

are important to American farmers, especially those in the South. The major legislation on which we have worked includes the peanut program; the Food and Agriculture Act of 1981; the Food Security Act of 1985; and the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990. The peanut, cotton, soybean, dairy, cattle, hog, poultry, and catfish programs have his fingerprints all over them. In each case, Dick's counsel, insight, ingenuity, and strong leadership have contributed not only to their passage and enactment into law, but to their overall success during their implementation phase.

He has indeed been my mentor and teacher. Practically all of my knowledge about American agriculture has come from him. There is no one more knowledgeable. Doctoral degrees are usually given to those in academic circles because of their knowledge about a particular subject. I gave Dick the name "Dr. Fifield" because I felt he was superior to most PhD's. Not only will I miss him as a mentor and teacher, but also as a dear friend.

As ALFA's Washington director, he also works extensively with the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the U.S. Trade Representative; the Department of the Interior; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Army Corps of Engineers; the Statistical Reporting Service; the Farmers Home Administration; the Soil Conservation Service; as well as other agencies which handle agricultural programs and projects. It is no surprise that his friendly face is known far and wide within the various corners of the Federal Government.

He has been an effective representative of farm interests due not only to his God-given talents, but also because of his extensive experience as a college professor, a geologist, a science editor, and a horticulturist. Examples of his influence on Alabama agriculture are numerous and varied. For instance, the State's modern farmers market, located in Montgomery, was made possible by his submission of the original design and his work on legislation and grants to raise the \$5 million needed to build the facility. He started annual farmers market days in Montgomery, Huntsville, and Birmingham, establishing a producer-farmer market inside Birmingham's Eastwood Mall.

Dick initiated the ALFA's monthly Food Price Survey and he remains the project's director. The food basket report is regarded by the business community and the media as one of the State's best economic indicators.

He represented the peanut industry in efforts to protect Section 22 of the GATT negotiations. He is a member of the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Peanut Growers Group; Assistant Director of the Farm Crisis and Transition Committee for Alabama; and has served on the Governor's Agriculture Policy Advisory Committee and the Energy Advisory Committee. Along with the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Environmental Task

Force, he helped form a State-wide endangered species task force for Alabama.

Dick received his bachelor of science degree in biology and geology from Beloit College in 1951. He continued his education at the University of Hawaii, the Wisconsin Institute of Technology, and the University of Wisconsin, receiving his master's degree in 1972 from the University of Illinois.

Over the course of his career, he served as an instructor of geology at the Wisconsin Institute of Technology; as an exploration geologist with the New Jersey Zinc Co.; and as a representative of the college textbook division in sales and as a field editor in science with the Houghton Mifflin Company. Also, he served in the U.S. Army in the counter-intelligence corps as an investigative special agent. Before accepting his position with ALFA, he was assistant horticulturist with the University of Illinois.

Dick Fifield's retirement will leave a void for American agriculture. He is as knowledgeable as anyone I know of as to the complexity of the integral parts of food and fiber production in this country and their effects on every phase of the American economy. His goal has been to improve the quality of life for rural America while at the same time providing consumers with a stable, safe, and cost-effective farm programs. I hope he doesn't stray too far, for we will continue to rely on his counsel even after he retires.

I commend Dick for all his outstanding and unwavering service to the agricultural community, and wish him and his wonderful wife, Shirley, all the best as they retire and enter a new phase of their lives. I know he will enjoy having more quality time with his family and many, many friends. Both ALFA and the Alabama Congressional delegation will sorely miss his strong and principled advocacy for agriculture in our State.

ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION REACHES MILESTONE

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. President, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution were ratified on December 15, 1791, forming what we refer to as the Bill of Rights. The first amendment covers what we have come to consider the most primary and essential element of our freedom as Americans: "Congress shall make no law * * * abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

Thomas Jefferson once wrote that if it were left up to him to decide between a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, he would not hesitate to choose the latter. This year, we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Alabama Press Association [APA]. Founded in 1871, the APA is the oldest statewide trade association in Alabama and one of the oldest State newspaper associations in the Nation.

