

BOB EDWARDS AND NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the management of National Public Radio has announced that Bob Edwards, the host of "Morning Edition" for a quarter century, will be removed from the show at the end of this month. NPR executive vice president Ken Stern explained that getting rid of Edwards was part of "a natural evolution." He says that it was "a programming decision about the right sound."

"Natural evolution?" The "right sound?" I have no idea what these words mean. In fact, I have yet to talk to anyone who knows what those words mean.

If NPR's management wants to remove a star broadcaster, enormously popular all across America, you would think they would offer a clear, coherent explanation. But, no, the best we are offered is that they want a different "sound."

Well, this is not very sound on the part of NPR management. Think about it: Bob Edwards has been the host of "Morning Edition" for 25 years. He has won every radio broadcasting award imaginable, including the 1999 Peabody Award. He has built "Morning Edition" into the No. 1 morning show on radio in the United States, with almost 13 million loyal listeners. He has played a major role in doubling NPR's audience over the last 10 years.

Now, I didn't go to Harvard Business School. I don't have the business and management credentials of the top executives at NPR. But I have enough sense to heed the oldest and wisest rule of management: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

If you are fortunate to have the best in the business, a broadcaster who is the heart and soul of the No. 1 morning show on radio, then, for heaven's sake, you don't remove him. You don't dump him. You raise his pay.

Characteristically, Bob Edwards was gracious and restrained. He said, "I would love to have stayed with 'Morning Edition.' But it is not my candy store."

No, "Morning Edition" is not Bob Edwards' candy store. Nor is National Public Radio the candy store of Mr. Stern, Jay Kernis, Kevin Klose, and the other NPR executives apparently responsible for this decision.

I would remind them that NPR's middle name is "Public." National Public Radio and its affiliate stations depend on taxpayer dollars and contributions from ordinary Americans. NPR depends on the public's support. And I have yet to talk to one person, one member of Congress, one listener of public radio who supports this decision.

Americans are speaking up and expressing their unhappiness. NPR has been deluged with telephone calls and e-mails. And I certainly encourage people to call their local NPR station or go to the NPR website at www.npr.org, where you can register your dis-

satisfaction. Urge NPR's executives to reconsider this unwise decision. Urge them to listen to their listeners.

Let me be clear, I do not advocate or support any kind of boycott of NPR. It would be a misguided and counterproductive for people to withhold contributions to their local NPR station. After all, National Public Radio is a national treasure. It is the gold standard of radio news and journalism. And we should do nothing that undermines it.

But we have a right to speak up. And we need to speak up. So by all means, send an e-mail to NPR. The address of the ombudsman at NPR is simple enough: ombudsman@npr.org. In addition, call your local NPR affiliate. Urge them to request NPR to reconsider its decision to remove Bob Edwards from "Morning Edition." And if NPR digs in its heels, urge your local affiliate to discontinue "Morning Edition" and find alternative programming for the morning time slot.

Obviously, I am personally a big fan of Bob Edwards. I listen to him virtually every morning, and have for as long as I can remember. He is a straight-shooter, smart, erudite, witty, and calm. He doesn't shout or rant. In other words, he adds class to radio news reporting and interviews.

So I urge executives at National Public Radio to reconsider their decision to remove Bob Edwards from "Morning Edition." And I urge Americans who share my respect for Bob Edwards to make their voices heard.●

IN MEMORIAM OF NORMAN A. LeBEL

• Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the life of Professor Norman A. LeBel, who passed away on December 21, 2003. Professor LeBel's life was dedicated to organic chemistry research where he was an outstanding example to his colleagues and an inspiration to his students.

Professor LeBel was born in Augusta, Maine on March 22, 1931, and received an A.B. degree in chemistry from Bowdoin College in 1952. Professor LeBel and his wife Connie, also from Maine, returned often to the States.

