

of admiration for their commitment to our youth.

I have found, however, some teachers are special and go beyond the call of duty to lead their students toward a rewarding and productive life. Today, I rise to speak about one such teacher who is retiring this year, Nicholas "Nick" Leist.

For thirty-six years Mr. Leist has dedicated his life teaching music to young people in Missouri. Mr. Leist has not only been an educator, he has been a friend and inspiration to literally thousands of students. Over the last thirty years, he has taught more than 9,000 students at Jackson High School, and his musicians have had a phenomenal record, having achieved twenty-seven consecutive number one ratings at district music contests. More than eight dozen students have gone on to become teachers themselves, following in the steps of their mentor.

On May 5, 1998, Mr. Leist conducted his last Jackson High School band concert which brought tears to the eyes of students and their Mr. Leist. They will miss Nick Leist at Jackson High School next year; however, the impact he had on students will live on for generations through the people he inspired to greater personal heights. I join the many who wish Mr. Leist happiness in the years to come. ●

HONORING TIMOTHY CORDES

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of Members of Congress and the country a young constituent of mine.

Some of you may have read about Timothy Cordes in Monday's Washington Post. For those of you who didn't, Tim—who is from Eldridge, Iowa—just received a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Notre Dame, with a 3.99 grade point average. Tim was the valedictorian of his class and will begin medical school at the University of Wisconsin this summer. These would be outstanding accomplishments for any young person. They are especially remarkable in this case, because Tim is blind—only the second blind person ever admitted to a U.S. medical school.

Tim has a genetic condition that gradually diminished his vision until he was blind when he was 14. Doctors diagnosed him with the disease when he was two. They talked about how blindness would limit Tim's life. But his parents wouldn't accept that for their son. His mother said that after talking with the doctors, "I went home and just ignored everything they said." Thank goodness for that!

I have spent much of my time in the Senate working toward a society in which all Americans, those with disabilities and those without, have the same opportunities to succeed. That's what all people with disabilities want—an equal opportunity to succeed. Some will succeed and some won't, but it will be because of their abilities, not their disabilities. Tim personifies the fact

that when society accommodates people with disabilities to allow them to reach their full potential, we all benefit.

At Notre Dame, Tim overcame his blindness by asking fellow students to describe the molecular structures they were studying and by using his computer to re-create the images in three-dimensional forms on a special monitor he could touch. In addition to his academic achievements, Tim earned a black belt in tae kwon do and jujitsu, went to football games and debated with this friends whether the old or new "Star Trek" is better.

Tim's biochemistry professor called him a remarkable young man and the most brilliant student he's ever had. One of Tim's roommates said that he was "simply amazing to be around."

Tim doesn't mind being an inspiration to others, but he doesn't think of himself that way. In his words, "[i]t was just hard work." Well, that's for sure!

For my part, I am honored to represent Tim and his parents and to be able to take this time to congratulate him and his parents for all their great work. Congratulations!

Mr. President, I ask that the full text of the Washington Post article be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Washington Post, May 18, 1998]
BLIND VALEDICTORIAN IS HEADED TO MED SCHOOL; NOTRE DAME STUDENT CREDITS "JUST HARD WORK" FOR HIS SUCCESS

(By Jon Jeter)

SOUTH BEND, IN.—Sure but sightless, Timothy Cordes arrived on the University of Notre Dame campus four years ago, an 18-year-old freshman from Eldridge, Iowa, who wanted to enroll in the biochemistry program. Faculty members tried, politely, to dissuade him. Just how, they wondered aloud, could a blind student keep up with the rigorous courses and demanding laboratory work of biochemistry?

Cordes graduated today from Notre Dame with a degree in biochemistry and a 3.991 grade-point average. He was the last of Notre Dame's 2,000 seniors to enter the crowded auditorium for commencement. His German shepherd, Electra, led him to the lectern to deliver the valedictory speech as his classmates rose, cheered, applauded and yelled his name affectionately.

Cordes starts medical school in two months, only the second blind person ever admitted to a U.S. medical school. He does not plan to practice medicine. His interest is in research, he said: "I've just always loved science."

His life has been both an act of open, mannerly defiance and unshakable faith. And this unassuming, slightly built young man with a choirboy's face awes acquaintances and friends.

Armed with Electra, a high-powered personal computer and a quick wit, Cordes managed a near-perfect academic record, an A-minus in a Spanish class the only blemish. Two weeks ago, he earned a black belt in the martial arts tae kwon do and jujitsu.

