

appreciation for fine arts and for the theater, both of which were nurtured in Detroit. And, as an avid basketball player and fan, he was able to cheer on the Detroit Pistons during the greatest years that organization has known.

Special Agent Wilson passed away on August 29, 1999 at the age of 47. He is survived by his wife, Patricia, and two sons, Lerone and Paul.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation works hard to ensure that its agents set a strong moral example for the people they are entrusted to protect. There is no question that Special Agent Wilson was a leader in this regard. Dedicated to his Nation, his agency and his family, he was a role model in the Detroit community, and he will be deeply missed.●

#### HONORING SHERIFF JOHN T. PIERPONT

● Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I would like to honor John T. Pierpont for his outstanding service as Sheriff of Greene County, Missouri. I want to extend my personal appreciation and heartfelt thanks to John for his dedication and hard work.

There are few careers more noble than those spent in public service. Sheriff Pierpont's twenty years of service with the Greene County Sheriff's Office have meant a great deal to the people he has served. Prior to being elected Sheriff of Greene County, Mr. Pierpont served as U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Missouri for eight years. His service has extended well beyond the Sheriff's office and law enforcement to community and charitable organizations across Greene County and throughout our state.

Sheriff Pierpont has represented the state of Missouri and the Sheriff's Department with dignity, integrity, and professionalism. His commitment to the enforcement of Missouri law and the protection of our residents is to be commended. I am delighted to honor my friend and fellow Greene County resident, John Pierpont.

May God richly bless John and his family as they begin this next chapter in their lives.●

#### TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL DAWSON

● Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Michael Dawson, who, over the past 11 years, has been my press secretary, one of my most trusted advisors, and a man whose judgement has been a key component to my success, from the campaign trail, to the Statehouse of Ohio and to the Capitol of the United States. But most of all, Mike Dawson has been, and will always be, my friend.

I first got to know Michael in 1989, when I was pursuing the governorship of Ohio and he was working as a top aide to then-Congressman Mike DeWine during his campaign for Lieutenant Governor. I was immediately struck by his work ethic and his tenac-

ity. During that campaign, it was reported that if Mike saw the lights on in the offices of our opponent when he was leaving the office, no matter what time it was, Mike would turn around, go back inside and continue to work. Mike refused to allow them to get the upper hand by putting in more time or effort.

Once the election was over, and I was elected Governor, there was little doubt in my mind that one of the people I had to have on my executive team was Mike Dawson. Since then, Mike has been with me through thick and thin and through good times and bad. Whatever the situation, and no matter how rough things got, Mike was always there providing me sound advice.

I will never forget Mike's dedication and professionalism during the Lucasville prison riots in April of 1993—a period I consider to be the darkest days of my administration. For eleven days, Ohio held its breath as the Lucasville prison erupted in violence. As I worked to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, one of the people I depended upon most for assistance was Mike Dawson. Not only did Mike serve as press secretary at that time, but he was also my executive assistant in charge of emergency management operations. In that position, Mike had a strong hand in working with the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, the Ohio Highway Patrol, and several other agencies in helping to put an end to the siege at the prison and restoring order. Mike initiated a task force to review what had gone wrong at Lucasville and to make recommendations on how to avoid similar Lucasville situations in the future. A special emphasis of the task force focused on the proper role of the media in covering prison situations.

Mike's service in emergency management operations was not limited just to the Lucasville riots. He was instrumental in Ohio's efforts to coordinate assistance to flood-ravaged areas of Ohio in 1997 and 1998, and was always right in the middle of things whenever Ohio was faced with an emergency situation during my two terms as Governor.

But no tribute to Mike would be complete without mentioning the work he has done as my press secretary. Mike has a relationship with Ohio's press corps and editorial writers that is legendary. All you would have to do, Mr. President, is ask any reporter who has covered my two terms as governor or my first two years in the Senate to find out what kind of a professional Mike really is.

Throughout the entire time that he has been my press secretary, Mike has always been accessible, always willing to go the extra mile to furnish the information that will make a reporter's job easier and he has made it a point to be able to provide an answer to whatever questions the press ask. If Mike does not know an answer, he will find it, and he will make sure that he un-

derstands the entire issue well-enough to be able to explain it. Mike has always been relentless in wanting to guarantee that the press gets the story right the first time.

