

away with this violation of federal practices and law. Now this seems to be at an end.”

“Now the BBG board should review the Radio and TV Marti lawsuit by Cuban Americans laid off wrongly over 4 years ago and attempt to settle it. Otherwise, BBG may face \$5 million in legal expenses,” Ashe added.

“I commend Jeff Shell, the new chair, for his efforts to correct the problems he inherited,” Victor Ashe stated.

Jeff Shell and the renewed BBG board have already announced several key personnel and management changes at the IBB and further management reforms are expected. Former IBB director retired at the end of November 2013. But some remaining IBB officials are alleged to be engaged in an attempt to cover up their previous mistakes by unnecessarily prolonging the FOIA process, sources told BBG Watch.

Ashe and some of his colleagues on the BBG board have been vindicated in a number of cases where their initial concerns were first strongly resisted by agency officials and later turned out to be correct and their proposed solutions embraced by other BBG members.

Among three BBG members who seem to have most annoyed IBB senior staff with demands for accountability, Ashe is credited along with Susan McCue and Michael Meehan with saving Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) from a major management and journalistic crisis last year. Ashe received the Glasnost Award for these efforts from a Russian human rights organization. He is also believed to have helped new RFE/RL CEO Kevin Klose rehire Radio Liberty journalists who had been fired by the previous management—an incident which produced a major public relations and public diplomacy crisis for the United States in Russia.

In a phone conversation about his previous difficult dealings with IBB officials, Ashe recalled discovering that flu shots were being denied to contract employees at the agency because of their status. IBB officials declined to correct the problem until he went public with the issue and shamed them into recognizing it was a health risk for the entire workforce, since contract employees and federal employees work daily side by side. “Today I am glad to say all can receive flu shots,” Ashe was quoted as saying.

Alleged attempts to silence inconvenient BBG members and alleged attempts by IBB senior executives to remove Ashe from the BBG board with unfounded accusations to the OIG were described in recent editorials published by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFGE Local 1812, a union representing BBG’s federal workforce. One OIG team sided with IBB officials against Ashe and incredibly accused him of being too aggressive in pursuing his oversight responsibilities, although it did not mention him by name. That particular OIG team repeated assurances received from IBB executives and, also incredibly, did not discover any substantial waste or irregularities in the agency, which has a budget of over \$700 million. It took another, different OIG team to find widespread irregularities in the work of IBB officials, including nonpayment of IRS required taxes.

Ashe is widely admired by rank and file agency employees and contractors, as are Governors McCue and Meehan. Chairman Shell has also developed a good reputation among BBG employees for his energy, willingness to listen to critics and some of the initial reforms he has proposed.

Ashe’s departure from the board was particularly mourned by BBG employees. Their union has arranged with the Knoxville, TN city administration to have a tree planted in

one of its parks in honor of former BBG Governor and former U.S. Ambassador.

In a recent article in *Ambassador Perspectives*, a forum of commentary on current world issues by non-career U.S. Ambassadors who have served presidents of both parties, Ashe has proposed several solutions to management problems at the BBG, including appointing a single agency head, confirmable by the Senate, dissolving the current part-time nine-member board, or making it much smaller. The CEO proposal, but without Senate confirmation, is also being pursued by Chairman Shell and the current BBG board.

Ashe has also called for bringing Congress more closely into the process of reforming U.S. international media outreach to those countries where independent press is either severely restricted or completely repressed. Ashe told a reporter that “hopefully, Congress will start holding annual oversight hearings on U.S. international media outreach, which have not been held for six years.”

The key questions, however, are whether anyone among IBB’s current government executives who are still in their positions will answer for alleged violations of tax and other federal rules? Who will pay millions of dollars, which have not been appropriated by Congress, to correct alleged mistakes? Can IBB officials get away with not releasing FOIA documents that may expose their alleged attempts to cover up corruption and abuse of power.

