an economics professor at Eastern Connecticut State University. Yesterday, Dr. Free was honored by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as one of four recipients of the U.S. Professors of the Year Award. I would like to congratulate Dr. Free, as well as Dr. Douglas Cooper, a professor of chemical engineering at the University of Connecticut, the winner of the Professor of the Year award for the State of Connecticut.

This award is the only national honor that specifically recognizes excellence in teaching and mentoring at the undergraduate level. Over 300 nominees for the award were evaluated on their impact and involvement with students, their scholarly approach to teaching, their contributions to undergraduate education, and support from their colleagues and students.

Dr. Free, who received her doctorate from the University of Notre Dame, has taught economics at ECSU since 1983. During that time, she has distinguished herself among her peers through her commitment to her students and to teaching. She helped found the Connecticut Consortium for Learning and Teaching, a statewide organization devoted to promoting excellence in teaching. She is also a member of the Connecticut Campus Compact, which focuses on service learning.

Dr. Free's students know her as a professor who brings ideas from different academic fields into her classroom, and who creates new and innovative courses such as Economics of Professional Sports. She has also devoted her time and energy to improve academic advising and freshman orientation at ECSU. Her methods, techniques, and enthusiasm have won praise from fellow professors and students alike. In 2001, she was awarded the university's Distinguished Faculty Award.

Dr. Rhona Free is truly an inspiration, not only to students and teachers, but to all of us who strive to make this country a better place for our children and grandchildren. In a demanding profession, she has gone above and beyond her duties and responsibilities to truly make a difference in the lives of not only her own students, but students and professors throughout the State of Connecticut. I congratulate her on her accomplishments, and I wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO MS. JUDITH MAYNARD

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to an extraordinary Vermonter, Ms. Judith Maynard, who was recently named a National Distinguished Principal. As one of 65 principals chosen nationwide, this award places Ms. Maynard in an elite class of educators.

Ms. Maynard has dedicated her life to the education and well-being of Vermont children. After working her way through an undergraduate and two masters' degrees at the University of Vermont, she launched her career as an educator. For the past 26 years, Vermont students have benefited from her extraordinary leadership. She has served as the principal of Chamberlin School in South Burlington, Vermont for the last eleven years and headed the Folsom School in South Hero for 10 years before that.

At Chamberlin, Ms. Maynard sought out grant money to hire the district's first school social worker—helping prevent problems at home from damaging students' performance at school. She has reworked the school's curriculum to provide focused, cohesive instruction across grade levels. She has made a priority of spending as much time as possible with her students, personally tutoring them in math and never saying no to those students who want to read a book with her or discuss losing a tooth. And she has fought to ensure that her young students have access to a nutritious breakfast at school, providing them with the fuel they need to successfully get through the school day.

The impact of her efforts is clear. Standardized test results on mathematics problem solving for fourth-graders at her school have jumped in the last 2 years from 48 percent achieving the benchmark of success in 2002 to 70 percent in 2004. These are impressive gains by any measure.

Ms. Maynard's leadership demonstrates the importance of having strong, dedicated principals in each of our schools. Providing vision, direction and support to all who work under the schoolhouse roof ensures that our children receive the best possible education. Together they provide our children with the skills and confidence needed to achieve their goals and lead happy, meaningful lives. America's future depends on the efforts of exceptional educational leaders like Judith Maynard. I congratulate her for her success and salute her for her tireless dedication to the children of Vermont.●

TRIBUTE TO SPECIALIST JEREMY F. REGNIER, LITTLETON, NH

● Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to remember and honor SP Jeremy F. Regnier of Littleton, NH for his service and supreme sacrifice in the service of his country.

Specialist Regnier demonstrated a willingness and dedication to serve and defend his country by joining the National Guard soon after this country was attacked in September 2001. Just as many of America's heroes have taken up arms in the face of dire threats, Jeremy too, dedicated himself to the defense of our ideals, values, freedoms, and way of life. His valor and service cost him his life, but earned him a place on the roll call of honor within the pantheon of heroes this country has produced.

Following basic training and a tour in the National Guard, Jeremy joined the regular Army as a Bradley Vehicle Crewman and was assigned to various units, eventually joining his comrades in 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. From this unit's home base in Fort Hood, TX, he would deploy in March 2004 to Iraq in pursuit of those who would threaten our way of life.

