

Hill for his leadership at a retirement dinner on Saturday, August 15, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Columbus Country Club and at a retirement program on Sunday, August 16, 2015 during the 11:00 a.m. service at the church.

A native of Columbus, Georgia, Willie L. Hill was born to the late Hollis and Dora Hill. He was educated in the public school system of Muscogee County. Reverend Hill then served our nation honorably in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. After completing his service, he attended Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Phenix City, Alabama, where he earned an associate's degree, and later attended Troy University to complete a bachelor's degree in Criminology. It was then that Rev. Hill heard God's call to preach and enrolled in the American Baptist College to study theology.

Rev. Hill pastored the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church for 28 years, faithfully carrying out his vision for the church and leading its members in the fulfillment of a God-first life. In the years after Rev. Hill became pastor, Greater Beallwood expanded greatly, growing from a century-old church that was facing financial hardship to a spiritual praising center serving almost 350 people weekly. Not only did Rev. Hill's leadership grow the congregation in number and in spirit, but it also was instrumental in the building of a new sanctuary that would accommodate the numerous church services and meetings.

A strong advocate of access to Christian education, Rev. Hill founded Children's Church, a separate training and worship service for children ages 5 through 12 to grow in their faith. Children's Church serves as a valuable resource for members of the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church and has helped children learn about the word of God in a way that they can relate to and understand.

Throughout his pastoral career, always seeking to improve the craft of Christian ministry and discipleship, Rev. Hill has served as President of the Inter-Denominational Ministerial Alliance for eight years and Vice President for four years. He served as President of the Fourth District Congress of Christian Education for two years, and he also co-founded the Columbus Ministerial Association. An avid golfer and fierce competitor, Rev. Hill served on the Golf Authority of the Columbus Consolidated Government for ten years.

Jeremiah 3:15 says, "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." Reverend Willie Hill is one such shepherd and a man of integrity who exudes the genuine principles and values of Christian discipleship. A charismatic evangelical leader and pioneer, his spiritual zeal is both infectious and highly contagious.

Rev. Hill is surrounded by the love and support of his congregation, but also his family—his wife of 52 years, Helen; their two sons, Daren and Brandon; and three beloved grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife Vivian, and the more than 730,000 residents of Georgia's Second Congressional District in thanking the Reverend Willie L. Hill for his service to our nation, the Columbus community, the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church, and the Kingdom of God.

HONORING DR. R. SCOTT RALLS,
RETIRING PRESIDENT OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SYSTEM

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Scott Ralls, the seventh president of the North Carolina Community College System, who stepped down as president of the system this summer after seven years of service.

North Carolina's community college system is one of the state's greatest educational assets. It is one of the nation's largest community college systems, and its reach is extensive, with most North Carolinians residing within 30 miles of one of its 58 colleges. The system serves more than 850,000 individuals annually, with 321,000 students in degree, certificate and curriculum programs and almost 500,000 students taking continuing education classes. Some 40 percent of the state's wage earners today have received some education or training at a North Carolina community college in the past 10 years.

Dr. Ralls was an exemplary president, carrying on the fine tradition of leadership of his predecessor, and our former House colleague, Martin Lancaster. Taking the helm in 2008, President Ralls' tenure began just as the recession hit and the state's unemployment rate began to soar. During the first three years of his presidency, displaced workers flocked to the state's community colleges; the system's enrollment grew 28 percent from 2007 to 2010. At the same time, the system weathered a budget crunch, all the while embarking on a strategy to revamp curriculum, improve completion rates, and forge new transfer agreements with the state's university system.

Even with these challenges, Dr. Ralls helped the System obtain international recognition for its efforts to foster economic and workforce development. Ralls's efforts included expanding health care programs, reenergizing technical education, strengthening the connection between economic and workforce development, and furthering strong partnerships between public schools, community colleges and the University of North Carolina System to promote seamless education pathways.

President Ralls also focused efforts on improving student success. He was an early champion for early college high schools, and today, North Carolina hosts one-third of all early colleges in the U.S.—the vast majority located on the campuses of community colleges. In addition, in 2009, under Dr. Ralls's leadership, the North Carolina Community College System initiated a comprehensive set of strategic initiatives focused on student success and program completion entitled SuccessNC, consolidating curriculums into 32 critical growth areas for North Carolina's economy and providing students with opportunities to earn industry-recognized, stackable credentials, resulting in a more competitive workforce. The Brookings Institution and the Rockefeller Foundation recognized this model in describing one of the most "forward-thinking economy-shifting efforts underway in America's state and metropolitan areas."