Of course, the Ohio press corps could write volumes of examples of Mike's tenacity in wanting a story reported correctly. If Mike felt he was right, he would argue his point until that reporter understood what he was talking about and where he was coming from. If Mike knew he was right, he would be relentless in his effort to not only convince the reporter to see his point of view, but to agree with it as well.

Mike's style has earned him the respect of reporters from all across Ohio. In fact, when I left the Governor's office to come to the Senate, Mike was lauded in a column written by Joe Hallett in the Cleveland Plain Dealer for how diligently he served as press secretary during my administration: probably the highest compliment any press secretary can receive from his peers.

That column put in print what I already knew and what I told millions of Ohioans on the night I was elected to the Senate—that Mike Dawson was the best press secretary in America. It was true then, and it is true today. In all the years I have known him, and in the hundreds, if not thousands, of stories that Mike handled for my gubernatorial administration, as well as here in the Senate, he has always kept the best interests of Ohio at heart. I have been truly blessed to have had Mike provide me such tremendous professional service over the years.

As I have been blessed with Mike's service, he has been blessed even more so with a wonderful and loving family. To witness the love that Mike has for his wife Laurel and his son Will makes it evident that they are the most important priorities in his life, and to see them all together makes it easy to realize that God's love truly shines upon them.

Mike is an Ohioan to the core, and he has always considered it his distinct privilege to work on behalf of the people of his state of Ohio in an effort to improve government and make government work more efficiently, and for the benefit of all Ohioans. When serving the people of Ohio, Mike was the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night, and it was a given that Mike was on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Today, though, Mike's responsibilities are focused a little more closer to home, and he and Laurel have decided to go back to their roots and raise Will in the Buckeye State. And while I am losing a valued member of my staff, I take great comfort in the knowledge that my friend Mike Dawson's service to the people of Ohio will continue. Mike has gone back to work for his former boss and my very dear friend, Senator MIKE DEWINE. I know that he will be successful in this new endeavor.

I consider myself a better person and a better public servant for having the

opportunity to know Michael Dawson. He has been a loyal friend and a sage counselor whom I will truly miss.●

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM F.X.  
McCONNELL

● Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a fellow Utahn, William F.X. McConnell of Salt Lake City, a remarkable man with a remarkable story. I am not sure that in this retelling I can do justice to his sacrifices or of those who fought along side of him during World War II's campaign for the Rhine River. But, I think my colleagues would be interested in this history and would like to join me in paying tribute to the bravery of these men.

In December 1944, Bill McConnell arrived in France and was assigned to the 168th Engineer Combat Battalion. Shortly thereafter, Bill McConnell and his battalion fought in the terrible Battle of the Bulge. His battalion paved the way for an allied victory by removing road blocks and tank traps, building bridges under fire, and other perilous assignments. But, these were not the most harrowing experiences to which McConnell was assigned. The worst was yet to come.

McConnell and his battalion were called to cross the Rhine River, an assault as dangerous as it was important. He was told that this would be a simple assault, with plenty of support provided. At 2:00 a.m. on March 26, 1945, he boarded a row boat to cross the Rhine River into Germany. During the crossing, a bank of lights on the German side of the river were suddenly turned on, spotlighting the American soldiers. German tracer bullets fell like deadly rain upon them. The promised support from the American side never came.

While rowing, McConnell was hit in the wrist. Bleeding profusely, he continued to row. Shortly thereafter, several tracer bullets ripped through his thigh and knee. Continuing to row, he was hit a third time by an unidentified object on the side of his face and head. This blow knocked him into the water where he was miraculously saved by an assault boat returning from the German shore. Still without cover, the occupants of the boat were forced to debark and trudge through an active sewer line in order to escape the German gunfire.

For this act of bravery, Bill McConnell was awarded a well-deserved Purple Heart. In addition, he has been honored with the American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation, European Theater of Operations with four battle stars, and the Belgium Croix de Guerre (War Cross). These medals stand as a symbol of his dedication.

