

Copeland upon the occasion of her retirement. For 42 years, Ms. Copeland has dedicated her career to educating our Nation's youth and serving the Gulf Coast community.

A graduate of Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi, Ms. Copeland began teaching at Mowat Junior High School in Panama City, Florida, in 1972. Eight years later, she joined the faculty at King Middle School in Milton, Florida, where she has established herself as a leader amongst the great educators in Northwest Florida and where she teaches today, chairs the History/Civics Department, and is the Student Government Association Advisor.

For over four decades, Ms. Copeland has inspired the minds of our Nation's youth, and her innovative techniques have brought unique learning opportunities and experiences to her students. Whether organizing an annual visit to Tallahassee, the state capital, to engage her students in the legislative process, sponsoring an annual Veteran's Day program to honor area veterans and first responders and educate her students on the contributions and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, or building pyramids and volcanoes, Ms. Copeland's passion for teaching is demonstrated through each of her tireless efforts in making learning enjoyable and bringing it to life.

Her dedication and service, however, is not confined to her classroom at King Middle School. Ms. Copeland teaches hospital homebound students in the evenings as well as Sunday School at her local church. She has also organized and sponsored countless events, including the Ronald McDonald House Easter Basket to benefit Sacred Heart Children's Hospital in Pensacola, Florida; a Thanksgiving food basket drive to provide for the needy; a blanket giveaway for our area's homeless and to support low-income families; and Meet-the-Candidate breakfasts during election years to afford an additional opportunity to her students and the local community to participate in the democratic process.

Her involvement in the classroom and throughout the community has not gone unnoticed. As a result of her commitment to excellence and service, Ms. Copeland has received myriad awards, including the Alpha Delta Kappa Educator of the Year in 2012, the Governor's Award in Education, the International Award ISTE Ana Mackay-Gutierrez Award for Community Giving, the Santa Rosa County Volunteer of the Year in 2006, the Veteran's State Teacher of the Year in 2007, and the King Middle School "Teacher of the Year" award three times throughout her tenure.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Ms. Deborah "Dee" Copeland for her lifetime of achievements and dedication to the Northwest Florida community. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing Ms. Copeland all the best for continued success in her well-earned retirement and thanking her for her service.

RECOGNIZING THE STROKE COMEBACK CENTER'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Stroke Comeback Center on the

occasion of its 10th anniversary and the critical health care services that it provides to stroke survivors and their families in our community.

The SCC is a non-profit founded by Darlene Williamson and John Phillips in 2004 to create a community in which stroke survivors and their families could receive proper long-term treatment. Meaningful care for stroke survivors is limited in the United States, and the SCC is one of less than ten such facilities. The mission of the SCC has been to pick up where traditional health care coverage misguidedly leaves off by providing affordable speech and language services to stroke survivors in a supportive and participating environment. No patient is ever turned away because they can't afford the cost.

The current situation of stroke coverage and care is in desperate need of reform. It is common misconception that recovery is quick and easy when in reality stroke survivors require comprehensive rehabilitation for a protracted period of time to fully regenerate their cognitive and physical abilities. Yes insurance coverage for such care, if provided at all, runs out within 3-12 months, and the Medicare therapy cap for speech and physical therapy falls well short of covering the true costs. There is an estimated direct and indirect cost of about \$73.7 billion. However, it is impossible to measure the emotional, physical, and financial burden a stroke puts on a survivor and their family.

Today, the SCC operates with about 100 individuals served in 40 groups weekly, growing from just five groups in 2005. More than a dozen committed volunteers contribute more than 3,000 hours annually. The SCC works closely with national, state, and local stroke-related organizations and receives referrals from all of the major hospital centers in the metropolitan area. Ninety-three percent of survivors report improvement in one or more areas of speaking, listening, writing or reading. On average, survivors report that they are now three times more confident in their social interactions allowing them to reestablish their role in their family and the community. The success of the SCC is due in part to their undiminished and comprehensive programs. Its life participation, group-based approach helps patients achieve their maximum potential.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contributions and achievements of the Stroke Comeback Center and its dedicated staff and volunteers over the past 10 years. The services and programs offered by the SCC fill a void in the rehabilitation process and significantly improve the quality of lives of stroke survivors and their families.

IRON BILL

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on May 31, 2013, Houston Fire Department suffered its most tragic event in its history. Four of Houston's bravest firefighters died in the line of duty, fighting a 5-alarm blaze at a hotel in southwest Houston:

Captain EMT Matthew Renaud, 35, of Station 51;

Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee, 41, of Station 51;

Firefighter EMT Robert Garner, 29, of Station 68;

Probationary Firefighter Anne Sullivan, 24, of Station 68.

They were the best we had in Houston, and we are still saddened that they are gone.

The hotel's hellish inferno claimed the lives of these four firefighters and injured fourteen other firefighters when the roof collapsed—some critically. One of the brave who survived was Captain William Dowling, also known as "Iron Bill."

Iron Bill was injured serving Houston, the community in which he was raised. A graduate of Klein Oak High School, Captain Dowling left Texas to serve his nation as an enlistee with the United States Marine Corps. In 1993, on leave from Marine boot camp training, he married his high school sweetheart—Jacki. As a Marine, Iron Bill served 4 years, including a deployment to Somalia with I Marine Expeditionary Force in support of Operation Restore Hope, 1995. He returned home to Texas and to Jacki to begin his career and to start a family. Twenty-one years later, Captain Dowling and Jacki have three children: Forrest, Faith and Foster.

Iron Bill's patriotic spirit and love of the community led him to join the Houston Fire Department. He graduated from the Houston Fire Department Academy in 2000 and steadily rose through the ranks. He worked at Stations 12, 19, and 48 before making Captain at Station 68 in January of 2013. Firehouse 68 is located at the corner of Bissonnet and South Gessner in the "heart of Southwest Houston". In 2013, the fire apparatus of Firehouse 68 made 14,847 responses, making it the third busiest fire station in the City of Houston. There, at Firehouse 68, Captain Dowling became known as "Iron Bill," a fitting nickname to describe a strong and courageous hero.

It was just five months after he arrived at Station 68 that Captain Dowling and fellow firefighters received an alarm call that would take them to the gates of hell.

On that fateful day, in the heat of the Texas noonday sun, Captain Dowling along with the four other firefighters rushed into the hotel to find potential trapped guests. While the firefighters were in the hotel, the roof collapsed, trapping and killing Garner and Sullivan from Station 68 and Bebee and Renaud from Station 51. Captain Dowling's legs were crushed and burned, but he remained calm, radioed for help and waited for his brothers to pull him from the flames.

The attending physician in the ambulance said that Captain Dowling, though severely injured, kept asking about the condition of his crew. He was more concerned for the safety of others than himself—the testament of a true hero. He told the doctor, on the way to the hospital, to tell his wife and children that he would fight for them. Hearing this comes as no surprise to Captain Dowling's family: they know him as a fighter.

Captain Dowling was seriously injured with burns over thirty percent of his body, and he was placed in a medically induced coma for months at Memorial Hermann Hospital and Medical Center. He subsequently had both legs amputated and suffered brain damage. A long road of recovery was ahead for Captain Dowling, but surrounded by a team of doctors, his family, firefighter family, friends, church