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Nationwide billboard company honors former first lady Barbara Bush



Inside C2

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Trump launches effort to boost U.S. weapons sales abroad

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration rolled out a long-awaited overhaul of U.S. arms export policy on Thursday aimed at expanding sales to allies, saying it will bolster the American defense industry and create jobs at home. U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a joint news conference with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, U.S., April 18, 2018. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

The White House aims to speed up arms deal approvals and increase the role of senior U.S. officials, including President Donald Trump, in closing foreign sales, while giving greater weight to business interests in sales decisions that have long prioritized human rights. The initiative, as first reported by Reuters, adds the full weight of government to Trump's direct personal role in pushing arms sales during interactions with foreign heads of state. Companies that stand to benefit from the new policy most include Boeing Co (BA.N) and the other top U.S. defense contractors, Lockheed Martin Corp (LMT.N), Raytheon Co (RTN.N), General Dynamics Corp (GD.N) and Northrop Grumman Corp (NOC.N). The plans have been in the works for a

year, with White House trade adviser Peter Navarro playing a major role in driving the project forward. Navarro is best known for pushing the administration to take tough trade actions against China. Human rights will now carry equal weight alongside other considerations in planned arms sales including the needs of allied nations and the economic loss if the U.S. contractor does not win the sale when decisions are made on whether to approve an arms deal. "This is a balanced policy," said Ambassador Tina Kaidanow, an official with the State Department who oversees arms export agreements. "We absolutely look at human rights as one of a set of considerations that we look at."

In a joint new conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Florida, Trump said late on Wednesday his administration was working to "short circuit" the cumbersome bureaucratic process at the State Department and the Pentagon to expedite arms sales to Japan and other allies. But giving economic and commercial concerns equal weight to human rights in the arms sales decision-making



Trump visits Joint Interagency Task Force-South in Key West, Florida

ing process raises concerns. "The new policy retains the legally binding language that prohibits weapons transfers when there is actual knowledge that they will be used to commit war crimes," Brittany Benowitz a former U.S. Senate staffer and lawyer who worked on human rights issues and arms transfers. "However, the policy did away with the more comprehensive assessment of risks when contemplating a weapons deal. A transaction can still occur to a human rights abuser so long as the U.S. has no specific knowledge that system will be used to commit atrocity crimes," Benowitz said.

The new policy will go well beyond a relaxation of rules for foreign military sales under President Barack Obama in 2014 that enabled U.S. arms contractors to sell more overseas than ever before. The export policy explicitly states it aims to "strengthen the manufacturing and defense industrial base" and as a part of this "when a proposed transfer is in the national security interest, which includes our economic security, and in our foreign policy interest, the executive branch will advocate strongly on behalf of United States companies." Trump has pressed foreign governments to buy more U.S.-made weapons in nearly every call he has had with a head of state of major allies, a State Department official said this week.

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Nationwide billboard company honors former first lady Barbara Bush

By Craig Hlavaty

Lamar Advertising joined the list of citizens and businesses saluting the late former first lady Barbara Bush this week.

The company's simple digital billboard shows a string of Mrs. Bush's trademark pearls. Digital billboards usually scroll through a series of paid messages, with this one thrown in the mix.

In the wake of her death at the age of 92 on Tuesday afternoon, pearls have become the go-to way for many to honor the woman who championed various causes over her life in the public eye.

According to a Lamar spokesperson, this is showing on over 600 billboards across the country.

"When Barbara Bush passed away, we asked our team of graphic designers to work on a tribute that we could play on our digital billboards," Allie McAlpin said Thursday. "We loved this creative that one of our

designers, Shannon Ford, came up with. Mrs. Bush was a strong, inspiring woman, and we are proud to honor her legacy."

On Thursday the city of Houston will host a special celebration of the life of the woman who called Houston home for decades.

Mayor Sylvester Turner called Bush not only the "matriarch of her family, but also the matriarch of Houston and Texas itself" in a statement on Wednesday.



Lamar Advertising joined the list of citizens and businesses saluting the late former first lady Barbara Bush this week.

At Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza, fans recall the former first lady's legacy

mily Scott wore her pearl necklace Thursday.

It felt appropriate to wear a shiny strand of elegance to honor Barbara Bush's memory. "I was like, 'One must wear one's pearls,'" she said.

The former first lady's legacy went far beyond her ever-present pearls, Scott said.

Standing in the Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza outside the Houston Public Library, Scott - an archivist for the library's Houston Metropolitan Research Center - spoke about the former first lady's "main focus" and lasting legacy: Her work to promote literacy.

Former First Lady Barbara Bush Dies at 92 Bush passed away on Tuesday after suffering from congestive heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. statement from George H.W.

