

CELEBRATING THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MENDHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

**HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2015*

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 110th Anniversary of the Mendham Fire Department located in the Borough of Mendham in Morris County, New Jersey.

The Mendham Fire Department was established on June 20, 1905. The first officers of the department were elected at the founding meeting. The President was Edward S.P. Bretherton, Secretary J. Smith Gunther, Treasurer Charles P. Bretherton, and Chief John M. Hoffman. The original firehouse was completed in December 1906 with \$885 raised by the residents. In 1913 the Mendham Independent Hook, Ladder, and Hose Company No. 1 was formed. One year later in 1904 the First Aid Squad came into existence with twelve men volunteers. In the past century, the department has grown and continued to provide the community with exemplary service.

On September 11, 2001 the fire department responded to terrorist attacks in New York. Their First Aid Squad was also sent to the World Trade Center to assist the victims at the site of the tragedy.

In 2014, the department responded to 250 calls with an average response time of seven minutes and twenty-two seconds. This is about two minutes less than the national average for all volunteer fire organizations. The department is not just responsible for responding to emergency calls. They are actively involved in just about every facet of the Mendham community and provide mutual aid to neighboring towns.

Each year the department continues to grow their junior membership. They provide opportunities for young men and women aged sixteen to eighteen, who participate in various firefighting and first aid activities. The makeup of the junior membership represents the best and brightest of Mendham. They carry on to college and beyond the confidence and skills that are instilled in them while working at the fire department.

The Mendham Fire Department has been able to maintain and grow a wonderful relationship of trust and respect with Mendham residents. For this 110th Anniversary the department is planning a number of events and activities to celebrate their achievements.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking and recognizing the Mendham Fire Department for their 110 years of dedicated service to the community.

HONORING TEMPLE, TX POLICE  
CHIEF GARY SMITH

**HON. JOHN R. CARTER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2015*

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Temple, TX Police Chief Gary Smith. With his retirement approaching, he will soon close out

37 years of incredible service to his community and begin the next chapter of his life.

A native son of Temple, Smith joined the force right out of high school and quickly rose through the ranks, showcasing his leadership and expertise at every step along the way. Recognition of his excellence included his being named Rookie of the Year and twice receiving the prestigious Officer of the Year award. Community leaders took notice of his great work and Smith was honored by the Temple City Council on three separate occasions for his stellar leadership and commitment to duty.

Chief Smith led his department with dedication, honesty, and integrity. Over the decades, Smith has seen his beloved police department grow from a small town force into a skilled and mobile law enforcement agency capable of providing safety to this rapidly growing city. Due in large part to his leadership, Temple is now one of the safest cities in the country. Locals could always sleep well knowing their safety was Smith's first priority.

As a former judge, I know firsthand the essential role police officers play in maintaining law and order and the risks they face every time they report for duty. These brave men and women awake each day uncertain of what dangers await. Yet they carry on, strengthened by their resolve to protect and serve. Police officers, be they big city beat cops or small town sheriffs, help preserve our way of life and are the shields that guard us from those lost souls who wish harm to others.

Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have made a difference in the world; Chief Gary Smith doesn't have that problem. I salute his extraordinary career and join the grateful citizens of Temple, TX in wishing him only the best in the years ahead.

CELEBRATING THE 135TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAINE'S FRIENDSHIP SLOOP

**HON. CHELLIE PINGREE**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2015*

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 135th anniversary of the Friendship Sloop, a style of sailing vessel that stands as an icon of Maine's maritime heritage.

Friendship Sloops were developed over a century ago in Maine's Muscongus Bay as fishing and lobstering boats. Their beautiful lines served an important purpose. The shape of the hull provided great stability and lobstermen could sail the boats by themselves while laying and checking their traps by hand. Many local craftsmen were known for building them, but none more than Wilbur Morse of Friendship, Maine. Morse's shop turned out so many of the boats that they eventually became known by the name of his hometown.

With the advent of modern-day engines in the 20th century, the Friendship Sloop fell out of favor as a fishing vessel. But it wasn't long before its beauty and functionality made it a popular design for recreational sailboats and yachts. Its distinctive shape lives on to this day with the help of many enthusiasts who carry on its legacy. Since 1961, the Friendship Sloop Society has hosted an annual regatta and connected a community of people who sail, rebuild, and appreciate these boats.

Much has changed since 1880, but life on the Maine coast retains many connections to those earlier days. Hard-working individuals still make their living on the water. Tight-knit communities still pull together for each other. And Friendship Sloops still gracefully ply the waters, their design largely unchanged in 135 years. Some things just cannot be improved upon.

My appreciation goes to all those who keep the tradition of the Friendship Sloop alive. It gives me great pleasure to celebrate its 135th anniversary.

OMAR RODAS

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 25, 2015*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, millions of American teenagers walked across the stage in their cap and gown and received their diploma after four years of hard work. Their high school careers will officially come to an end and the next chapter will soon take off. High School Graduation is an exciting time meant for celebration with friends and family. But one Texas student did not get to cross the stage in his green cap and gown to receive his high school diploma.

Omar Rodas from Houston, Texas was an 18 year old student at Klein Forest High School.

He was a tenacious student. Constantly, he put in the extra effort to make his dream of graduation a reality. He stayed for after school hours and worked overtime to ensure that he would graduate. He spent his extra time bus-ing tables at a local restaurant, Babins.

At first he did not think that he would be able to graduate, but Omar pulled it off. He worked tirelessly for that cap and gown and to make sure he was part of the big day in June. His friends said that he was so excited that the hours of extra time and effort made his dream of graduating a reality.

Omar was on his way to his graduation ceremony early Saturday morning on June 6, 2015 with his good friend, who agreed to drive him that morning to ensure that he would make it to the ceremony on time. On the Houston highway, he was suddenly killed in a violent car accident involving two other cars. Omar was already wearing his cap and gown when rescue crews pulled him out of the wreck.

Initial reports have suggested that Omar was driving on the freeway around 7 a.m. when he veered out of his lane and hit the back of a dump truck and SUV then veered in front of the truck and was struck.

Omar was pronounced dead at the scene.

Friends and family at the graduation ceremony were surprised and confused when Omar's name was called and he did not cross the stage.

No one knew that a terrible highway accident took the life of the bright student.

A candle vigil was held for Omar on June 7th at Klein Forest High School and student, parents, and friends are helping the family by setting up a GoFund account in order to help them raise money for the funeral so that the family may grieve properly without the worry of money. Many who attended the vigil wore