But, Bill McConnell's battle since the war has been to keep this military history alive. While the battle at Remagen and other locations during the war to defeat the Third Reich have been well-chronicled in books and on film,

engagements such as the Rhine crossing are still unknown to many Americans.

Since the war, McConnell has worked tirelessly in support of veterans organizations. Shortly after returning from the war he worked as a national service officer with the Disabled American Veterans. For 25 years, he served in the Veterans Administration Adjudication Division, in positions including senior adjudicator, chairman of the rating board, and adjudication officer.

For more than 40 years, he has been the American Legion member in charge of placing U.S. flags on graves for Memorial Day. He has served as past state commander in Utah of the Disabled American Veterans. He is the founder of the Salt Lake City chapter and national service officer of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, where he volunteers to help veterans with their disability claims. Clearly, he is one who has helped many.

There are thousands of World War II veterans just like Bill McConnell, who fought courageously for freedom. But, William F.X. McConnell is one who happens to live in my home state. He exemplifies the dedication of all American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—past, present, and future—who have always been on watch to defend our country and its vital interests.

Today, I want to thank Bill McConnell for his service in uniform and for his service to our nation's veterans. This stand as his own monument. I am pleased to call the Senate's attention to his bravery in battle and to his many contributions to veterans.●

MR. LEONARD E. AND MRS.  
LOUISE A. PLACHTA DAY

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, November 11, 2000 is a very special day on the campus of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, MI. The day has been proclaimed Mr. Leonard E. and Mrs. Louise A. Plachta Day, in honor of the former President and First Lady of the University. I rise today to recognize this occasion and to pay tribute to the magnificent couple being honored.

The couple arrived in Mt. Pleasant in 1972 when Mr. Plachta took a job as Professor of Accounting. He served as Assistant Dean of CMU's College of Business Administration from 1977 to 1979, when he took over the position of Dean. In January of 1992, he was appointed to serve as President of the University, and he served in this position until his retirement in July of 2000.

Mr. Plachta's 8-year tenure as President stands as one of the most productive stints in the history of the University. His financial restructuring of CMU has allowed it to remain one of the most affordable public universities in the State of Michigan. He initiated a number of programs to give students real-world experience to help prepare them for future employment, including

developing a state-of-the-art Career Services Center and expanding internship opportunities for students.

He drew national attention for the Degree Partners Program, which is a guaranteed four-year degree agreement with students designed to save them money as well as get skilled professionals into the job market quickly. He also initiated one of the first leadership scholar programs in the country, a four-year educational protocol designed to help students develop ethical leadership skills they can apply in their professions.

Mr. Plachta oversaw significant upgrading of classrooms and facilities during his tenure. This included new, highly technological music and science buildings; new and renovated athletic facilities; and a pending Library and Information Services Center that will incorporate technology to link students with academic resources from around the world.

He also oversaw a complete reorganization of CMU's academic programs in order to increase interdepartmental cooperation and draw attention to the University's strengths. This reorganization included a new College of Communication and Fine Arts, a new College of Health Professions, redefined science programs through a new College of Science and Technology, and a revamped College of Business Administration, College of Education and Human Services, and College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

One of the greatest accomplishments of his tenure, though, has been the leadership role CMU has taken in terms of the chartering of public school academies, charter schools. More than 17,000 K-12 students, approximately 50 percent of whom are minorities or at risk children, are enrolled in 59 CMU-licensed schools throughout the State of Michigan, with families on waiting lists at nearly every school. In addition, the national Charter Schools Development and Performance Institute, housed at CMU, had its grand opening earlier this year, on May 1, 2000.

Mrs. Plachta has also greatly contributed to the CMU community. For twelve years, she worked as a member of the clerical staff. She provided superior guidance and caring support to nontraditional students as the nontraditional student services liaison, which is a volunteer position. Her knowledge in this position came honestly, as she earned a master's degree herself as a nontraditional student. And, as First Lady, she has been a much-loved ambassador for CMU and an outstanding member of the Mount Pleasant community, volunteering with numerous organizations and strongly supporting adult literacy programs.

Central Michigan University stands where it does today, poised for success in the 21st Century, in large part due to the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Plachta. They have worked together to bring