Bush's office statement from George H.W. Bush's office Bush served as the country's first lady from 1989-1993. She is the mother to president George W. Bush and former governor Jeb Bush. She started the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy in 1989, which encourages parents and children of low-income families to read and write.

"I'm sure librarians all over the country are a little sad," Scott said. "We have lost a big advocate."

All day, people trickled through the downtown plaza, which the city designated as a place for "all offerings of flowers, Teddy bears of personal notes." Most people chose to leave personal notes using notebooks and poster boards the library provided.

"Thank you for always making educa-

tion our nation's #1 priority," said one note.

"Your strength and courage is an inspiration to all American women," said another.

Many of the notes were personal and funny. "Delusionally," one woman wrote, "I (once) thought I would start a pearl business called Royal Barbara's Pearls."

Others recalled meeting Bush in person. One woman sat a couple of rows behind the Bushes one year at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

"Your youngest son was being recognized," her note said. "Like any mother, you were proud and took several pictures with your iPad."

Joel Draut, who was a photographer for the Houston Post, recalled photographing the couple at their home in

the early 1980s. Having a photographer in her living room was likely not Barbara Bush's idea of a good time, but "she was gracious about it," he said Thursday on the plaza.

When Bush was first lady, she helped start the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, based in Florida. That foundation supports programs for preschoolers and their parents nationwide.

Her foundation opened in Houston in 2013 in response to a "literacy crisis" in her own city.

The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation was established after an assessment of the city's literacy rate determined 1 in 5 adults was functionally illiterate. Today, the young non-profit coordinates resources and literacy efforts all over Houston to

help solve some of the city's reading problems.

The plaza, which is still under construction, will help cement Bush's legacy. In late 2016, it was named the Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza to honor Bush's decades of work to promote literacy.

The plaza stretches between the main library and the historic Julia Ideson Building. When it is finished, it will feature reading gardens, a cafe, a jumbo screen for movie screenings and an art lawn for rotating exhibits. It is designed to draw people to the library, making it a downtown destination.

Rhea Lawson, the library system's executive director, called Bush "an icon and a real champion for the cause of literacy."

Bush was "hands-on" and accessible, Lawson said, and spent time at libraries all over the country.

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The most influential Texas-connected people



Renee Zellweger
Before getting her “big break” as an actress, the Texas native worked as a cocktail waitress at a strip club.



Beyonce
Before becoming world-famous as “Destiny’s Child,” the singer’s trio was known as “Girls Tyme.”



Tommy Lee Jones
The renowned actor not only speaks fluent Spanish, but he never took an acting class.



Patrick Swayze
The late actor met his wife, Lisa Niemi, when he was 19 and she was 15.



Amazon head Jeff Bezos, astronaut Peggy Whitson, and Texans star J.J. Watt are on the TIME list of the most influential people on the planet, released this week.



Matthew McConaughey
This Texas icon is known to almost never wear deodorant or cologne



Owen Wilson
Despite being a widely known comic, the actor suffers from and sought treatment for depression.



Jamie Foxx



Robin Wright
She was robbed of her vehicle at gunpoint in the 1990s, prompting her and then-husband Sean Penn to move out of Los Angeles.



U.S. Small Business Administration SCORE and the U.S. Small Business Administration will honor the best small business owners and champions in Houston at an awards event to be held Wednesday, May 2, 2018, at the Westin Galleria 5060 West Alabama in Houston. The event will include a workshop titled, “Insights into Entrepreneurial Success”, a small business expo and celebratory luncheon with a keynote address.

The keynote speaker for the event will be Johnny Carrabba III.



Keynote Speaker

Proudly born and raised in the East End of Houston, Texas, Johnny Carrabba III was raised in his parent’s family-owned grocery store, Carrabba’s Friendly Grocery, and attended St. Thomas High School. In 1986, Johnny opened The Original Carrabba’s on Kirby Drive. The second location on South Voss Road opened its doors in 1988. In 1993, Outback Steakhouse created a joint venture partnership consequently opening over 250 Carrabba’s Italian Grill Restaurants nationwide. Johnny and his family continue to own and operate the two original Carrabba’s locations. Johnny and his wife, Randi, are philanthropists at heart and give back to the community through many venues and charities.

SCORE/SBA Small Business Awards Event To Honor The Best Entrepreneurs In Houston

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Master of Ceremonies

Master of Ceremonies for the event will be Bob Charlet. Bob Charlet became the publisher of the Houston Business Journal in 2005 where he joined a veteran team of professionals who have distinguished the HBJ as one of the leading business journals in the country.