"He is really a remarkable young man," said Paul Helquist, a Notre Dame biochemistry professor. Helquist at first had doubts but ultimately recommended Cordes for medical school. "He is by far the most brilliant student I've ever come across in my 24 years of teaching," the professor said.

If others find some noble lessons in this life, Cordes perceives it more prosaically: He's merely shown up for life and done what was necessary to reach his goals.

"If people are inspired by what I've done, that's great, but the truth is that I did it all for me. It was just hard work. It's like getting the black belt. It's not like I just took one long lesson. It was showing up every day, and sweating and learning and practicing. You have your bad days and you just keep going."

Despite his academic accomplishments, Cordes led a fairly ordinary life in college, debating, for example, the merits of the old and new "Star Trek" series with Patrick Murowsky, a 22-year-old psychology major from Cleveland who roomed with Cordes their sophomore year.

"The thing about Tim is that he's fearless and he just seems to have this faith. Once we were late for a football game and we had to run to the stadium. He had no qualms about running at top speed while I yelled 'jump,' or I would yell 'duck' and he would duck. And we made it. He is simply amazing to be around sometimes," said Murowsky.

Cordes has Leber's disease, a genetic condition that gradually diminished his vision until he was blind at age 14.

When doctors at the University of Iowa first diagnosed the disease when he was 2, "it was the saddest moment of my life," said his mother, Therese, 50.

"The doctors . . . told us: 'He won't be able to do this, and don't expect him to be able to do this,'" Therese Cordes recalled. "So I went home and just ignored everything they said."

The ability to conceptualize images has greatly helped Cordes in his studies, Helquist said. The study of biochemistry relies heavily on graphics and diagrams to illustrate complicated molecular structures. Cordes compensated for his inability to see by asking other students to describe the visual sides or by using his computer to re-create the images in three-dimensional forms on a special screen he could touch.

Cordes applied to eight medical schools. Only the University of Wisconsin accepted him. (The first blind medical student was David Hartman, who graduated from Temple University in 1976 and is a psychiatrist in Roanoke, Va.)

"Tim has always exceeded people's expectations of him," said Teresa Cordes, who, with her husband, Tom, watched Tim graduate. "He really does inspire me." ●

TRIBUTE TO DR. JOHN H. MOORE JR.

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Dr. John H. Moore Jr. for his humanitarian efforts on behalf of Operation Smile, an organization that provides free medical care to children around the world.

Dr. Moore distinguished himself when he started the Philadelphia Chapter of Operation Smile in 1988. Since then he has expanded this group to provide annual missions to Nicaragua, the Philippines, Vietnam, Liberia, Kenya and other third world countries. Locally, Operation Smile provides free care for school children in the Philadelphia area. Working with philanthropic organizations, the group brings physicians from other countries to Philadelphia for advanced training in techniques used to reconstruct child deformities.

Operation Smile consists of reconstructive surgeons, professional nurses and concerned citizens who have dedicated themselves to providing relief for children suffering from congenital and acquired deformities.

Through a spirit of selflessness, Dr. Moore has given both this heart and time to Operation Smile. He has served as the President of the chapter's local board and is currently its medical director.

Mr. President, Dr. Moore's dedication is a great source of pride, not only for Pennsylvania, but for the United States. I hope my colleagues will join with me in honoring Dr. Moore for his spirit of community and faithful service. ●

AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise as a strong supporter of Amtrak, recognizing the tremendous potential that advanced rail-passenger technology can play in developing our nation's 21st Century economy.

Amtrak has a distinct and important relationship with the state of Illinois. Chicago is the headquarters of one of Amtrak's three Strategic Business Units and the Intercity Business Unit, which manages all passenger trains in America with the exception of the Northeast Corridor and West Coast services. Downtown Chicago is also home to one of the three nationwide Reservation Call Centers. Amtrak also operates over forty trains per day in Illinois, with a total ridership in excess of 2.5 million passengers. Illinois has first-hand experience with Amtrak's current services and recognizes its future potential.

The Congress has also understood Amtrak's potential. In last year's Taxpayer Relief Act, the Senate and House provided \$2.3 billion in Amtrak capital investment to make our federally owned rail passenger carrier a strong contributor to our nation's mobility. Congress also worked diligently to enact the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997. With the authority conferred on it by this legislation, Amtrak now has the ability to undertake the organizational restructuring and operational fine-tuning necessary to realize the full benefits promised by the \$2.3 billion in capital funding.

