

would not exist today. I would like to recognize their work as they seek to honor their ancestors by collecting historical accounts, and locating important artifacts from this time in history. Accordingly, the Lakota language includes an expression that fits their mission: *Hecel lena Oyate kin nipi kte*, so that our people may live.●

#### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE WARRINGTON

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, in light of today's historic vote on the Amtrak reauthorization legislation, I wish to honor a great transportation leader and a son of New Jersey George Warrington, who passed away at his home in Mendham, NJ, on December 24, 2007. During a public service career that spanned more than 30 years, Mr. Warrington held an influential and decisive role in the development and continued success of public transportation systems not just in our State of New Jersey but throughout the entire region. His role in the early development of NJ Transit helped make the agency what it is today one of the largest and most successful transit agencies in the country.

George Warrington's contributions to public transportation cannot be overstated. His work to secure funding for NJ Transit in the 1970s was crucial to the creation and early development of the agency. He later served as vice president and general manager of NJ Transit's rail operations and brought a necessary focus on customer service, ontime performance, and repairing the rail system's infrastructure. He worked tirelessly to expand regional rail capacity by adding additional seating in cars and parking spaces at stations across the State. He also promoted the development of new rail lines, such as the Midtown Direct Montclair service and Newark Light Rail extension, and he spearheaded the addition of key rail stations such as Hoboken Terminal and Secaucus Junction. These initiatives were central in creating and maintaining a successful public railroad transportation system in New Jersey and the surrounding region, and I was proud to secure Federal funding for these efforts.

George's efforts on one project, in particular, will help secure the economic future of the New Jersey-New York region and that is the new Hudson River Rail Tunnel. Also called the Trans-Hudson Express, THE Tunnel, part of the Access to the Region's Core, ARC, Project, this new rail tunnel will ensure that travel between New Jersey and Manhattan by rail will be available well into the future. Existing tunnels are already at capacity during peak hours, with trains moving through them at a rate of one every 2½ minutes. Without this new tunnel, our region's economy will suffer. New Jerseyans would lose out on a convenient and environmentally friendly way to commute to work into New York

City and New York City would lose out on a strong and dedicated labor pool of New Jersey workers. George garnered critical early support for the new tunnel project from both sides of the river, a feat acknowledged by many experts as vital to the project.

George Warrington also listened to passengers and employees, a critical feature of any successful organization. He considered their input in new rail car designs, such as the popular new multilevel cars. These rail cars eliminate the dreaded "third seat," while adding to the overall number of seats in the car.

For several years, George also served as executive director of the Delaware River Port Authority, which governs the Delaware River port system, four major vehicle bridges in the region, and the PATCO rail system. He is credited with speeding up project delivery times and managing the conversion to collecting tolls in just one direction on the bridges.

George Warrington must also be recognized for his significant contributions to national transportation as Amtrak's corporate president and CEO and chief executive of its Northeast corridor. He was instrumental in the launching of Acela Express, the nation's first high-speed rail line, as well as carrying out the completion of the electrification of the entire Northeast corridor rail line between Boston and Washington, DC, another project I was proud to secure Federal funding for. The Northeast corridor now offers the country's premier high-speed rail service and carries more passengers than all of the airlines combined between key northeastern cities. George will always be remembered as an important advocate of a strong national rail system.

Mr. President, while George Warrington passed away on December 24, 2007, his legacy lives on through his family and through his lasting contributions to the rail industry both in New Jersey and throughout the Nation. On behalf of the people of New Jersey, I am proud to commemorate his many achievements to make New Jersey and our Nation a better place and convey our best wishes to his family and friends.●

#### HONORING REV. DR. WALTER SOBOLEFF

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, when Americans think about what they most admire about my home State of Alaska, the breathtaking scenery first comes to mind. What I most admire about my home State of Alaska are the people, and in particular our Native Elders.

Our Elders are the bearers of our uniquely Alaskan culture. They have accepted the responsibility of ensuring that succeeding generations know where they came from. They preserve and transmit the traditions that make Alaska different from anyplace else.

Looking at the face of an Alaska Native Elder is like looking at the concentric rings in the trunk of a tree. Every line on that face represents a precious slice of Alaska history.