Charlet joined the Pacific Business News, a sister publication, in 2009 as advertising director and was promoted to publisher three years later. Prior to PBN, he was North American group sales manager at Canon Communications, overseeing sales and marketing for a group of B2B media properties. He is a graduate of Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

Event Workshop (9 AM - 11 AM) “Insights into Entrepreneurial Success” Workshop

Attendees will gain an in-depth understanding of the resources available to the entrepreneur in Houston. Meet the distinguished panelists and learn about their programs to promote small, minority, and women-owned businesses. Learn about SBA’s 3 C’s, Capital, Contracting and Counseling plus programs to spur innovation and exports. Meet SBA’s resource partners, UHSBDC and SCORE, who provide education and mentoring to help you succeed. Listen and learn from other successful entrepreneurs during a panel

discussion.



Maya Durnovo, HCC



Carlecia Wright, City of Houston



Gilda Rameriz, The Port of Houston



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Tim Jeffcoat, SBA



Steve Lawrence, SBDC



David Lurie, SCORE

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is a United States government agency that provides support to entrepreneurs and small businesses. The mission of the Small Business Administration is

“to maintain and strengthen the nation’s economy by enabling the establishment and viability of small businesses and by assisting in the economic recovery of communities after disasters”. The agency’s activities are summarized as the “3 Cs” of capital, contracts and counseling. SBA loans are made through banks, credit unions and other lenders who partner with the SBA. The SBA provides a government-backed guarantee on part of the loan. Under the Recovery Act and the Small Business Jobs Act, SBA loans were enhanced to provide up to a 90 percent guarantee in order to strengthen access to capital for small businesses after credit froze in 2008. The agency had record lending volumes in late 2010. (Source: Wikipedia)

SCORE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides free business mentoring services to prospective and established small business owners in the United States. More than 10,000 volunteers provide these services, with all volunteers being active and retired business executives and entrepreneurs. In addition to mentoring, SCORE also offers free and low-cost educational workshops each year, both online and in-person. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration. It operates out of 300 chapters across the U.S., with national headquarters in Herndon, Virginia. (Source: Wikipedia)

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People at a railway station in Seoul watch a live television report showing judge Kim Se-yoon reading the verdict in the trial of disgraced former South Korean president Park Geun-hye on April 6, 2018. (Photo/Getty Images)

Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye was formally convicted of an array of corruption charges and sentenced to 24 years in prison on Friday, a year after she was driven from office and arrested over a scandal that saw months of massive street rallies calling for her ouster.

The Seoul Central District Court found the former leader guilty of 16 counts of bribery, abuse of power, and coercion. In addition to prison time, the court fined Park 16.8 million dollars. Friday's sentence is the latest in Park's fall from power after she was ousted in February 2017, clearing the way for liberal South Korean President Moon Jae-in to take power in the vacuum.

The disgraceful downfall of the country's first female president is an end with which many former South Korean presidents are very familiar.

South Korea's first President Syngman Rhee, from 1948-1960, embraced authoritarianism and clung to power through rigged elections and corruption, critics say. Massive demonstrations forced him to flee the country and settle in Hawaii. He died in exile.

The conviction, which she can appeal, is the latest indignity for South Korea's first female president, who grew up in the presidential palace as the daughter of a former dictator and even served as first lady after her mother's assassination. The harshness of the sentence is likely to deepen divisions in a country still wrestling with the aftermath of the most serious political turmoil in years. Once seen as the darling of South Korean conservatives, Park earned the nickname "Queen of Elections" for her record leading her party to victory in tight races, culminating in her own election as president in 2012. Yet that was all undone by the scandal involving a close confidant and bribery, extortion and other allegations.

Park, 66, maintains she's a victim of "political revenge" and has been refusing to attend court sessions since October. She didn't attend Friday's verdict, citing a sickness that

Park Geun-hye Joins The Ranks Of South Korea's Many Notorious Leaders

South Korea's Disgraced Former President Gets 24 Years In Prison For Massive Corruption Scandal

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

wasn't specified publicly.



Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye arrives for her trial at the Seoul Central District Court on Aug. 24, 2017. A judge sentenced Park to 24 years in prison on Aug. 6, 2018, after Park was convicted of bribery, abuse of power, extortion and other charges. She has been held at a detention center near Seoul since her arrest in March 2017, but she refused to attend the court session citing sickness. (Photo/AP)

In a nationally televised verdict, the Seoul Central District Court convicted Park of bribery, extortion, abuse of power and other charges.

"It's inevitable that the defendant should be held strictly responsible for her crimes, if only to prevent the unfortunate event of a president abusing the power granted by the people and throwing state affairs into chaos from happening again," chief judge Kim Se-yun said.

Kim said Park has shown no remorse for her wrongdoing and continued to pass responsibility to others with "unconvincing excuses." Along with the prison sentence, Kim said Park was also fined 18 billion won (\$16.8 million).

