNE OLIVEIRA

**HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 15, 2019*

Mr. KEATING. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the retirement of Mr. Wayne Oliveira, a veteran of the Fairhaven Fire Department with forty-two years of service.

In 1977 Wayne Oliveira started his career as a call firefighter. Years later, Wayne would be appointed a full-time firefighter and EMT by Fire Chief Donald Bernard. Shortly after his appointment, Wayne began taking on numerous responsibilities. Wayne was elected secretary of the firefighter's union, a position he would hold for the next twenty years. He became a Public Fire Educator in 1989, prioritizing informing children and seniors about the importance of fire safety. Developing the SAFE program, Wayne taught classes in child car seat installation as well as CPR. Continuing his outreach efforts, Wayne organized Public Safety Open Houses for the public long before prevention programs became standard practice.

Wayne was named Standard Times Man of the Year in 2012 for his wide array of volunteer work. From cleaning the traffic island outside of the local high school to fundraising for a new memorial sign which he personally maintains, Wayne sets an incredible example of selflessness in the work he takes on. He has engaged with the town at large as Co-