

family in this community, I thank Ms. Momberger for her hard work and accomplishments that have pushed our region forward. I also commend her on her achievements as a journalist and community leader, and thank her for bringing important resources and stories from our region into Redlands households each and every day. She leaves behind a legacy of journalistic excellence that will be remembered by all who read and appreciated her work.

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH (LISA) JOYCE FREEMAN ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT AS DIRECTOR OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elizabeth (Lisa) Joyce Freeman, the Director of the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System. Appointed to the position on February 11, 2001, we will celebrate her retirement on June 7, 2016.

Lisa is a 1983 graduate of the University of Notre Dame where she earned a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. She received a master's degree in Business Administration from Louisiana Tech University in 1987, and is a licensed civil engineer in the state of Virginia. She and her husband live in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park, California.

Lisa Freeman began her VA career in 1983 as a Resident Engineer at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Later positions include Senior Resident Engineer, Shreveport, Louisiana; Project Manager, Southern Region, VA Central Office; Health Systems Specialist, Southern Region Field Support Office, VA Central Office; Health System Administrator Trainee, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; Chief Operating Officer, VA Sierra Pacific Network Office, San Francisco, California; Associate Director, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; and Acting Director, VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

In addition to her VA responsibilities, Lisa Freeman is a Fellow in the American College of Health Care Executives and serves as a formal mentor to numerous VA emerging leaders. She is a member of the California Hospital Association's Santa Clara County Section and served on the 2006 Board of Directors for the Hospital Council. In 2005, she received the VA Alumni Association's Honorary Leadership Award. She also received a Presidential Rank Award at the Meritorious Level in 2005 and at the Distinguished Level in 2009 and was named one of the top 100 influential women in Silicon Valley in 2011. She also completed the Brookings Institution Certificate in Public Leadership Program in 2012.

When the shocking failures at various VA facilities in the country became public in 2014, there was a beacon of light and excellence at the Palo Alto VA, the institution led by Lisa Freeman. Veterans surveyed about their satisfaction with the Palo Alto VA consistently scored it above the national average and in the top 25 percent in the region for access to outpatient care. This level of excellence is why

Lisa Freeman was called on by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to lead the effort to reform the Southwest VA system in Arizona to correct widespread failures in service to veterans, including hidden wait lists.

During Lisa Freeman's tenure as Director of the Palo Alto VA she has managed 3 inpatient clinics, 7 outpatient clinics, 800 beds including 3 nursing homes and a 100 bed homeless shelter. A Fisher House, a Defenders Lodge and a new Mental Health building were built and dedicated under her leadership, and funds were secured for a second Fisher House to be built on the premises. Lisa Freeman's duties included overseeing one of the most complex health care systems in the country with an annual budget of over \$1 billion, a capital portfolio of \$2.6 billion and more than 7,000 staff and volunteers. She was also responsible for initiating and maintaining a cooperative relationship with the Stanford University School of Medicine, other local health care systems and the neighboring VA Health Care Systems. Lisa was instrumental in the creation of a new rehabilitation facility set to open in late 2016, and the joint VA/DoD facility opening in Monterey in late 2016. She also implemented a system improvement model that utilizes LEAN principles to improve the manner in which the Palo Alto VA cares for its veterans.

Lisa Freeman has served our nation's veterans with extraordinary professionalism and with the care and compassion they've earned and deserve. She is a gifted leader who has led the VA Palo Alto Health Care System with great distinction. I'm very proud to have worked with her and like all those who have had the good fortune to know her, I will miss her wise counsel, her effectiveness and her love for country and those she served.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring Lisa Freeman's great work and in thanking her for her extraordinary service to our nation's veterans.

SABLATURA MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVANCES TO NATIONAL SEAPERCH CHALLENGE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate two Sablatura Middle School teams, Aqua Tronz and Hydro Tech, for advancing to the National SeaPerch Challenge at Louisiana State University.

The U.S. Navy National SeaPerch Challenge is an underwater robotics competition. Both Sablatura teams qualified for nationals by finishing as two of the top seven overall teams at the regional competition. The teams build and operate their own remotely-operated vehicles that function underwater and are designed to complete an obstacle course. The SeaPerch Challenge competition judges the students' underwater vehicles in poster and interview first, and then two underwater challenges follow. The first being an obstacle course and the second being an orbs challenge where the students move different sized balls into submerged containers. The students develop problem-solving, teamwork and technical skills through their work. Both teams are coached by Marc Smith, and we are very

proud of what he and his teams of bright young students have accomplished.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the two SeaPerch teams, Aqua Tronz and Hydro Tech. Keep up the great work.

TRIBUTE TO WINSTON THOMAS

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2016

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Winston Thomas, a distinguished public servant in the states of South and North Carolina.

Born August 20, 1942, Winston was a native of Detroit and a graduate of its prestigious Cass Tech High school with a concentration in Electrical Engineering. He came to South Carolina to attend Benedict College in Columbia, graduating with a degree in Chemistry. He was a gifted athlete, attending Benedict on a football scholarship and also competing in basketball, baseball, and track, where he was part of a record-setting 4x200 relay team.

While Winston passed up a professional athletic career when he declined a free agent offer from the Philadelphia Eagles, sports remained his lifelong passion. He participated in three all-state softball teams, was a member of the first all-black team to play in the Columbia Softball League, and competed in the United States Softball Association State Championship. At Benedict, Winston was an athletic institution, working as an assistant basketball coach, helping to start a swim team, and creating an Athletic Hall of Fame (into which he was deservedly inducted).

Even more impressive than Winston's athletic accomplishments was his tenure in public service. His career began as a science teacher and a coach at Booker T. Washington High School. He subsequently served as Director of the Aging Program at the Columbia Urban League and as a Representative for the South Carolina Deferred Compensation Commission. From 1983 to 1988, he served as a Program Information Coordinator on the staffs of two South Carolina governors of different parties. Democrat Richard W. Riley and Republican Carroll A. Campbell. The fact that he was trusted by leaders on both sides of the aisle is a testament to his diligence and public-spiritiveness.

I had the great pleasure of seeing these qualities firsthand in 1988 when he became my Executive Assistant at the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. Winston played an instrumental role in the Commission's work, and countless South Carolinians benefited from his service there. Though he left the Commission and moved to Charlotte shortly before I left the Commission to serve in Congress, our region continued to benefit from his commitment to public service, with stints at the Urban League of Central Carolina and 100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte, which was selected as chapter of the year three times under his leadership. After leaving 100 Black Men in 2004, Winston started another career as an antique store owner, his store MAMALU, named after his mother, Lula Ballard, was recognized as a North Carolina Treasure.