Throughout his short career, Jeremy developed a long list of accolades and experiences which testify to the dedication and devotion he held for the Army, his fellow soldiers, and his country. With tours in New Hampshire, Korea, Texas, and Iraq, Jeremy's expertise contributed greatly to his unit's successes and cemented his place as a participant in the great endeavor known as America. Jeremy was recognized for his service by the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

My condolences and prayers go out to Jeremy's family, and I offer them my deepest sympathies and most heartfelt thanks for the service, sacrifice, and example of their soldier, SP Jeremy Regnier. Jeremy exemplified the words of Daniel Webster who said, ''God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it.'' Because of his efforts, the liberty of this country is made more secure.●

TRIBUTE TO JIMMY RAY LOYLESS

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Jimmy Loyless, who has worked as a congressional fellow in my office since January of 2004. On behalf of my staff and the people of South Dakota, I would like to thank Jimmy for his hard work, his dedication, and his considerable contributions to my State and to this great Nation.

Jimmy chose a Presidential election year to join our staff to work on banking and tax issues, and he has spent the past year learning about what can and can't happen in the United States Senate in a politically charged atmosphere. Jimmy left the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, his home for the past 24 years, to spend a year learning about the legislative process. And what a year it has been.

Jimmy came on board around the time that a series of scandals rocked the mutual fund industry, and almost immediately Jimmy was called upon to sit through a long series of hearings and witnesses. While learning the nitty-gritty of an industry may not be the most glamorous of duties, I am hopeful that at the very least, Jimmy learned a thing or two that may help

him manage his own finances as well. In the end, Congress chose to let the Securities and Exchange Commission work through a series of regulatory changes to clean up the industry, but I am confident that the Committee's thorough investigation played a key role in forcing both the SEC and the industry itself to adopt critical changes to protect small investors.

Jimmy also got a close-up view of how Congress crafts tax legislation. For the better part of a year, the Senate crafted and debated the Jumpstart our Business Strength Act, S. 1637. Jimmy played a key role for our office, and helped to ensure that key provisions regarding tribal bonding authority were drafted and inserted into the bill. Unfortunately, those provisions, which would have provided critical economic development tools to Native Americans, were stripped out by the Republican majority in the House of Representatives as part of election year politics. This was a particularly demoralizing moment for those of us who care so deeply about South Dakota and Native American communities throughout the United States, yet Jimmy managed to remain optimistic and cheerful about what we can accomplish in the next round.

Having a financial services expert on board was indispensable when a large foreign conglomerate, Rabobank, announced its proposed takeover of South Dakota's local Farm Credit Service lender. Jimmy took the lead on analyzing the possible impact on South Dakota farmers, ranchers and lenders, and displayed a deep understanding of the needs of rural America.

Jimmy got a bit more than he bargained for when our lead banking staffer went out on maternity leave. Jimmy rose to the occasion, however, and performed admirably on such issues as reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program, tracking progress on the Basel II capital accords, evaluating the merits of a controversial preemption ruling by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and developing proposals to reduce, in a responsible manner, the regulatory burden on our nation's financial institutions. In addition, Jimmy has provided key insights into the development of a South Dakota program to develop cybersecurity programs for financial institutions.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention Jimmy's role in our continued efforts to pass comprehensive deposit insurance reform. Although we were hopeful that Jimmy would be the Johnny Damon of deposit insurance reform, the Boston Red Sox managed to win the World Series while our reform bill will live to see yet another Congress.

It is my pleasure and honor to stand before the Senate today to thank Jimmy Loyless publicly for his service to the United States Senate. I am pleased he will continue to serve our country by returning to the FDIC, which is lucky to have him.●

GRAND MA'S STORY

● Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I recently received a letter from Iva D. Fesler Johnson. In it, she recalls what her grandmother, whom she called ''Grand Ma,'' told her about slavery. I would like to thank her for sharing this with me. Grand Ma's story is one of strength and perseverance—a story that took place during one of the darkest points in our Nation's history. The following is the story contained in the letter:

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation declaring ''All Slaves Free.''

I, Iva D. Jones, was born the daughter of Richard and Lottie Foster Jones. My father's mother was Cicly Belle Graham, the daughter of Henry and Fanny Graham. She was my grandmother. She was a slave.