BBG Watch has learned that at the urging of a least one NGO, a member of Congress known for his support of U.S. international broadcasting mission abroad plans to make inquiries to the BBG to find out why IBB officials are dragging their feet on answering FOIA requests for information that may expose their alleged misdeeds.

It’s not the first time, and not the last, that we ask: who’s in charge of this Agency?

As the new Broadcasting Board of Governors members get down to business, we recognize their role of being in charge of ensuring that the broadcasting arm of the United States government carries out its mission for the 21st century. However, we get the feeling that some in top and mid-level management take the position that the bureaucracy is still in charge, will remain in charge, and will make sure the BBG understands who is really in charge.

Why should there be any concern? Flash back to the arrival at the Agency several years ago of a former BBG Governor, the Honorable U.S. Ambassador Victor Ashe. A politician, in addition to a diplomat, with extensive managerial experience, he engaged in behavior any official on the BBG should feel comfortable engaging in: he met with the staff, listened to their concerns, opened a communication channel by providing his personal e-mail and started asking questions of management.

The backlash was swift and fierce. Ambassador Ashe was warned in private, then warned again more forcefully in public, against assuming his full role as Governor. Apparently he did not get the message. The General Counsel’s office—whose main purpose sometimes seems to be not to assist management in respecting the law, but rather in how to circumvent it—drafted new rules that essentially tried to muzzle BBG members, trying to prevent them from freely discussing Agency business.

But that did not silence Ambassador Ashe. He had the courage to publicly deplore the diplomatic mess created by the firing of most of the staff at the Russian Service of Radio Liberty. Payback time came in many forms including a rather silly and spiteful incident, when Governor Ashe was refused entry to an event to which he was invited.

Other blockades were erected by the resident bureaucracy to thwart any attempts by Governor Ashe to find out what was going on in the Agency including a scandalous contracting-out process. Even the OIG, in its January 2013 report, characterized Governor Ashe’s actions as somewhat of a transgression when it wrote: “He visits widely throughout the agency, offering to bypass IBB management to assure Board attention to employee concerns.”

And yet, Ambassador Ashe did not budge. He continued his fight. So, he was disposed of thanks to a blistering and factually-challenged OIG report that the Union described, and still does, as a ‘hatchet job’. He could have stayed in his position as a Republican Governor on the BBG. There was no need to push out the only BBG member who had a perfect attendance record at all meetings and seemed to genuinely care, and was competent as well. The Agency would not stand for that and the White House somehow found time to name someone to replace him.

AFGE Local 1812 will always be grateful to former Governor Ashe for his intrepid efforts to try to find out what was wrong in the Agency and to fix it. We are also grateful that he did not look at the Union as a pariah. For its part, the Union has arranged with the Knoxville, TN, city administration to have a tree planted in one of its parks in honor of Governor Ashe where he served five terms as mayor. We are considering another project in his honor as well.

REMEMBERING GENERAL BLAZ

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and remember former U.S. Representative and Brigadier General Vicente T. “Ben” Blaz, who passed away on January 8, 2014 in Fairfax, Virginia at the age of 85.

Gen. Blaz was born on February 14, 1928, in Hagatna, the capital of Guam. At 13, he was forced into a Japanese detention camp following the Japanese seizure of the island immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. While a detainee, Gen. Blaz witnessed the torture and murder of his fellow Chamorros—natives of Guam—until American Marines liberated the island in 1944.

Following the war, Blaz learned English and received a scholarship to study at the University of Notre Dame. Soon after graduation, he joined the Marine Corps, where he served in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, earning the Bronze Star. He then served in the Joint Staff for a number of years, including under General Lemeul Shephard, who liberated his home from the Japanese many years earlier.

Blaz was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1977. He was the first non-white soldier to attain this rank within the Marine Corps.