It would be a vast understatement to characterize the Elders as witnesses to Alaska history. They are the living embodiment of Alaska's history. They were the first generation of Alaskans to experience and adapt to the challenge of living in two worlds. They have come to embrace the traditional world of subsistence and the modern world of the Internet in the same breath. Some like the individual I speak about today have devoted their lives to preserving Alaska Native languages as spoken and written languages for all eternity.

Today I pay tribute to a most respected Tlingit Elder, the Reverend Doctor Walter Soboleff, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on November 14, 2008. Walter Soboleff was born on a small island called Killisnoo near Admiralty Island in Southeast Alaska. His father was the son of a Russian Orthodox priest serving in Southeast Alaska. His mother, a Tlingit Indian. Four languages were spoken in his home: Russian, German, English, and Tlingit.

Walter Soboleff was educated at a US Government Indian school on his island and subsequently at the Sheldon Jackson School in Sitka. Several years after graduating from Sheldon Jackson with a high school diploma he enrolled at Dubuque University in Iowa, receiving a bachelor's degree in education in 1937 and a divinity degree in 1940.

Ordained as a Presbyterian minister he returned to Southeast Alaska to take the pulpit at the Memorial Presbyterian Church in Juneau. The church, which was built to minister to the Tlingit people, opened its doors to all. Its congregation included Caucasians and African Americans, and Filipinos as well as Haidas and Tsimshians.

We take diverse congregations like this for granted in 21st Century Alaska. It must be remembered, though, that Jim Crow racial segregation laws and practices were quite prevalent in pre-World War II Southeast Alaska.

Reverend Soboleff emerged a key player in the maintaining and enhancing the Tlingit culture, serving seven terms as President of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and broadcasting church services in Tlingit on the radio. From 1962-1970 he took his ministry to the water traveling on mission vessels to Native villages, logging camps and Coast Guard facilities in the archipelago of islands that make up Southeast Alaska.

In 1952, Reverend Soboleff accepted a commission in the Alaska Army National Guard, serving as Chaplain for 20 years, retiring with rank of Lieutenant Colonel on February 1, 1973.

In 1970, Walter Soboleff founded the Alaska Native Studies Department at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He

taught Tlingit history, language and literature, retiring again in 1974.

You may have discovered that it is difficult to use the words retirement and Walter Soboleff in the same sentence. Every time Walter Soboleff retires he embarks on a new and ever more vital project.

Awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity by Dubuque University in 1952 and an honorary Doctor of Humanities by the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1968 he continues to serve as Pastor Emeritus of the Northern Lights United Church in Juneau and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. And lest I forget, he was the first Alaska Native to serve on the Alaska State Board of Education, where he served as chairman.

I think I can speak for the entire Senate in wishing the Reverend Doctor Walter Soboleff a happy 100th birthday. We extend our best wishes to Dr. Soboleff for continued good health and good works.●

#### RECOGNIZING LARRY G. SALYERS

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish today to congratulate Larry G. Salyers on his years of service as the manager of Tri-State Airport. Larry's hard work and continuous efforts have greatly enhanced this important regional airport as well as the community it serves. I am honored to have served with him and to share his story with you today.

In December 1975, Larry began working at the airport as Director of Operations and Security. He exhibited extraordinary dedication and hard work and, in March 1980 he was promoted to assistant airport manager. In 1981, he was named acting manager and by May 1982 he was appointed as the airport manager.

Under Larry's leadership, the airport has experienced many positive changes. He has overseen numerous structural renovations in Tri-State's terminal design and the conditions of the runways. At present, the airport is in the process of a major runway extension which will allow Tri-State to continue its reputation for excellence for many years to come. Larry has also diligently worked to ensure that the airport has the best maintenance vehicles and equipment possible.