During his tenure, President Ralls was elected by national peers to be the President of the National Association of Industry-Specific Training Directors. He also led a state task force responsible for creating policies and procedures for the New and Expanding Industry Training Program, which resulted in a 16% reduction in expenditures and 11% increase in total training projects. Further, he chaired a task force on workplace safety training and generated new policies for administering the NC Worker Training Tax Credit Program.

Dr. Ralls serves on several national and state boards and commissions and is the Chair of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges. He has earned a number of awards and honors, including a Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Department of Commerce (1995), and a Certificate of Appreciation from the NC Rural Prosperity Task Force (2000). He was also awarded the 2006 Freedom Fund Award from the Craven County NAACP, and was dubbed a 2007–2008 Impact Business Leader by the Charlotte Business Leader Magazine.

Prior to serving as the North Carolina Community College System President, Dr. Ralls was president of Craven Community College in New Bern and Havelock. This makes him only the second former North Carolina community college president to hold the System presidency, and he is leaving to once again assume the presidency of a fine institution, the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). While at Craven, he led efforts to support college enrollment growth, while facing significant impacts of military deployment. At Craven, Ralls led in establishing workforce development programs in targeted industry sectors; helped create Craven Early College; initiated University Connections to foster on-site and on-line degree completion opportunities, and fostered an Undergraduate Engineering Education partnership with N.C. State College of Engineering.

Dr. Ralls, a leader of national distinction, is also an approachable, collaborative person who has been a delight for me and others to work with personally. He guided North Carolina's community colleges through the economic downturn and state budget cuts and oversaw a period of remarkable growth. Thanks to his tireless efforts, thousands of North Carolinians have had the opportunity to obtain the education and training they need to realize their full potential. I thank Dr. Ralls for his years of service to the state of North Carolina and wish him the very best as he assumes the helm at NVCC.

RECOGNIZING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2015 BEST OF BRADDOCK AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the recipients of the 2015 Best of Braddock Awards, presented by the Braddock District Council of Community Associations. These awards are given annually to deserving individuals, organizations, and companies in the Braddock Magisterial District of Fairfax County, Virginia, who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to our community.

The goal of the Braddock District Council is to promote the civic, community, and general welfare of the citizens of the Braddock District. The Council represents the interests of community associations, facilitates cooperation and coordination between associations, and provides a path of communications between associations and officials or elected representatives of the Braddock District.

I am pleased to join the Braddock District Council of Community Associations in recognizing the following Recipients of the 2015 Best of Braddock Awards:

Citizens of the Year:

Amy Zydell for her selfless devotion of time and talent to foster care children and foster care parents in the Braddock District and all of Fairfax County. She also is a key supporter of "Let's Help Kids," a local charity aimed at giving a helping hand to elementary school children whose parents are suffering financial hardship.

Duwain Ketch for his many years of working with the Kings Park and Burke Centre Libraries. He currently serves on the Executive Board of the Fairfax Library Foundation and heads the Foundation's Scholarship Committee. Mr. Ketch previously has served as a member of the Burke Centre Conservancy Board of Trustees, and he is a member of the Rotary Club of Burke.

Young Person of the Year: Jonathan McCarty—a member of Boy Scout Troop 1115—for his Eagle Scout project. Jonathan led a group of volunteers in completing trail improvements in Accotink Park by digging a ditch next to the trail which will help reduce the amount of standing water on the trail after rainstorms. All of the work was done by hand because it is located in an area of archeological importance.

Most "Can-Do" Public Employee: Dennis Barton of the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) for volunteering to work overtime with Jonathan McCarty to haul away thirteen cubic feet of dirt that was removed when digging a trail ditch. Without his help, the project couldn't have been completed.

Club or Organization Making a Difference in the Braddock District: Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley. Less than a year old, this group organized itself for the express purpose of improving both environmental and recreational opportunities in the Long Branch Stream Valley, a part of the Accotink Watershed.

Neighborhood Enhancement or Beautification in the Braddock District (2 honorees):

The Commonwealth Swim Club. When declining membership and tight budgets caused the pool board to cut back on grounds maintenance funds, the grounds began to show signs of neglect. James Watkins, a member of the club and a handyman, offered his time and resources to remedy the problems. He repaired the entrance to the pool, restored the primary storm water runoff channel, installed new lighting, and landscaped and beautified the area leading to the clubhouse.