Professor LeBel obtained a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1957. He then moved to Detroit, MI, where he began a 40-year career at Wayne State University in the Department of Chemistry, during which time he directed the research of 32 Ph.D. students. Professor LeBel made numerous contributions to organic chemistry during his long career, the most notable being the development of the chemical transformation commonly called the LeBel Reaction. He retired in 1996, after serving Wayne State University as chairman of the chemistry department; as chief of staff for the office of the provost; and as interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Professor LeBel served the American Chemical Society (ACS) in a number of roles, starting as chairman of the Awards Committee of the Detroit Section (1961-1962), then secretary-treasurer of the Division of Organic Chemistry (1965-1969). He was a division councilor for 20 years, starting in 1970, and served on the Committees on Publications, Nominations & Elections, and Divisional Activities. Professor LeBel was also general chairman of the international chemistry meeting known as Pacificchem 2000.

Among his many awards, Professor LeBel received the Wayne State University President's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1981, the ACS Organic Chemistry Division's Paul G. Gassman Distinguished Service Award in 1996, and the ACS Santa Clara Valley Section's Shirley B. Radding Award in 2001.

In conclusion, I want to express my condolences to Professor LeBel's family and former students. His contributions to the field of organic chemistry are only equaled by his devotion to higher education.●

ASSISTED LIVING

• Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Louisiana Assisted Living Association, LALA, which will be celebrating "Assisted Living Day" open April 14, 2004 in the State capitol. Both in my home State and in States across the Nation, disabled individuals and older Americans are voicing their demand for a wide range of long-term services. Assisted living represents a significant piece of that continuum of care.

Decades ago, those in need of long-term care had limited options—family caregivers, skilled nursing homes or institutional care. In many cases, family caregivers cannot provide the proper level of care for their loved one for a variety of reasons. In other instances, the person does not require the high level, around-the-clock care of a skilled nursing facility or institution. Now, many disabled persons and older Americans with functional limitations and/or cognitive impairments are finding the assistance they need and desire in assisted living, and in other home and community-based settings.

Unfortunately, our Federal financing structure has a strong institutional bias and does not reflect Americans' growing desire to be cared for in settings other than nursing homes or institutions. Public preference is not the only momentum driving this need for change—we see this direction in our courts as well. At the Federal level, the landmark Olmstead decision underscored this push toward allowing our country's elderly and disabled to live in the least restrictive settings for as long as possible. And, in my home State of Louisiana, this momentum was echoed in the Barthelemy case, in which the court strengthened the rights of people to get assistance in

home and community-based settings. We now know that we are not talking about merely a preference for non-institutional care—but a legal right to it.

In my capacity as ranking member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, I have held numerous hearings on long-term care and the importance of supporting the continuum of care options. Assisted living is one of the most significant of these options and offers a real choice to those Americans wanting assistance outside of an institutional setting—a preference that will only grow as more of our baby boomers look for help with long-term care. Today, I salute the Louisiana Assisted Living Association for taking time to educate and improve awareness about a service that I believe can and will improve the lives of many of our Nation's disabled and elderly.●

HONORING KAREN MAYRY

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I stand today to recognize an individual who is a dedicated advocate for the blind in this Nation, and especially in my home State of South Dakota.

Karen was raised in Hibbing, MN. The second of five children, she learned at an early age to cope with people's afflictions. Her brother Robert was born with Down syndrome. It was from this early exposure that Karen gained some of the beliefs that would carry over in later life. At age 11, Karen, herself was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes—the disease that was to define the rest of her life.

In 1965, Karen married her long-time love, Marshall. While living in Tacoma, WA, where Marshall was to finish out his military obligation, Karen found a job teaching in the Clover Park school system. In her first year on the job, she experienced her first hemorrhage in her right eye which resulted in complete vision loss in that eye. Because of her love of educating children, she remained on the job teaching despite experiencing a traumatic physical ailment.

Marshall and Karen moved to Denver, CO after his military obligation was fulfilled. While in Denver, Karen lost still more of her vision and for all purposes became “totally blind” and underwent eye surgery with the hope of restoring some vision to her right eye. The surgery was deemed a cosmetic failure. It was also at this time, that doctors discovered that she was beginning to experience renal failure.

In 1969, Karen and Marshall moved to Rapid City where she was hired on as a Juvenile Probation officer. She remained at the position for 6 years until her renal failure had continued to progress so much that she was no longer able to continue her duties. Experiencing kidney failure soon after, her loving brother, David, offered one of his kidneys. After many months of complications delaying the surgery, the transplant was successful. Three weeks later, she left the hospital and

her kidney functions have remained excellent for the past 27 years.