An integral component of the reform envisioned by this legislation was the timely selection and seating of an "Amtrak Reform Board" comprised of directors with fresh ideas and experience in dealing with the business world. We must ensure that the Administration moves swiftly enough to avoid the consequences of failing to appoint a new Amtrak Reform Board by the statutory deadline, July 1, 1998. Quick action on this matter will allow Amtrak to maintain the authorization mandated in the law signed last December.

I am hopeful that the President will move quickly to appoint the seven di-

rectors required under the new law. These appointments should include professionals experienced in the leasing and financing of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment and people familiar with debt rescheduling and refinancing, which are among tasks tailored to Amtrak's business needs.

I would also encourage the Administration to make certain that these appointments fairly represent the various regions of the country, and Illinois is certainly deserving of such representation. Amtrak provides service to over thirty cities in Illinois. In addition, Amtrak employs some 2,200 Illinois residents, with earnings totaling over \$50 million per year. Regional representation will also ensure that the diverse interests of our regional economies can be brought to the table for equitable decision making in the Amtrak Boardroom.

Mr. President, I hope my colleagues who support Amtrak will join me in encouraging the Administration to submit qualified candidates, women and men with the knowledge and experience required to strengthen our national system of passenger transportation, to the Senate as soon as possible. ●

RECOGNITION OF THE LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an exemplary program in Missouri, the Leadership Training Institute for Youth (LTI). Every year at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri this leadership camp is held for youth from all over America. This camp inspires youth to work toward their goals and to achieve personal excellence.

With the leadership of Dr. Pat Briney, the attendees learn leadership skills through Christian values. LTI helps to guide youth through their most confusing years and teaches them coping mechanisms for future problems.

LTI represents the kind of spirit, honor and integrity that belong with today's youth leaders. I commend LTI staff and participants for their energy and faith to Christian values and hope they continue their important mission for years to come. ●

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE FRANK CAPRIO

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Frank Caprio of Providence, Rhode Island, who will be honored at the 37th Annual Verrazzano Day Banquet this Saturday.

A respected and admired Rhode Islander, Frank Caprio was born in Providence in 1936, the son of immigrants. His father peddled produce and delivered milk in the Federal Hill neighborhood, while his beloved mother cared for Frank, his two brothers, Antonio Jr. and Joseph, and dedicated herself to her Church and community.

Frank Caprio epitomizes the American dream. From his humble beginnings, he is today a respected lawyer, successful businessman, and Chief Judge of the Providence Municipal Court. At Central High School he was an all-state wrestler who was encouraged to learn a trade, but he aspired to attain a college education. And he did. He worked his way through Providence College, earning his Bachelor of Arts. He later earned his education certificate from Rhode Island College.

Frank taught American government by day and attended Suffolk Law School at night. Inspired by President Kennedy, he ran for Providence City Council in 1962 and served for eight years. He was a delegate to the Rhode Island Constitutional Convention in 1973, and he has been elected a delegate to the Democratic National Convention five times.

Frank Caprio has practiced law for more than 30 years and has a remarkably diverse practice. He has served as special counsel to Cookson America, a fortune 500 corporation, and as legal counsel to the Providence Redevelopment Agency and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. But perhaps Frank's most revered clients are neighbors and friends, many of humble means, who seek out Frank as their defender, advocate, and voice. They cherish his friendship and offer trust in return, which is a wonderful tribute to Frank and a testament to the way he has led his life.

Through initiative, hard work and tireless energy, Frank has attained much success in business. He is a principal owner of the Coast Guard House, a historic waterfront restaurant in Narragansett and another popular restaurant, Casey's, in Wakefield. In addition to his success as a restaurateur, Frank is a principal owner of Cherry Hill Housing in Johnston.

Despite all of his success in law, government, and business, Frank has always understood the importance of community and public service. He serves on the board of Federal Hill House and as a volunteer at Nickerson House. He is a fellow of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, and is a member of both the Bishop's Council and the State Board of Governors for Higher Education.

In honor of his own father, he established the Antonio "Tup" Caprio Scholarship at Suffolk University, and is the 1997-1998 Chairman of the Providence College Alumni Fund. He holds an Honorary Doctor of Law Degree from Suffolk and has been recognized by countless organizations for his spirit of community and his humanitarian efforts.

Mr. President, I am pleased today to salute Frank Caprio on receiving the prestigious Annual Verrazzano Day award, and I extend best wishes to Frank, his wife, Joyce, and their wonderful family on this momentous occasion. ●