Throughout his long service, Larry has seen Tri-State Airport through some of the aviation industry's hardest times. He has seen the deregulation of the industry which left many small communities across the country with significantly diminished air service. The September 11 terrorist attacks also had enormous repercussions throughout the aviation business as many airlines went into bankruptcy and new security measures were required at all the Nation's airports. Tri-State, like many small airports across the country, is often the first to feel the pain during trying times for the

aviation industry and the last to recover. Despite these challenges, Larry was able to successfully keep everything going, and I am pleased to say that in recent years, Tri-State Airport has seen significant financial and passenger growth. Between 2006 and 2007, passenger traffic increased by 62 percent, and the airport is currently producing its highest boarding numbers in over 13 years. Much of this success can be directly contributed to Larry's efforts to bring Allegiant's Air's low-fare flights to the airport. This accomplishment has helped Tri-State Airport to contribute roughly \$50 million annually to the local economy.

The hard work and dedication of Larry Salyers personifies the attitude of America and the true nature of West Virginians. When he retires, he will have left Tri-State Airport and the region around the city of Huntington better than it was when he first began his career there over 33 years ago.●

#### TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL HENRY A. "TREY" OBERING, III

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I honor a great American, a native of Birmingham, AL, LTG Henry A. "Trey" Obering III, on the occasion of his retirement after 35 years of dedicated service to our country. His passion for progressing missile defense has been imperative to its success and critical to our national security and the safety of our allies.

General Obering entered the Air Force in 1973 and received his pilot's wings in 1975. From there he went on to become a skilled air-to-air Top Gun-trained F-4E pilot and lead a very distinguished career. As an Air Force captain, General Obering was assigned to the Space Shuttle Program the year before the first orbiter flew into space. General Obering became an important part of this pioneering endeavor and participated in 15 space shuttle launches as a NASA orbiter project engineer.

I want to highlight the critical role General Obering played in developing, testing, and fielding this Nation's ballistic missile defense system. General Obering joined the Missile Defense Agency in December of 2001, the very month the United States announced its withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which had seriously impeded the development and deployment of missile defenses. He deserves credit for the tremendous progress our Nation has made in recent years in the field of missile defense. The advancement of all approaches to ballistic missile defense, BMD, including kinetic energy interceptor, KEI, ground-based mid-course defense, GMD, Aegis ballistic missile defense, and terminal high altitude area defense system, THAAD, can be attributed to the hard work of General Obering and those he has led.

Under General Obering's leadership, the Agency addressed current and

emerging ballistic missile threats by fielding missile defenses at an unprecedented pace to defend the United States, our deployed troops, and U.S. allies and friends around the world. During his tenure as director, the Agency emplaced ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California, developed and deployed missile defenses to defeat shorter-range threats to our troops and our allies, and successfully modified 18 U.S. Navy Aegis warships to give U.S. military commanders a highly effective regional ballistic missile defense capability.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of our missile defense to our friends, our allies, and, importantly, those that would mean us harm, General Obering presided over a series of historic flight tests of our ballistic missile defense system and spearheaded efforts to train the warfighters employing the system. These tests proved to our allies that we are prepared to defend ourselves and our allies and will pursue technologies to further reduce and eventually eliminate the threat of attack by ballistic missiles.

General Obering has pursued an aggressive development program to address future threats, such as boost phase defenses, space tracking and surveillance, and technologies to destroy multiple threat objects using a single interceptor.

General Obering recognized early on the importance of working with our international partners and he led the expansion of the Department's missile defense cooperative activities. He pursued bilateral programs with Japan, Israel, the Czech Republic, and Poland, among others, as well as multilateral programs with NATO. Working closely with the State Department and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, General Obering's vision and personal engagement resulted in a broad consensus among international leaders, combatant commanders, and the international communities on the growing need to establish long-range missile defenses in Europe.

General Obering has overseen the expansion of the Missile Defense Agency. During his tenure, while executing all of the activities in one of the most important programs in the Department of Defense, the Agency successfully underwent unprecedented organizational changes. Thanks to his guidance, this transition is proceeding smoothly.

General Obering's leadership proved critical during two real-world crises. During North Korea's provocative missile launches in July 2006, General Obering oversaw the Agency's input to the Nation's strategic response and provided situational awareness to the President, combatant commanders, and the missile defense community. His assurances that the Nation had the option of a responsive missile defense capability, had it been necessary, contributed greatly to the maintenance of international stability. And in February 2008, General Obering also led the