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HONORING NELLY KORDA, BRADENTON'S HOMETOWN CHAMPION

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HON. VERN BUCHANAN

of Florida

in the House of Representatives

Friday, October 9, 2026

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Nelly Korda of Bradenton, Florida, one of the greatest golfers in the world, whose achievements have filled our hometown with pride.

Nelly was born in Bradenton on July 28, 1998, into a family that loves sports. Her father, Petr, was a champion tennis player who won the Australian Open, and her mother, Regina, played tennis at the Olympic Games. Her older sister, Jessica, is also a winner on the LPGA Tour, and her younger brother, Sebastian, is a professional tennis player. The Kordas could have lived anywhere in the world, but they chose Bradenton as their home, and our community has cheered for Nelly every step of the way.

Nelly turned professional in 2016 as a teenager and quickly showed the world what Bradenton already knew. In 2021, she won her first major championship and, that same summer, stood atop the podium at the Olympic Games in Tokyo with a gold medal for the United States. In 2024, she put together one of the most impressive seasons the sport has ever seen, winning seven tournaments and being named the LPGA Tour's Player of the Year.

Her bond with Bradenton was on full display in January 2024, when a professional tournament came to Bradenton Country Club, just down the road from the hospital where she was born. Friends, family, and neighbors lined the course to cheer her on. Late on the final day,

it looked as though the title might slip away, but Nelly fought back with two brilliant shots on the closing holes and went on to win in a dramatic finish. Afterward, she thanked the hometown crowd for staying positive and carrying her to victory. For one unforgettable week, the golf world turned its attention to our city, and Bradenton's own daughter delivered.

Like every great athlete, Nelly has faced setbacks. In 2025, she went the entire season without a win. Rather than be discouraged, she went back to work, and in 2026 she came back stronger than ever. She won the very first tournament of the year and finished first or second in each of her first six events, something only one other woman in history had ever done. She went on to win the Chevron Championship and the U.S. Women's Open, two of the most important events in women's golf, and returned to her place as the number one player in the world. In September, she once again wore the colors of the United States at the Solheim Cup in the Netherlands, where she and her teammate made history as the first pair ever to win five matches in a row together.

Yet Nelly's greatest gift to Bradenton may be the example she sets. Across Manatee County, young girls now pick up a golf club believing they, too, can become champions, because someone from their own hometown has shown them the way. Parents point to her as a model of hard work and perseverance, and whenever Nelly's name appears in headlines around the world, the name of Bradenton travels right alongside it.

This tribute is personal for me as well. My own granddaughter is a golfer, and a very good one. Like so many young players in our community, she considers Nelly a true inspiration. She watches how Nelly competes, how she handles both victory and disappointment, and how she carries herself on and off the course. I have seen firsthand how much it means to a young athlete to watch someone from her own backyard rise to the very top of the game.

Through it all, Nelly has remained humble and gracious. She is quick to credit her family, her team, and the people who have supported her since she was a little girl. She represents the very best of our community: talent matched with determination, success matched with kindness, and a deep love for the place she calls home.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Nelly Korda on her extraordinary achievements, in thanking her for the honor she has brought to the City of Bradenton and to our nation, and in wishing her many more years of success.