Gen. Blaz served three more years before retiring from the military and returning home to Guam. There he worked as a teacher and farmer until his election to the U.S. Congress in 1982. For eight years, he served as Guam’s non-voting representative in the House, and held committee assignments on the Foreign Affairs Committee and Armed Forces Committee. During his time in Congress, he focused on veterans’ education issues, as well as the reorganization of Guam’s judicial system.

Following his retirement in 1992, Gen. Blaz published a memoir, as well as books and television documentaries about Guam's history and culture. He also spent time in Virginia's 10th District in Fairfax County, where he passed away last month. He is survived by his two sons, Tom and Mike Blaz, as well as two brothers, one sister and five grandchildren.

I submit the following obituary from the Washington Post on Gen. Blaz's amazing story.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 27, 2014]

VICENTE T. 'BEN' BLAZ, MARINE GENERAL AND GUAM DELEGATE, DIES AT 85

(By Matt Schudel),

Vicente T. "Ben" Blaz, who survived a Japanese prison camp during World War II and later became a Marine Corps brigadier general and Guam's representative in Congress, died Jan. 8 at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital in Fairfax County. He was 85.

The cause was acute respiratory failure, his son Tom Blaz said.

Gen. Blaz was 13 when he was captured by Japanese forces who overran the U.S. territory of Guam on Dec. 8, 1941, one day after the Japanese attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He was one of many native Chamorros, as natives of Guam are often called, held in a detention camp and pressed into forced labor, building airfields for the Japanese.

He was later held in a Japanese prison camp, where he saw fellow inmates beheaded.

"As a boy, I stood behind barbed wire," he told The Washington Post in 1977. "There was a pervasive sense of personal insecurity. That probably is more damaging to your feeling of wellbeing than hunger."

In 1944, he was freed when U.S. Marines reclaimed Guam from the Japanese. He asked a young Marine how he could go to the United States.

"The first thing you have to do is learn to speak English," he recalled the Marine saying. Gen. Blaz spoke primarily the local Chamorro language at the time. "He taught me a few words and told me, of all things, to listen to the radio, and talk as they do."

After graduating in 1951 from the University of Notre Dame, in Indiana, Gen. Blaz joined the Marine Corps. He served during the Korean War and was an artillery officer in the Vietnam War, where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

He held several jobs with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and once served under Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., a Marine general who led the U.S. forces that recaptured Guam in 1944.

When he was promoted to brigadier general in 1977, Gen. Blaz became the first person from Guam and the first non-white Marine to reach the rank of general. At the time, he was director of information for the Marine Corps, in charge of rebuilding the image of the Marines after the Vietnam War.

After retiring from the military in 1980, Gen. Blaz returned to Guam to farm and to teach. He made an unsuccessful bid as a Republican for Guam's non-voting congressional seat in 1982.

Two years later he won a closely contested election, defeating Antonio B. Won Pat, who had served as Guam's delegate since 1973, when the territory first received representation in Congress.

Gen. Blaz, who was a member of the Armed Forces and Foreign Affairs committees, was the only retired general serving in Congress at the time. He had few legislative victories in his limited role in Congress, but he was instrumental in reorganizing the judicial system on Guam and was a strong advocate for improved educational benefits for veterans.

Gen. Blaz served four terms before losing a reelection bid in 1992 to Robert A. Underwood.

Vicente Tornas Blaz Garrido was born Feb. 14, 1928, in what is now Hagatna, the capital of Guam, and grew up in a farming community. Guam, which is about 30 miles long, has a population of about 140,000 and is the southernmost island in the Marianas chain. It became a U.S. territory after the Spanish-American War in 1898.

In 1947, Gen. Blaz received a scholarship to attend Notre Dame. After a 22-day boat trip, he arrived in San Francisco and told a cabdriver to take him to Notre Dame. He was dropped off at a Catholic girls' school with a similar name, where he presented his papers to the nuns. They put him on a train to Indiana.

While serving in the Marine Corps, he received a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University in 1963. He had a home in Fairfax County since 1969 and was a member of St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church in Fairfax.

