

and performance of music. Ray Charles will be deeply missed by fans and fellow musicians alike.

Ray Charles Robinson was born September 23, 1930, in Albany, GA. The child of a mechanic, Bailey Robinson, and a saw-mill worker, Aretha, Ray Charles' life was a lesson in triumph over adversity. A young Charles began losing his sight at infancy and was clinically blind by the age of 7. Two years prior his brother had accidentally drowned, and by age 15, Charles lost both parents and had no immediate family. Alone, sad, and orphaned, Ray Charles went to live with friends of his mother, nearly 200 miles away from home, in Jacksonville, FL.

Charles lived in Jacksonville for a year developing his talent as a musician before moving to Orlando, supporting himself, a 16 year-old orphan, with only his seemingly dauntless optimism to help him along. Work was sparse, and income was never guaranteed. He left Florida, looking for a new city with potential for new challenges, took what little money he had and made a five-day bus trip to Seattle, WA. It was here that Charles formed his first group, a small jazz group called the McSon Trio.

Emulating the vocal styles of his musical idol, Nat King Cole, Ray Charles formed a rhythm and blues group led by vocalist Ruth Brown. The band played night after night in smoky back-alley clubs throughout Seattle's red light district. As Charles reflected in his autobiography, these clubs consisted of little more than a big room with a band in one corner, liquor in the other, and a shoulder to shoulder audience. Playing in Seattle, Ray Charles met Quincy Jones, showing the young future producer how to write and compose music. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

It was on the West Coast that Ray Charles' famous career truly began to develop. Swingtime Records signed Charles in Seattle, giving him his first break in the music business. And in 1950, the company flew him to Los Angeles to record. In 1952 his contract was purchased by Atlantic Records, and by 1954, Charles had formed his own band recording his unique raw and tortured mix of gospel and rhythm n' blues a style that would later be known as soul music—with songs like "I Got A Woman," and the later "Georgia on my Mind," with ABC-Paramount. Ray Charles, the innovator and musical provocateur was being called "The Genius" by contemporaries and playing at such famous venues as Carnegie Hall and the Newport Jazz Festival.

In the 1960s, Ray Charles would truly come to call Los Angeles home. He had his own studio designed and built by long time friend and business manager Joe Adams, and recorded his first album, "Country and Western Meets Rhythm and Blues," at the studio in 1965. Charles would continue his recording career here for nearly 40 years until his death, and once said of the

studio, "I love this place. It's the only home I've truly had for most of my professional career, and I would never leave it." Charles would go on to produce numerous hits in his Los Angeles location, continuing an impressive career that would later earn him 12 Grammy Awards between 1960 and 1966, including best R&B recording for three consecutive years. The Ray Charles Studio was designated a Los Angeles historical landmark on April 30, 2004 thanks to the hard work of Councilman Martin Ludlow and City Council President Alex Padilla. Ray Charles made his last public appearance in Los Angeles at his studio as the site was designated a city historic landmark, a living testament to Charles' 40 years living and working in the city of Los Angeles.

The music of Ray Charles was a deep and powerful reflection of the American musical tradition. From troubled origins in the south that would characterize the blues aspect of Charles lyrical style to the gospel influences present in so many of Charles' hits, soul music encapsulates so much of the American story. From racism, to heartache, to loneliness, to redemption, Ray Charles was writing the songs that could only come from an American artist and influencing a generation of musicians. He was at once expert composer, rock and roller, long-sufferer, genius, and poet. He was, to say the least, one of America's greatest artists, and will be deeply missed.

TRIBUTE TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY JESSE ROBERSON

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, on Tuesday, June 15, I received some very sad news, that Jessie Roberson had announced her resignation as the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department of Energy effective July 15.

I have known Jessie since I was first elected to the Senate in 1996. At the time she was the site manager for the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site in my State of Colorado. Through our common interest at Rocky Flats, I got to know her quite well. She not only impressed me with her depth of knowledge but here innovation and determination in making sure that Rocky Flats would be one of the first major DOE sites to close. Under her watch from 1996 to 1999, the Rocky Flats closure date went from 2015 to 2006. I know it was her leadership that moved this ambitious plan forward.

