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House of Representatives

HON. JAMES P. MORAN
OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CONGRATULATING 64 AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MAKERS AT
THE DEDICATION OF THE "CHARLES HOUSTON MURAL AND HALL OF FAME" IN
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA ON JUNE 22, 2013
Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Mr. MORAN – Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 64 African American history makers in Alexandria, Virginia on their induction into the Charles Houston Mural and Hall of Fame.

To walk through the streets of Alexandria is to walk through the annals of African American history in America from slavery to the Civil War to the Civil Rights era. The brick passageways chronicle the vast array of history makers and symbolic structures honored with the unveiling and dedication of the Charles Houston Ad Hoc Committee's "Charles Houston Mural and Hall of Fame" photographic exhibit.

"As an Alexandria History Maker, your legacy of service had added to the vitality and spirit of this community," the Committee wrote in honoring the contributions 64 inductees made to the historic city's African American heritage and culture.

It has been over 60 years since civil rights attorney Charles H. Houston passed away, but the good works recognized at this dedication show that the strength of his legacy has endured. Just like Mr. Houston, the honorees have played a major role in the City and have served as an integral part of the civic life of Alexandria and its citizens for generations.

The dedication ceremony was attended by 800 familiar Alexandria faces. Among the honorees present were Mr. Ferdinand Day, the first African American School Board Chairman for the state of Virginia, Police Chief Earl Cook, Mr. Eugene Thompson, former Director of the Alexandria Black History Museum, author Marie Bradby, journalist Judy Belk, athletic director and basketball coach James "Jimmy" Lewis, Minister Charles Hall, and community activist Dorothy Turner. Other honorees include athlete Earl Lloyd, John Naismith NBA Hall of Fame, educator Harry Burke, Dr. Thea James, Gen. Leo Austin Brooks Sr., and attorney Samuel Tucker who led what is believed to be the first public sit-in in the nation, the 1939 protest of the Alexandria Library's ban on African Americans.

Historic structures on the mural include: Beulah Baptist Church, the Franklin & Arm filed Slave Office & Pen, the Freedman's Cemetery, Seminary School, Fort Ward, the Odd Fellows Hall, Alexandria Home Bakery, the Capital Theater, Out Cross Canal, Colored Rosemont, the Carver Nursery/American Legion, the Johnson Pool, the Robert Robinson Library and the Departmental Progressive Club.

The photographic mural will be permanently located at the Parker-Gray Way, the Wythe Street entrance to the Charles Houston Recreation Center. It establishes the African American footprint in the city and celebrates neighborhoods, schools, churches and businesses vital to Alexandria's African American community. The intent of the Hall of Fame is to honor and memorialize the achievements of African American history makers in Alexandria; document the contributions of Alexandria's African American community to the city's history; and foster appreciation for diversity of the African American experience in the City of Alexandria.

Besides the City of Alexandria's sponsorship, the project committee consulted with George Mason University faculty and received support from Hoop Academy International, Simpson Development, and the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church, among others.

Mr. Speaker, these 64 individuals honored by the Charles Houston Mural and Hall of Fame are a testament to the human spirit, an example for resilience and defiance in the face of hardship, and an inspiration given what they achieved in their lifetimes. Thank you.