His wife of 58 years, Ann Evers Blaz, died in May 2013. Survivors include two sons, Tom Blaz of Fairfax and Mike Blaz of Fairfax Station; two brothers; a sister; and five grandchildren.

After Congress, Gen. Blaz wrote a memoir and books about Guam and also made a series of historical and cultural television documentaries about his native island.

In Congress and later in life, Gen. Blaz became known for a useful description of the people of Guam, U.S. citizens who serve in disproportionate numbers in the military but do not have full representation in Congress: "Equal in war, unequal in peace."

IN HONOR OF MILLIE MARSHALL
ON HER RECEIPT OF THE MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE'S WOMEN
IN MANUFACTURING STEP
AWARD

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Millie Marshall of Hurricane, West Virginia on the occasion of her selection to receive a STEP Award from The Manufacturing Institute. As an inspiration to young women interested in technical careers, I am pleased to recognize her contributions to Toyota, the automotive industry, the state of West Virginia, her community, and our country.

Manufacturing is revitalizing our economy and making America strong. Investments in manufacturing, particularly in automotive manufacturing, multiply across the economy, creating jobs and growth in other sectors. Manufacturing is the backbone of our nation's middle class. Today's manufacturers offer competitive wages in high-tech fields while working hard to encourage women into the field.

STEP Award Honorees, such as Ms. Marshall, help to attract more women to manufacturing careers by educating young workers that this is not your grandfather's manufacturing industry. By telling the real stories of these women, we can inspire the next generation to pursue careers in the industry and encourage women currently working for the manufacturing industry.

Ms. Marshall's 20-year career progression, beginning as a specialist all the way to her

current position as president of Toyota's West Virginia engine plant, is a direct result of her technical knowledge and ability, her drive and determination, and her passionate commitment to her fellow team members and Toyota's customers. Her accomplishment of becoming the first female president in Toyota's history is tied to her many successes.

Ms. Marshall is a lifelong learner. She has always seen her career as a journey. Her desire to learn and try new things led to many different positions, functions, and locations. In every experience at Toyota so far, she has left her positive mark. She has always been a strong advocate for self-development, team development, and for the growth of Toyota as a whole.

Ms. Marshall is a role model and mentor for other women in business. She shares her talents with women internally and is also actively involved in SOAR, a program that assists in the professional development and career advancement of women in business. With the support of her family, she has learned balance, patience and the ability to see the bigger picture with a variety of perspectives.

We are thankful for the years of dedication and hard work by Millie Marshall. We congratulate her for setting an example of professional excellence and advocacy of women in manufacturing, as well as her commitment to the greater community.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND WAYNE
BRIDEGROOM

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Reverend Wayne Bridegroom for receiving the Martin Luther King Legacy Award. After 40 years of being a pastor, this is a well-deserved recognition.

In 1973, Rev. Bridegroom started at Central Baptist Church in West Modesto, where he still lives today. In 1981, he became the pastor and opened his doors to many ethnic groups. He began by ministering to Southeast Asian and Latino immigrants, but soon Central Baptist became home to the Laotian, Hmong, Cambodian and Hispanic populations as well. In 1980, he brought many of the Anglo churches from across town to form Modesto Outreach Ministry, which later became the Christian Challenge Ministries.

Pastor Bridegroom has a unique ability to develop networks and put his talent to work, becoming the co-founder of Harvest of Hope. Harvest of Hope is a collaboration of church, neighborhood and county government which focuses on providing goods for needy families. In 1989, he spearheaded a group called Love Inc., which paired people in need with agencies and volunteers in churches. He also helped in the founding of Weed and Seed, which led to First Tee, a golf mentoring program on the city's municipal course, and started Boy and Girl Scouting programs on the west side.

In the last 20 years, Rev. Bridegroom has worked with the West Modesto King Kennedy neighborhood collaborative and helped improve relationships between police and the community. In 2000, Pastor Bridegroom