When President Bush was elected in 2000, it was that same leadership and determination that convinced me to put her name forward knowing that she would be the best person for the job of Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the Department. And I can say, unequivocally, that she has not disappointed.

When I met with her shortly after being confirmed, I told her that the en-

vironmental management program was broken and in need of major reforms. I added that this would not be easy and that some people would not like the changes which are necessary to make the program work. She agreed and she promised that she would work hard to effect change. While she later told me that it has not been easy, she kept the course and has transformed the program from one of just motion to true action. The Department has made tremendous progress in getting sites closer to closure. I can honestly say that what some people did not think possible 3 years ago is closer to happening; and that is that sites will be closing. I can only attribute this to the leadership of this extraordinary woman.

During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on May 16, I inserted into the RECORD a Denver Post editorial entitled "Roberson a Top Flight Pick" and quoted one line from the editorial. It said:

The Department's environmental management job is in fact one of the toughest positions in the Federal Government. There likely is not a better person around to tackle the task, than Jessie Roberson.

I believed that statement then, and after 3 years on the job, she proved that statement to be true.

She has done a tremendous job not just for President Bush and Secretary Abraham, but for the entire country. She has made our country safer by accelerating the cleanup of some of the world's most dangerous places. She is making sure that our children and grandchildren are not going to have to bear the burden of these contaminated sites.

While I am saddened to see her leave her post at the Department, I know that she has nothing but the brightest future ahead of her. I am proud to call her my friend and I wish Jessie and her daughter Jessica all the best. Thank you, Jessie Roberson, for your service.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF GI BILL

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of one of the most important bills to ever be passed by this body, the GI bill. Just like the recent remembrance of D-Day and the unveiling of the World War II memorial, the passage of this landmark legislation is another part of the World War II legacy.

Sixty years ago today, President Roosevelt signed into law the "Service-men's Readjustment Act of 1944." That bill created unprecedented access to education and training for tens of thousands of military members returning home after World War II.

Even before the War ended, Congress and the Administration were preparing for the return of over 15 million men and women serving in the armed services. Without intervention, those 15 million would have no jobs or opportunities when they returned home. To

prevent postwar depression caused by mass unemployment, an agency within the Administration, called the National Resource Planning Board, recommended a set of programs to provide education, training and employment for returning soldiers. One of these recommendations became the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, which was supported by the American Legion and other veteran organizations, and was unanimously passed both chambers of Congress. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944.

This bill became known as GI bill, and it provided a range of benefits to help veterans reintegrate into the workforce and American society. It provided education and training; loan guaranty for a home, farm, or business; unemployment pay for up to a year; job-search assistance; building materials for veterans hospitals; and military review of dishonorable discharges.

Veterans were entitled to one year of full-time education or training, plus a period equal to their time in service, up to four years. This program had a tremendous impact on college enrollment in this country. In fact, in 1947, which was the peak year of the program, veterans accounted for 49 percent of college enrollment.

Out of a veteran population of 15.4 million, just over half—7.8 million—were trained, including 2.23 million in college, 3.48 million in other schools, 1.4 million in on-job training, and 690,000 in farm training.

Millions of veterans, who would have flooded the labor market, instead opted for education, which reduced joblessness during the demobilization period. When they did enter the labor market, most were better prepared to contribute to the support of their families and society.

The GI bill created an initiative called the Local Veterans Employment Representative Program, or LVER. This program hired wartime veterans to work in employment centers across the U.S. to help other veterans secure counseling and employment. For 60 years, the LVER Program has helped veterans find jobs, training, and education. It has become an integral part of employment services and has been instrumental in helping veterans to resume normal lives after returning.

Today, LVER staff in my home State include some of the best-trained worker placement and retraining experts in the country. For Washington, which has one of the largest concentrations of servicemen and women, veterans, and their families, this is very important. Within my state, Pierce County has a particularly high active military and veteran population, and the LVER program there is a terrific example of what is possible.

