Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) issued the following statement today on the passing of former Florida Governor Claude R. Kirk, Jr:

“Governor Kirk will be dearly missed, but his memory will live long in Florida, where he will be remembered as a strong leader, a captivating and charismatic speaker, and a loyal public servant to our state. He was truly a great man. We say that about many people, but in this case there’s no arguing it. Everyone who was blessed to know him would agree. Very seldom in our lives do we come across people of his character and stature. When you are around people like him, you feel lucky to just have a few minutes.

“Governor Kirk was a mentor and role model to me. His son Erik and daughter Claudia are close friends of Tara’s and mine, so we were fortunate to get to know him beyond a politician and a statesman. While his passing is cause for sadness, I know the governor is making everyone in heaven have a good laugh. Tara and I send our thoughts and prayers to the Kirk family during this difficult time.”

###