According to APA information, William Wallace Screws, the editor of the

Montgomery Advertiser in 1871, took the initiative and invited newspaper executives from around the State to help build new communication links among themselves. On March 17 of that year, eight editors and publishers met in Screws' office and made plans to organize the press of Alabama. Newspapers represented in that first meeting were the Montgomery Advertiser, the Montgomery Mail, the Evergreen Observer, the Troy Messenger, the Union Springs Times and Herald, the Montgomery State Journal, the Talladega Sun, and the Opelika Locomotive.

In 1872, at the first convention, 30 editors and publishers from every corner of the State came together to form a new association of newspapermen called the Editors and Publishers Association of the State of Alabama. Since those early days, this association has played an important role in developing the daily and weekly newspapers of Alabama and in helping to lead the State's economic and cultural development. The APA has also worked on behalf of the citizenry of Alabama by advocating stronger citizen access to government records and meetings.

On February 24 and 25 of this year, editors and publishers from Alabama's daily and weekly newspapers will gather for the 125th successive year. The site of this anniversary celebration is in Montgomery, the same city in which the organization was founded. During this convention, they will hear historians discuss the role of newspapers in Alabama's history while also considering the future role of newspapers in the Nation's rapidly changing communications industry.

The 1996 APA is led by its president, R. Douglas Pearson, editor and publisher of the Daily Mountain Eagle in Jasper. The first vice president is Michael R. Kelley, editor and publisher of the Clanton Advertiser, and the second vice president is John W. Stevenson, editor and publisher of the Randolph Leader. APA's executive director is William B. Keller.

For 125 years, the APA has thrived under its first amendment rights. Taken as a whole, freedom of the press in the United States rests upon relatively firm constitutional footing. The media's general right to publish material, regardless of potential impacts on government operations or other features of national life, has been accepted. Winston Churchill eloquently stated the importance of a free press in his own country during the midst of World War II when he said, "A free press is the unsleeping guardian of every other right that free men prize; it is the most dangerous foe of tyranny." I salute the APA on reaching this distinguished milestone.

DEE SCHELLING MEMORIAL

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize a New Mexican who made a notable contribution to my State—to its

communications and to its participation in public policy.

Daralee "Dee" Schelling passed away this week at the age of 57. She will be greatly missed.

Dee was the executive director of the New Mexico Broadcasters Association for 14 years and she was well-known among State legislators for her participation in legislative issues regarding broadcast interests.

In addition, she handled media relations for New Mexico First, an organization that Senator DOMENICI and I formed in 1986 to encourage citizens to take an active role in studying the long-range issues facing our State. Dee was with us from the beginning.

She was born in Colorado, but came to New Mexico in the mid-1960's to work in advertising. She became the first female ad agency president in our State and handled many major accounts including various movie promotions and the Double-Eagle II trans-Atlantic balloon crossing—an event which is a source of pride to New Mexicans and is commemorated at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

Dee's many public service accomplishments included service on numerous Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Ski New Mexico, and Project I committees.

She will be remembered fondly by many.

PRESS FREEDOM IN HONG KONG

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I rise today to speak out on behalf of freedom of the press in Hong Kong. As we approach Hong Kong's July 1, 1997 transfer to control under the People's Republic of China, there is great fear that one of the fundamental tenets of a free society—freedom of the press—will not survive the transition. China's track record on press freedom leaves much to be desired; the current Hong Kong Government should be actively working to shore up legal support for the press before it hands over control to Beijing.

The grand experiment of democracy in the United States would have surely failed were it not for a free press. Our founders realized that its importance was not only for general education, but also for exposing the dangers of would-be oppressive officials and prodding leaders into more ethical behavior. Our Nation's history has proven that the scrutiny of public light forces public officials both to serve the interests of the public and to serve honestly far better than they would without that scrutiny. Benjamin Franklin once said that "whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech." It is precisely this fear—that the PRC will attempt to overthrow Hong Kong's current way of life by stifling its press, with the quiet acquiescence of the current authorities—that I wish to address today.

Hong Kong boasts of one of the freest media systems in all of Asia, with more

than 70 daily newspapers. The press is privately owned, offering Hong Kong citizens access to a broad range of political and social views. But journalists in and out of Hong Kong cite the present administration's sluggish pace in revising anachronistic press laws as one of their key sources of fear for the press after 1997.

