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Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to celebrate the life of service of a true public servant and philanthropist in the Tampa Bay area, Mrs. Ruth Duncan Bell.

Mrs. Bell was born in Lansing, Michigan and received her bachelor's degree in mass communications from Arizona State University and after moving to the Tampa Bay area she obtained a master's in public administration from the University of South Florida. She has worked at the federal, state and local levels of government and served as an advocate for the public employment agencies associations in Washington, D.C.

After 27 years of service as senior vice president of public affairs, Mrs. Bell retired from the LifeLink Foundation, which is a non-profit that facilitates the recovery of life-saving organs and tissue for transplantation. She has also participated on national professional organization boards, related to organ and tissue donation, and she is committed to increasing awareness and donor registration for those in need of life-saving transplants.

Mrs. Bell's work in the organ donation and transplantation community is nationally recognized. In 2018, in Madrid, Spain before the 27th International Congress of the Transplantation Society, she presented "Success of a Multicultural Donation Education Program to Increase African American Organ Donation in a Donor Service Area with a High African American Population," which is a work showcasing best practices that led to successful organ donation education and registration programs inclusive of the African American community.

Education is also an important part of Mrs. Bell's life and she and her husband have worked to improve the lives of African American students. During her time at Arizona State University, she and her now husband Jerry noticed friends or acquaintances leave on school break and not return due to financial reasons. It was at this time that they both agreed that if they were ever in a position to help, they would prevent this from happening.

At their alma mater Arizona State University, they established the Jerry and Ruth Bell W. P. Carey Black Student Success Scholarship for any students engaged with the Black Business Student Association or a similar association that supports Black students at ASU. They were also the first Black couple to endow a scholarship for Black students at the University of South Florida, and to

date it has had a significant impact in the lives of more than 100 young people who have obtained their college degree through this fund.

Mrs. Bell is also an active member of Tampa Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Tampa Chapter of The Links, Inc., the Athena Society and numerous other professional organizations.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I am proud to recognize Mrs. Ruth Duncan Bell for her undeniable impact on our community and her unwavering commitment to supporting young African Americans through their college journey.

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