

HONORING THE LIFE OF NEIL
ARMSTRONG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American hero, Neil Armstrong, a space pioneer who profoundly influenced world history.

I can still remember wearing my most prized possession, a blue Fly Me to the Moon T-shirt with the Apollo 11 mission insignia on it. I remember the feeling of seeing those grainy images of Neil on the Sea of Tranquility and, as he put his left foot down on lunar soil, his famous "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

That historical moment changed America forever, and the world changed with us. And Neil Armstrong's quiet heroism helped catapult America to be the global leader. His legacy of American exceptionalism inspired generations of young people to take up science and space exploration.

In the 43 years since his Moon mission, Armstrong believed deeply that America should continue to explore new worlds. Upon learning the Obama administration had canceled NASA's plans to return to the Moon, Neil Armstrong, a very private man, became a vocal critic of this failure and the willingness to allow other nations to surpass America's space leadership. The state of NASA's human space exploration plans, he told Congress last fall, is "lamentably embarrassing and unacceptable."

One of the highlights of my life will always be shaking the hand of my childhood hero. Neil and I were united in our opposition to President Obama's plan to cancel the Constellation program and diminish the priority of human spaceflight in his 2010 budget and National Space Policy documents.

It was humbling to work with Mr. Armstrong and several other Apollo astronauts like Gene Cernan and Jim Lovell to fight to restore a strong NASA budget and develop a comprehensive human space exploration program worthy of America's greatness as explorers.

America needs a clear and purposeful mission worthy of our Nation's continued investment to regain our leading role and remain the dominant human space country in the world.

Our Nation suffers a great loss with Neil Armstrong's passing, but his courage and commitment to greatness live on in the next generation of explorers to come.

For the rest of my time on this planet, I will continue to honor his contributions to American exceptionalism and his legacy by pushing for a strong human space exploration program that will take America to the Moon, to Mars, and beyond.

My thoughts and prayers are with Neil Armstrong's family and the entire NASA family as we cope with this tremendous loss. America mourns with you as we remember Neil's amazing journey.

Neil's philosophy about life is captured best by advice given by one of Neil's Moon-walking brothers, Gene Cernan, when he spoke to a group of students at Sartartia Middle School in my hometown of Sugar Land, Texas. Gene told the kids, "Always shoot for the Moon, because if you miss, you'll see the stars."

Neil Armstrong gave us the Moon so we can look to the heavens and see the stars. Thank you, Neil.

God bless.

ANGELS IN ADOPTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. NUNNELEE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Madam Speaker, this week, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption is recognizing the individuals and families from around the country who've enriched the lives of children through foster care and adoption. I rise this morning to share the story of a couple who have dedicated their lives to providing not just a home for children, but a family.

Pat and Sandra Nunnelee, from Tupelo, Mississippi, had lived the American Dream. They married in their teens, and over the next 14 years had four children born into their family. When they married, Pat was working in a low-paying manufacturing job.

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But he soon entered the profession of life insurance sales. He possessed a good personality and a strong work ethic. Because of that, he was a natural for the business, and his career advanced quickly both in income and in prestige.

Sandra had a love of infants and a desire to be a nurse. However, she decided to forgo her nursing education and her career in order to get married and then raise a family. Later, she did enter into nursing school. In fact, she graduated from nursing school the same year her oldest child graduated from high school.

By 1980, they were in their mid-forties, and they were enjoying the fruits of their labors together. Pat had become vice president of one of the largest life insurance companies in his State. Sandra was enjoying the love of her life—taking care of newborn babies as an intensive care nurse. They were enjoying a standard of living that neither of them had ever thought possible. In addition, empty nest was in sight. Two of their children were in college, and two others weren't far behind. In short, life was good. They'd worked hard, and they were nearing a stage of life when they could really begin to enjoy it.

But any plans they may have made changed in November of 1980 when a little girl was born prematurely. That month, while America was preparing to celebrate Thanksgiving, we were watching the peaceful transition of

power begin in the White House, and we were watching an international hostage crisis. So, when the world is watching Presidents and Ayatollahs, who cares when a little premature girl is born? Thank God somebody did.

This little girl was born with numerous health problems, and the pediatrician's quick diagnosis was that this infant wouldn't live through the night and that medical staff should make her short time on Earth as peaceful as possible. At the conclusion of the shift, Sandra left her patient with the belief that this little girl would not be alive when she got back to work the next morning.

Much to her surprise, when she arrived the next morning for work, the little girl was still alive. She'd proven to have a strong will to live, but she'd been abandoned by her parents. So, after 3 months in the intensive care unit, her pediatrician observed to Sandra one day, "We've done miracles for this child, but the one thing we've not been able to give her is a home. She has never had anyone to hold her, to rock her, or to sing to her. Over the next few days, Pat and Sandra became foster parents. She left her job, and the child entered their home."

Child number five.

Three years later, Sunday lunch was interrupted by a desperate knock at the door. Sandra had taken a leave of absence from her job to take care of this little girl, and she volunteered to offer child care to a single mom from the hospital where she worked. That young woman was having a great deal of difficulty coping with the many demands of being a single mom.

She desperately asked, Ms. Nunnelee, would you please take my baby.

Thinking there must be some kind of temporary crisis, the Nunnelees replied, "Yes, we'll be glad to take care of your child for a couple of days."

The young mom responded, "I don't want you to take him for a couple of days. I want you to take him forever."

Child number six.

Four years after that was another desperate contact, this one a phone call from the County Department of Human Services. An infant boy had been born with very severe heart problems. The doctor's prognosis was that he wouldn't live beyond age 10 or 12. His parents didn't want to keep such a sick child. There were no available foster parents with the medical expertise or the willingness to adopt such a child in that condition.

The desperate social worker said, "You've done more than any family should be asked to do, but there is nobody else."

Child number seven.

That child has lived more than a decade beyond the doctor's initial prognosis, and while he still has some health problems, he has recently completed school, and he has moved out on his own. For the first time in 54 years, Pat and Sandra Nunnelee don't have a child in their home. Oh, holidays,