Current Hong Kong laws which restrict press freedom are rarely applied by the government, but an authoritarian regime could easily use them to prohibit the expression of any objectionable ideas. These laws—which are inconsistent with Hong Kong's own Bill of Rights—include the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, which gives the Governor broad powers of censorship during loosely defined "emergencies"; the Crimes Ordinance, which defines any publication or speech "intending" to foster hatred of the government as seditious; and the Official Secrets Act, which makes unauthorized publication of information illegal. Some of the democratically elected members of the Legislative Council, along with independent journalists groups such as the Hong Kong Journalists Association, have repeatedly urged the government to repeal or amend these laws. These same reformers have also urged the Hong Kong Governor's office to enact legislation which would provide greater access to information, similar to the United States Freedom of Information Act. But the current administration continues to move slowly, to the point of delay. There is no reason to believe that the successor Chinese administration will be any more willing to undertake these reforms; it is likely to oppose them outright. The time to make these changes is now. Above all, the government should refrain from introducing any new laws which in any way restrict the press' right to function independently. A recent call by pro-Beijing Legislator Law Cheung-kiok for hearings to consider regulating newspaper prices, a move that appears to be aimed specifically at controlling the Oriental Daily News, is exactly what the Hong Kong government should not be doing.

Joseph Pulitzer argued that "publicity may not be the only thing that is needed, but it is the one thing without which all other agencies will fail." There is no point of having a freely elected democratic government if there is no way to freely report on its actions and to expose its abuses. A free press is the only guarantor of the people's right to know what their government does and the best guarantor of their right to offer alternative views. Hong Kong's press must remain free and unrestricted if the colony's current rights are to be maintained. The colonial government has the immediate responsibility of ensuring that it does.

PROGRESS AGAINST FRAUD IN POLITICAL ASYLUM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this is the first anniversary of a major initia-

tive by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to reduce illegal immigration by cracking down on fraudulent asylum claims. One year ago, INS Commissioner Doris Meissner put new regulations into effect which have more than doubled the number of asylum officers, increased the number of immigration judges and streamlined the asylum application process.

The results have been dramatic. In 1 year, there has been a 57 percent reduction in new asylum applications. Clearly, there has been a reduction in the filing of fraudulent claims. In addition, 84 percent of new asylum claims are now heard by INS within 60 days. This initiative is a major success story in the Clinton administration's ongoing effort to combat illegal immigration.

In coming weeks, the Senate Judiciary Committee will recommend comprehensive immigration reforms. A large part of these reforms focus on the need to reduce illegal immigration, including steps to deal with abuse of the right of asylum.

As the INS has shown, asylum abuse can be remedied—without denying true refugees the right to apply for asylum. They deserve adequate time to learn how to apply for asylum, overcome their fear of authority, and obtain help with their applications. We must avoid unfair restrictions that result in real harm to true refugees.

I ask unanimous consent that recent articles on the major progress against asylum abuse be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 15, 1996]

SOME PROGRESS AT INS

A year ago, the Immigration and Naturalization Service put into effect new regulations to control abuse of the political asylum program. Commissioner Doris Meissner recently released figures that indicate progress. The problem has been this: Although immigration law authorizes sanctuary to be given to people in fear of political persecution at home, too many undocumented immigrants had figured out that they could indefinitely postpone deportation merely by requesting asylum. They would be automatically given work permits, and, because of the backlog of cases awaiting adjudication, they could often disappear into the general population without much chance of being found. In 1994, 123,000 new applications were filed (up from 56,000 three years earlier), and the backlog exceeded 425,000.

In response, the INS decided to issue work permits only to those granted asylum or waiting more than 180 days for an adjudication. Within a year, applications dropped by 57 percent to 53,000. Then Congress approved a request for more asylum officers and judges, and the new positions—which are still being filled—have enabled INS to complete more than twice as many cases as it did last year. Finally, most individual claims for asylum are heard within 60 days instead of waiting months, or even years, as was the case before. While the backlog remains almost unchanged, the figure is deceptive, inflated by a sizable number of petitions filed pursuant to court order by certain Salvadorans and Nicaraguans.

Although some challenge has been made to the claims of progress made by the INS, it is