''Grand Ma,'' as we called her, was brought to this country from Africa by ship. Grand Ma was sold three times by auction on the auction block at Washington, Kentucky. She was sold to the highest bidder. She was given the name of her slave master. So, she was Cicly Marshall at one time, another time, Cicly Smith.

Grand Ma plowed the fields with oxen. She was the mother of nine children. She birthed some of the children in the field that she was plowing. Her slave master did not allow her to return to the cabin in which she lived until the day's work was done. She worked from sun up to dark. She was not paid any money for this work.

She was married three times by jumping across a broomstick.

The slaves would sometimes try to escape from the ''Life of Slavery'' to Canada. Grand Ma tried to escape. She was caught by ''Blood Hounds'' and ''Slave Catchers.'' She was punished by being whipped, and salt and pepper was put on the cuts made by the whip to help healing.

Grand Ma developed the gift of mid-wife. She delivered two sets of twins for her daughter, Margaret O'Banion, and her husband, Lucian O'Banion.

The slaves could not read or write. No one in the slave owner's family was allowed to teach the slaves because it was against the law. Some taught the slaves to read and write in secret. There were no schools for the slaves until after they were free.

Grand Ma said she saw President George Washington and President Abraham Lincoln.

Grand Ma lived through the Civil War. She said she prayed we would one day have a place to worship God under our own vine and fig tree and the slave master's whip would no longer be stained with African blood. God has answered her prayers. God has given us places to worship.

One writer states, slavery lasted 250 years in the United States. Millions of people were sold into bondage so that their owners could grow rich, selling sugar, tobacco, rice, and cotton grown by their slave laborers. The slaves loved to sing as they worked—such songs as ''Steal Away to Jesus,'' ''Go Down Moses,'' and ''Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.''

At dawn, the slaves would awake every morning except Sunday to the sound of the overseer's horn. Men, women, and children would scramble out of a pile of straw, piled high on the mud floor of their hut, with hoe in hand to the field. Mid-morning, they were told to fix their breakfast, which was cornmeal put in a pot of boiling water to make hoe-cakes. The hoe-cakes were cooked on the blade of their hoe over the fire. Once a week, they were given a little piece of salt pork and fish.

Sometimes the slaves would drop little pieces of grains in the boiling water.

The slaves did not have shoes to wear and their clothes were ragged.

The slave master would ride a horse to the slave auction. The slaves were chained together, barefoot and raggedy. They were taken to the auction block.

As they worked in the field, the overseer would ride a horse to watch the slaves work. If he thought the slaves were not working hard enough, he would flog them with a cowhide whip.

After slavery, Grand Ma worked for pay because she had to find a home. The master's wife told Grand Ma to leave Grand Ma's daughter, whose name was Ellen, with her while she looked for a home. Grad Ma said on Sunday morning a man riding a horse told Grand Ma, Ellen is dead and buried. Little Ellen was nine years of age. The man told Grand Ma that the missus said Ellen wasn't washing the hearth right. So the missus hit Ellen in the head with a sick of wood and Ellen died.

Other slaves were sold at auction, and members of a family were separated. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and children did not know the whereabouts of others.

Grand Ma was finally able to get a home of three rooms on a one acre lot in Lewisburg, Kentucky. She lived there many years and died in her home on June 26, 1926. The House has been modernized. It stands there today. I was 15 years of age when Grand Ma died.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see.

Written by Mrs. Iva Johnson

These are things my grandmother told me about slavery.●

CELEBRATING THE OPENING OF THE COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN HENDERSON COUNTY, KY

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I want to celebrate the dedication of the Columbia Sportswear 4 Star Distribution Center in Robards, Kentucky.

Columbia Sportswear is a family-owned company that was founded in Portland, OR, in 1938. You may be familiar with this corporation's amusing advertisements featuring Gert Boyle, the matriarch and chairwoman of the company, testing her products under various extreme conditions.

This is a $40 million dollar facility occupying 428,000 square feet. It could add up 400 new jobs to the area, not including any other indirect employment. This site will enable Columbia to have better access to its markets in the Midwest and on the East Coast. The industrial park that the center is built on was the result of cooperation between Henderson, McLean, Union, and Webster Counties. I was very impressed by how the region pulled together to make this project happen.

I believe that this distribution plant will bring jobs and other economic benefits to this area. Columbia Sportswear is good company and I am excited to welcome them to Western Kentucky. I look forward to the positive impact they will have on the community.●