Following the successful kidney treatment, she was approached by representatives of National Federation of the Blind to become a member. The philosophy of the NFB matched her own; one of independence and the abilities of blind persons, if given a chance. Soon after joining, she became active that same year and was elected state president, a quite remarkable accomplishment.

Karen Mayry is the long-time president of the South Dakota Federation of the Blind. For many years, she has provided tireless advocacy for the blind residents of South Dakota and for the disabled population of the State. Under her presidency the State affiliate has grown to five local chapters. She has proposed and lobbied for and had legislation passed bettering the lives of blind South Dakotans. She has testified before the Senate, investigating transportation for the handicapped and has annually made trips to our Nation's Capital to lobby for issues of importance to the blind of the country.

She is dedicated to advocating issues of importance, and she is committed to breaking down the structural and attitudinal barriers that impact the blind and disabled community in south Dakota. Her list of organizations is vast and her accomplishments and awards are countless.

Despite various physical ailments in recent years, Karen refuses to be sidelined and continues her stalwart advocacy. Her vitality and energy is commendable and her advocacy and education over the years on issues affecting blind and disabled individuals have proven very successful. She works hard to educate and advocate for the Americans with Disabilities Act, helps promote the skills and talents of the blind and educates the business community about the importance of hiring individuals with disabilities.

South Dakotans with disabilities have many fighters in their corner, and Karen Mayry is one of their most ardent advocates. Karen doesn't mince words with elected officials, I, for one, have appreciated her frankness and candor over the years. Her insight is valuable on important issues, not only on matters directly affecting blind residents, but also in issues vital to all South Dakotans, disabled and non-disabled alike.

As residents in my State prepare for the annual South Dakota Federation of the Blind Convention in Sioux Falls, I take this opportunity to congratulate and commend Karen Mayry for her many years of outstanding advocacy work for the blind. I applaud her dedication and commitment, appreciate her advocacy, and wish her the best in her own individual battle to come. I look forward to continuing my work with Karen concerning issues of importance to the blind and disabled citizens of south Dakota. It is with great honor that I share her impressive accomplishments with my colleagues.●

CONGRATULATING ALISA BARTON

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I would like to take the opportunity to honor Mrs. Alisa Barton of Hopkinsville, KY. Salvation Army welfare coordinator Alisa Barton was honored nationwide with an Award of Excellence in Social Service at the National Social Services Conference in Pittsburgh on Tuesday, March 20.

As former military child and wife, Mrs. Barton knows firsthand the hardship Army families can experience, especially during times of deployment. Mrs. Barton has continuously worked to help alleviate the needs of families remaining at home while their loved ones serve this country in Afghanistan and Iraq.

She developed a program called Homefront War Relief, which has received national recognition for helping the families of deployed Fort Campbell soldiers. The Homefront War Relief program, partnered with Wal-Mart, allowed the Salvation Army to assist 743 military families resulting in the largest military assistance effort the Salvation Army of Hopkinsville has ever done. Throughout 2003, 5,000 military personnel and their families received assistance in the form of comfort kits to deployed soldiers, food and clothing, holiday meals, and Bibles and inspirational books to troops.

Mrs. Barton is dedicated to helping those who come to the Salvation Army in need. She began working with the Salvation Army by ringing donations bells and describes her work as a labor of love spreading the Christian faith and helping people. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mrs. Barton. She is a wonderful asset to Kentucky and an inspiration to us all.●

CONGRATULATING MARSHALL ALL-STAR CHEERLEADERS

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I would like to take the opportunity to honor the Marshall All-Star Cheerleaders for their recent success at the national championships in Indianapolis.

The Marshall All-Star Cheerleaders is made up of girls from grades 1–12 competing in three age levels, Peewee grades 1–4, Youth 3–6, and Senior 6–12. They are from Marshall, Graves, Lyon, and McCracken counties and students at Melissa's Gymnastics in Benton, KY.

The squads spent hours in preparation for the fierce competition they faced in Indianapolis. Other squads were from Indiana, Kansas, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Ohio, Michigan, West Virginia, Maryland, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Kentucky. They competed in dance, cheering, and tumbling, and came out on top in the end.

The Marshall All-Star Cheerleaders were the national champions in all three age levels. They are to be commended for this high honor. Their hard work and dedication paid off, and I join