

CELEBRATING 2016 NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

**HON. DAN BENISHEK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 2016 National Catholic Schools Week. Across the First District of Michigan, there are 22 Catholic schools providing a first rate education to over 4,100 students that combines faith with academic excellence. Since coming to Congress, it has been an honor to meet with students in Catholic schools across my district at St. Francis de Sales in Manistique, Manistee Catholic Central School in Manistee, and Menominee Catholic Central School in Menominee, among others.

This year, the theme of National Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service." As a lifelong Catholic, former student, and frequent guest of schools across Northern Michigan, I know that the Catholic schools in our region are certainly living up to these goals.

This year, Congress was blessed to hear from Pope Francis. Pope Francis has called on all Catholic schools to "provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values."

In light of this, I have signed onto House Resolution 35, a resolution that honors the contributions that Catholic schools have made to the United States and its people. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 35, and urge my colleagues to support this resolution as well. Together, we must all recognize the significant contributions that Catholic schools have made to our country.

HONORING BOONE EVANS

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Boone Evans. Boone is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 376, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Boone has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Boone has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Boone has led his troop as the Senior Patrol Leader, earned the rank of Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, and has become a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow. Boone has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Boone Evans for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF NICOLINA  
(NICKI) R. CARDWELL FOR HER  
DEDICATED CAREER OF PUBLIC  
SERVICE

**HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 4, 2016*

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of our own. On Friday, January 22, 2016, Ms. Nicolina (Nicki) Cardwell retired from my office after serving a combined seventeen years for the people of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District as a Community Affairs Liaison for eleven years in my Independence District Office and six years with my predecessor. Overall, Nicki dedicated four decades of public service to our community, as a teacher, county employee, and ultimately retiring from Congressional service, spending much of her career based in Eastern Jackson County, Missouri.

Born May 7, 1947, to an Italian mother, Silva Piva, and a Kansan father, George Morris, Nicolina Rowena Maria Cardwell often reminds folks of her proud Italian heritage. After studying at Central Missouri State University and taking time to raise a beautiful family, Nicki returned to school. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Health, going on to teach in public and private schools in Independence, helping to shape future generations.

Nicki has spent much of her adult life as a resident of Independence, Missouri, home to Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States. She is well known throughout the area, as she has been an active volunteer in the community and politically active for causes and individuals she supports. In 1988, Nicki joined the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department, holding a variety of positions over the next ten years, including in the Speaker's Bureau, where she helped introduce thousands of individuals to Jackson County's programs, facilities, and parks. Among many other responsibilities, Nicki assisted with marketing, group events, and public relations while working for the County.

In 1999, Nicki joined the staff of my predecessor, Congresswoman Karen McCarthy. While being considered for the position, some of her prior employers called her, "the best we've ever had dealing with the public," and "a hard worker—very good." As she assumed her new role as a caseworker, Nicki handled passports, immigration, and veterans issues among others impacting residents of Missouri's Fifth District. She was often the recipient of great praise from constituents she helped, including in one letter to the editor in which the constituent had faced repeated roadblocks before making his first call to a Congressional office. He wrote:

"... I called [the Congressional] office expecting another difficult process. Nicki Cardwell called me back within five minutes. She proceeded to treat me as if I were 'family.' I know that she is very busy, but I felt like I was the only one on her agenda. She went beyond the call of duty and even met with me on a Saturday afternoon to complete the paperwork I needed. . . . She made me feel very comfortable throughout the entire process. She took a lot of stress off my shoulders, and

I would just like others to know how considerate and kind a government employee can be."

This type of praise was not uncommon for Nicki. Her personnel folder is full of thank you notes and emails referring to her as "jumping right into the action", "could not have been more helpful", and "beyond the call of duty." Her dedication to constituents led one individual to even refer to her positively as a "bulldog" and went on to say "You're lucky to have such a person on your staff."

So it should come as no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that when I was first elected to Congress in November, 2004, I knew immediately who my first staff hire would be. The list of civic leaders and elected officials advocating that I hire Nicki was lengthy, but they did not need to convince me. I knew after our conversation that a more passionate and caring caseworker did not exist.

Over the past eleven years, Nicki has helped thousands of constituents. She has worked primarily with our veterans and active military personnel, but does not hesitate to jump in to help whenever needed. She often would spend hours listening to constituents in person or on the telephone as they shared their struggles with her, pleased to find an empathetic listener. Her compassion for the men and women in uniform who have served and continue to serve our nation is unparalleled. She regularly attended Stand Downs, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day events with me, or on my behalf. She worked to honor veterans through helping to arrange special events for Vietnam veterans, Korean veterans, World War I veterans, World War II veterans, and Tuskegee Airmen, just to name a few. She created a Veterans Advisory Committee to help serve as a sounding board when important issues arose within the VA system or in proposed legislation. In addition, Nicki spent countless hours every year helping our young people going through the Academy nomination process, giving counsel and advice to those eager to join our prestigious military institutions.

Given Nicki's background, she often assisted with many of our special projects as well. There have been too many projects to name them all, but the one that stands out is our annual Congressional Art Contest. Nicki's leadership helped shepherd record participation with nearly 200 pieces of artwork from high school students around the Fifth District being submitted for consideration. She worked personally with principals and art teachers to encourage submissions to guarantee all parts of the District were well represented. She carefully handled and displayed each piece as if it were her own. She helped secure some of our community's strongest advocates for the arts to judge the students' submissions to ensure the winning artwork hanging in the Cannon Tunnel represented the best of our District. Students and teachers alike have come to rely on Nicki's friendship and expertise and they will surely miss her guidance, as will I.

In addition to Nicki's primary role as a caseworker, she also regularly represented the office at meetings and events throughout the District. She was a regular at the Independence Chamber of Commerce, the Eastern Jackson County Betterment Council, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the Truman Presidential Library and Museum, and 40 Club to name but a few. She is as well