



Congressional Record

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Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the remarkable contributions and achievements of a distinguished individual of the Tampa Bay community, Mr. Wallace Z. Bowers. Supported by his wife, Lois Bowers, and son, Warren Lyle Bowers, his lifelong dedication to community service, advocacy, and leadership embodies the spirit of stewardship we all must strive towards.

Mr. Bowers grew up in Bascom, FL, the 11th of 13 children. In describing his upbringing, Mr. Bowers considered himself a “country boy,” and often recalls the lessons of hard work and “making a difference” which his parents instilled in him and his siblings. This foundation inspired a call to service in the U. S. Army and later, his decades of community service within the Tampa Bay community. After returning from military service, Mr. Bowers moved to Tampa, Florida, eventually settling in a little community called Progress Village. He went on to study at the University of Tampa, Tampa Bible College and Florida Theological Seminary & Bible College.

Mr. Bowers was an early member of the Progress Village Civic Council, a Tampa-based community organization which played a pivotal role in offsetting the displacement of African Americans during the Civil Rights era. He also co-founded and served as President from 1986 until 1996 of the Progress Village Foundation which provides scholarships to local students. Mr. Bowers also played a pivotal role in rezoning negotiations with the Hillsborough County Commission, resulting in significant benefits for the community, including the revitalization of the Progress Village Park, and various other improvements.

Mr. Bowers' commitment to public service is also exemplified by his Gubernatorial appointment to the Florida Housing Authority from 1983 to 1989, where he served as Chair during the later years of his tenure. Additionally, his dedication to transportation and community development is reflected in his roles as a county appointee to the Hillsborough County Regional Transit Authority (HART) and as a past member of the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board and Tampa Streetcar Board.

Throughout his life Mr. Bowers has invested in the communities and people of Tampa. And often recalling his parents' teachings of hard work and making a difference, Mr. Bowers was always

aware of his higher calling as a spiritual leader. He was the Vice Moderator of the Mount Pilgrim Association for six years and is currently a member of the Progressive M & E Baptist State Convention of Florida and National Baptist Convention of America International, Inc. As a licensed and ordained minister, he led and pastored the Saint Mary Missionary Baptist Church from 1996 to 2018 being given the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus.

In 1970, Mr. Bowers founded his own real estate business and has been practicing for over five decades. His entrepreneurial spirit also led him to own and operate Bowers Barber Shop. Mr. Bowers served as the Property Manager for the Progress Village Shopping Center and Progressive M & E Baptist State Convention Headquarters, always working hard and always making a difference.

Mr. Bowers has stated that for any community to progress and move forward we all must take an interest in improving the welfare of our fellow citizens. Not only has he led by that example for decades, but he has helped establish a foundation in the community that would ensure future generations, regardless of where they were from or the challenges they face so that they have the appropriate educational, economic, and social opportunities needed to achieve success.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Mr. Wallace Z. Bowers, whose work is engraved in the streets of our Tampa community. His legacy of service, leadership, and hard work serve as an inspiration to future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Castor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathy Castor
United States Representative
Florida – District 14