Kings Park West Townhouses HOA. When Marilyn Stoney's property began experiencing flooding, she came to the board with a simple request which led to a community-wide storm water management project. Ms. Stoney volunteered her experience as a program manager to research the problems, develop solutions, solicit bids, oversee the work, and obtain a grant to assist with replanting once construc-

tion was completed. A dozen members of the community assisted with the planting.

Special Recognition also is being given to the employees of the Fairfax County Park Authority who worked with the residents of Olde Forge/Surrey Square to build the new community playground.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these outstanding residents and organizations and also in thanking them for their service to our community. Their efforts and leadership have been a great benefit to the Braddock District and are deserving of our highest praise.

HONORING ALBERT SORANO

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, a community is only as strong as the commitments of its citizens to its success. Albert Sorano has been one of those committed citizens, a true visionary in the city of Yonkers.

Albert was born in the Bronx and became a communicant of St. Bartholomew's Church. A graduate of New York City Schools, Albert served honorably in the United States Military during the War in Vietnam. Following his service, Albert moved to Yonkers where he became one of the most sought after mentors in the city.

Albert dove into serving the Yonkers community by assisting and leading in Career training and Job Placement. He excelled as a major Fundraiser and Event Coordinator for non-profit organizations, including organizing a major fundraising effort to benefit the Ursuline Sisters in New Rochelle. The \$125,000 raised was used to establish an infirmary for ill and disabled retired Sisters has been a Yonkers resident for close to 40 years. In 2004, Albert became a strong member of the Exchange Club of Yonkers, rising to the position of President for three terms from July 2006 to June 2009, and has been on the Board of Directors for many years.

Albert continued using his gifts to rally the community to fundraise for the Child Abuse Prevention Center in White Plains, College Scholarships for Yonkers High School graduates, the Yonkers 5th Grade City Wide Spelling Bee, and the Freedom Shrine installations in schools, libraries and city facilities with recognition of outstanding private citizens.

Albert's greatest commitment however has always been serving the young people in the neighborhood, including those individuals that had been at risk or just released from jail.

This year, the Exchange Club of Yonkers is honoring Albert at the club's annual "Book of Golden Deeds Gala." He is incredibly deserving of this recognition, and I count myself fortunate to represent such a fine individual in the Halls of Congress. Congratulations to Albert for receiving this wonderful award.

COMMEMORATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the passage of Medicaid and Medicare, two of the most beneficial and consequential government programs ever launched.

On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Medicare and Medicaid into law as part of the Social Security Act and in the process made good on the commitments made by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John Kennedy to provide health security to Americans in their old age.

Medicare is a promise kept to those who have contributed a lifetime to our nation to enjoy their golden years with peace of mind and the security of reliable, affordable, and high quality healthcare.

Likewise, Medicaid created a crucial partnership between the government and the people to provide a basic health care safety net for the most vulnerable Americans: children of adults with low incomes, persons with disabilities, and the poor.

Mr. Speaker, half a century later, the legacy of these programs have proven how effective and critical government action can be to the life and well-being of our nation's most vulnerable.

In 1965, almost half of all Americans aged 65 and older had no health coverage, living in fear that the colossal healthcare costs would drive them and their families into poverty.

Today, because of Medicare, over 98% of seniors have health insurance, which has led to a five-year increase in life expectancy for those over 65.

Today, 55 million Americans rely on Medicare for health care, ranging from preventive services, hospital visits, lab tests, to critical medical supplies, and prescription drugs.

It is difficult for some to imagine what 1965 was really like, when today affordable, accessible and available health insurance is a reality for so many people living with disabilities.

Before Medicaid was enacted children from poor families, pregnant women, and low-income working Americans were not able to afford even the most basic medical care they needed to remain healthy and productive.

When the legislation was first passed, many claimed that Medicaid would not live up to its promise; but today, because of expansion of Medicaid through passage of the Affordable Care Act the program provides comprehensive coverage for over 70 million children, pregnant women, low-income adults, and people living with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be seriously disputed that Medicare and Medicaid have changed our country and made it better.

In my home state of Texas and in communities across the country, both programs have significantly changed the lives and improved health outcomes of many Americans over the past century and represent the best of American values.

Unfortunately, Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured (27.6%) in the nation,