Both Park and prosecutors — who had demanded a 30-year sentence — have one week to appeal.

Park's lawyer, Kang Cheol-gu, called the 24-year prison term "very bad" and said the legal team will decide whether to appeal after confirming her willingness.

The court convicted Park of colluding with longtime confidante Choi Soon-sil to pressure 18 business groups to donate a total of 77.4 billion won (\$72.3 million) for the launch of two foundations controlled by

Choi.



Supporters of ousted President Park Geun-hye gather on the street in front of the Seoul Central District Court on April 6, 2018. Park was sentenced to 24 years in prison. (Photo / EPA)

The two women were also convicted of taking bribes from some of those companies, including more than 7 billion won (\$6.5 million) alone from Samsung. Prosecutors previously alleged that Samsung's bribe was aimed at getting government support for a smooth company leadership transition, but the court said there was not enough evidence to prove that Samsung sought such favor from the government.

The court said Park colluded with senior government officials to blacklist artists critical of her government to deny them state assistance programs. Park was also convicted of passing on presidential documents with sensitive information to Choi via one of her presidential aides.

The scandal has already led to the arrests, indictments and convictions of dozens of high-profile government officials and business leaders. Choi is serving a 20-year prison term; Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong was initially sentenced to five years in prison before his sentence was suspended on appeal; and Lotte chairman Shin Dong-bin was given 2½ years in prison.



As South Korean's president, Park Geun-hye met with China President Xi Jinping.

Park has a small group of fierce supporters — most of them middle aged and older — who regularly stage rallies calling for her release and after the verdict was broadcast, thousands of them marched near the Seoul court to protest the ruling. They waved South Korean and U.S. flags and held signs that read, among other things, "Stop murderous

political revenge!"

"Release (President Park) immediately!" the marchers chanted as they walked between thick lines of police officers. There were no immediate reports of major clashes or injuries.

The gatherings of Park's supporters have been much smaller than the earlier ones calling for her ouster, which began in October 2016, eventually drawing millions every Saturday to a Seoul plaza and elsewhere around the country. She was impeached by lawmakers that December and removed from office by a Constitutional Court ruling in March 2017.

The protests show how deeply South Koreans are split along ideological and generational lines, the result of decades-long tension with rival North Korea and the lingering fallout from the conservative military dictatorships that ran the country until the late 1980s.

Park is the daughter of deeply divisive dictator Park Chung-hee, who is revered by supporters as a hero who spearheaded South Korea's rapid economic rise in the 1960-70s. But he's also remembered for imprisoning and torturing dissidents.



During her father's 18-year rule, Park Geun-hye served as first lady after her mother was killed in an assassination attempt targeting her father in 1974. She left the presidential mansion in 1979 after her father was gunned down by his own intelligence chief during a late-night drinking party.

After years of seclusion, Park returned to politics by winning a parliamentary seat in the late 1990s, during a burst of nostalgia for her father after South Korea's economy was devastated by a foreign exchange crisis.

In 2012, she won the presidential election by defeating her liberal rival and current President Moon Jae-in, riding a wave of support by conservatives who wanted to see her repeat her father's charismatic economic

revival.

Park's friendships with Choi, 61, began in the mid-1970s when Choi's late father served as Park's mentor after her mother's assassination. Park once described Choi as someone who helped her when she had difficulties. But her relations with the Choi family have long haunted her political career.



File photo of Park Geun Hye posing with her father and then-President Park Chung Hee and her mother Yuk Young Soo along with her younger brother and sister in Seoul. (Photo/REUTERS)

Media reports say that Choi's father was a cult leader and allegedly used his ties with Park to take bribes from government officials and businessmen.

Park has previously insisted that she only got help from Choi on public relations and to edit some presidential speeches.

Park's four years in office were marred by rising animosity with rival North Korea over its advancing nuclear program, a 2014 ferry disaster that killed more than 300 people, mostly teenagers on a school trip, and criticism that she curbed free speech and didn't manage things transparently.

In a presidential by-election triggered by Park's early exit, Moon won an easy victory against wounded conservatives.

Park's saga is only the latest addition to a long line of scandals involving the country's leaders.



Park Geun Hye (left) poses with her father and then President Park Chung Hee.

Her conservative predecessor, Lee Myung-bak, who governed from 2008-2013, was arrested and jailed last month over a separate corruption scandal. Lee's liberal successor Roh Moo-hyun jumped to his death in 2009 amid a corruption investigation of his family. Park Chung-hee's successors, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, both ex-army generals, spent time in jail for bribery, treason, munition and other charges after leaving office. Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, both former opposition leaders who fought against the dictatorships of Park Chung-hee and Chun, left office in disgrace after their sons and close associates were arrested or embroiled in scandals. (Courtesy chicagotribune.com)

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