



Ayanna Pressley @AyannaPressley Thu Jan 20 00:52:36 +0000 2022

Willie O'Ree is a hockey legend, trailblazer, ice breaker, hero & activist whose powerful story is unknown to far too many.

We changed that today when the House passed our Willie O'Ree Congressional Gold Medal Act—the highest honor Congress can give a civilian. ■ <https://t.co/uXliwC4reu>



Willie O'Ree is a descendent of enslaved people who made history with the @NHLBruins 64 years ago when he became the first Black player to play in the @NHL.

He played 45 games in the NHL & spent over 20 years in pro hockey—all while hiding the fact that he was blind in one eye.

Willie was a speedy left winger—but even he couldn't out-skate racism as the sole Black player in the NHL.

He faced fierce discrimination & even violence from fans & players alike.

Despite it all, Willie embodied resilience, grace, dignity & never gave up on his dream.

After retiring, Willie spent time paying it forward to the next generation.

He was @NHL's Director of Youth Development & Diversity Ambassador, and worked to increase opportunities for young Black and brown players & help them take their rightful place in the big league too.

Willie's story reminds us to not only take up space, but to create it—and pave the way for others to do the same.

With this honor, he joins Jackie Robinson, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, the Tuskegee Airmen & more.■

Incredible company for an incredible man.

TY [@QuigleyCampaign](#), [@Higgins4WNY](#), [@tomemmer](#), [@RepJohnKatko](#) for your partnership on this critical bill.

And to the grassroots movement pushing for years to ensure Willie takes his rightful place in history—none of this would be possible without you. Thank you.

Black history is American history, and today we honored an American hero.

Congratulations, Willie O'Ree! Today, we give you your flowers. <https://t.co/PgEWWTHZS6>