The Pierce County LVER program ensures that over 25,000 veterans receive the vital re-employment support they deserve. With staff assistance, they write resumes that reflect the

breadth of their experience and skills, draft cover letters, and research employment opportunities. Veterans are also provided with leads on specific jobs and employers who seek the unique skills and talents of experienced veterans.

Staff of the Pierce County LVER also set up three major job fairs each year, which attract over more than 6,000 veterans and employers each year. The LVER office coordinates its activities with over 500 local, State, and national employers, giving veterans access to a unique national support network. The LVER staff includes men and women like Sam Mack, Sal Cantu, Tanya Brewster, and Vicki Bishop, all of whom are decorated veterans who are proud to support their fellow servicemen and women.

Sal Cantu, a resident of Pierce County, epitomizes the dedication and commitment of his colleagues. Sal coordinated a national effort to not only celebrate the GI bill, but specifically to recognize the LVER program and its tremendous impact on service members who seek meaningful employment once they return home. More than 25 State governors wrote letters lauding the efforts of the Pierce County LVER staff to recognize the significant impact of their program.

Most importantly, Sal, a 40 percent-disabled Vietnam era veteran, knows how to build trusting and lasting relationships with veterans. For him, helping veterans chart the next stage of their careers is a labor of love. I am extremely proud of the many men and women like Sal who, after serving honorably in the military, have made it their second career to support and help locate jobs for their fellow veterans.

Yet before the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the United States did not provide employment or vocational services for veterans upon their completion of military service. Since the first GI bill, there have been five subsequent programs enacted to provide benefits to veterans of other military conflicts—from the Korean conflict to the war in Iraq. The most recent bill, the Montgomery GI bill enacted in 1985, is the largest contemporary program providing education benefits to military personnel. All enlisted soldiers and veterans are eligible for between \$7,500 and \$35,000 in educational aid. This program has attracted men and women into the armed forces by helping to pay for college. Today, over 90 percent of those who enter the military enroll in the Montgomery GI bill program.

As we reflect on the history and success of the GI bill, we should consider how this program can translate to all Americans. The spirit of the GI bill that in exchange for contributing to society, this country should help individuals invest in themselves also holds true for those who have not served in the military. As the cost of education rises, many low- and middle-income students—whether they have served in

the military or not need help covering educational expenses. We need to make the same kind of investment in the human capital, not just of our veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, but for all Americans. We need a GI bill for all Americans.

In the ever-changing global economy, the success of our companies depends on adaptability and innovation. As a result, we must change the way we educate and prepare workers to compete in the global economy. When national leaders were confronted with fundamental changes in the size and nature of the country's workforce following World War II, they stepped up to address the challenge with the GI bill. The economic sea changes we face today demand a similar response.

To maintain our economic competitiveness, we must keep up with the demand for skilled workers across all sectors of the economy. The changing economy has increased the demand for a college degree. In February, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 6 of the 10 fastest-growing occupations in the U.S. economy require an associate's degree or bachelor's degree, and that all ten of these careers will require some type of skills training. By 2010, 40 percent of all job growth will require some form of post-secondary education.

To keep pace in the new, knowledge- and information-based economy, it's imperative that we equip our workforce with the skills to succeed in high-wage jobs. If we fail, those who lack skills will fall further and further behind, imperiling not just their individual futures, but America's ability to compete in the global economy.

It is the responsibility of this body to return to the level of investment in higher education that this country made 60 years ago. We do need a new GI bill for all Americans, and I, for one, intend to fight to make the idea of universal post-secondary education come to fruition.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO TOBY GROSSMAN

• Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to share with the Senate the memory of an extraordinary woman. Toby Grossman, of Albuquerque, NM, lost her battle with cancer on May 25, 2004. Her husband, Leonard, and daughter, Jennifer, survive her.

Ms. Grossman was the senior staff attorney at the American Indian Law Center, Inc, the oldest existing Indian-controlled and operated legal and public policy organization in the country, having joined the center in 1971. She also served as the administrator of the Southwest Intertribal Court of Appeals, a voluntary court of appeals available to tribes in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and west Texas.

Ms. Grossman was a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of New Mexico School of Law, and