

work to combat global HIV/AIDS. I have traveled to Africa to see up close the devastation this international pandemic has caused, and I continue to be active on this important and urgent issue. I commend all the men and women volunteers who selflessly work to better communities around the world.

On March 1, 2005, as the Peace Corps celebrates its 44th anniversary, its work is particularly relevant to the challenges before our country and our world today. It is so important for Americans to become involved in world affairs, especially through programs such as the Peace Corps. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell and his successor Condoleezza Rice both acknowledge that Americans must make a serious investment in reaching across borders and turning around growing anti-American sentiments abroad. I am constantly impressed by Peace Corps volunteers who devote themselves to personally bridging the gap between people of our country and those beyond our borders, proving by their work our country's commitment to positive changes and mutual understanding. These volunteers amplify the effects of their service when they share their Peace Corps stories and experiences with people back home—with family and friends, in corresponding with classrooms, or in recruiting new volunteers to carry the Peace Corps mission forward.

I congratulate Peace Corps and its volunteers for 44 years of effective and admirable service, and I urge all of my colleagues to continue to work to support this unique and inspiring organization.

TRIBUTE TO THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today, with a great sense of honor and respect, I rise to pay tribute to the Tuskegee Airmen, both for their bravery while fighting for our country's freedom in World War II and for their contributions in creating an integrated U.S. Air Force.

Like many of the heroes of World War II, these brave men left their families at home to fight overseas for the principles of freedom and democracy. Unlike most of their colleagues, these great airmen also fought an enemy of racism and prejudice at home. Thankfully, on both fronts, they were victorious. I am proud to stand today to recognize this great accomplishment, honor their service, and thank them for their dedication to racial equality in the U.S. armed services.

For decades, our military denied African Americans the opportunity to serve in leadership positions in the armed services. Although willing to serve a country that did not yet fully recognize their own civil rights, these men were systematically denied the benefit of skilled training in preparation for war. It was thought that they

lacked the qualifications for combat duty or the ability to use sophisticated equipment. In 1941, under pressure from civil rights organizations, the Army Air Force set up a training program in Alabama to experiment with training African Americans as military pilots. The training for this program took place at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, AL, the famous school founded by Booker T. Washington on July 4, 1881.

There was doubt among many in the military that African Americans were up to the task, but the Tuskegee Airmen proved them all wrong. Fighter pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and maintenance staffs were successfully trained to be members of the 332nd Fighter Group. The airmen were under the able command of COL Benjamin Davis, Jr., and the highly motivated group flew successful missions over Sicily, the Mediterranean, and North Africa.

By the end of the war, 992 men had graduated from the pilot training programs at Tuskegee, and 450 had seen combat overseas. The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded numerous high honors, including Distinguished Flying Crosses, Legions of Merit, Silver Stars, Purple Hearts, the Croix de Guerre, and the Red Star of Yugoslavia. In all their combat, they never lost a bomber to enemy fighters. A Distinguished Unit Citation was awarded to the 332nd Fighter Group for "outstanding performance and extraordinary heroism" in 1945. By the end of the war, the Airmen had overcome segregation and racial prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II.

We must never forget the spirit and dedication of these great patriots. Today, as our Air Force is playing such an important role in the global war on terrorism, the ideas and principles that the Tuskegee Airmen represent remain of the utmost importance. With this in mind, I stand today in support of S. Con. Res. 11, a resolution that Mr. SHELBY and I have submitted to express the sense of Congress that the U.S. Air Force should continue to honor and learn from the great example set by the Tuskegee Airmen. I ask my fellow Senators to support this resolution, and I urge the U.S. Air Force to continue to take note of this important part of its storied history.

CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to recognize the success of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association as they tip off their 60th Men's Basketball Tournament this week.

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, CIAA, is an athletic conference consisting of 12 historically African-American institutions of higher education, including: Bowie State University, Elizabeth City State Univer-

sity, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Livingstone College, North Carolina Central University, St. Augustine's College, St. Paul's College, Shaw University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University and Winston-Salem State University.

Established in 1912, the CIAA is the Nation's oldest black athletic conference, rich in history and heritage. The conference is entering its 85th year of athletic competition in which they have reaped continued success and recognition on the field and the court. The CIAA is a premiere member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, Division II and the reputation of their athletic programs, in conjunction with the academic success of their athletes, is a proud legacy for the conference.

The CIAA basketball tournament began humbly in Washington, DC in 1946 and has grown into one of the largest, most prestigious and long-tenured sporting traditions in America, particularly in the South. Started by a group of visionaries led by legendary coach John McClendon, the tournament has come to showcase dynamic basketball that has produced the likes of past NBA stars Earl Monroe, Bobby Dandridge, Charles Oakley, Rick Mahorn and current NBA star Ronald Murray of the Seattle Supersonics. The weeklong affair draws a host of national celebrities and dignitaries for a variety of activities and events. The tournament festivities serve as a sort of homecoming for students, fans and alumni of the conference. In 2004, the tournament drew over 100,000 fans to Raleigh, NC, making it the third largest basketball tournament in the nation, regardless of division.

As a former collegiate athlete, I understand the difficulties faced by institutions of higher education in planning and supporting athletic tournaments. I congratulate the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association on its rich and sustained history of superb college athletics. The celebration of this 60th Anniversary Basketball Tournament represents a remarkable achievement for those who have worked tirelessly over the past decades to ensure its longevity. I wish the conference and its annual tournament continued success.

WILLIE McCARTER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments today to acknowledge the work and leadership of Willie McCarter who has served for the past 15 years as chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, IFI.

The IFI was conceived by my old friend Tip O'Neill who secured the original funding in 1986. Willie McCarter became involved with the fund in 1989 and became chairman in 1992. Under his tenure, the fund flourished and became an integral economic tool that helped bring peace and understanding in Northern Ireland.

The investments that the IFI made in border counties provided an economic boost to communities that had no hope. In tumultuous times where communities were divided by religion, the IFI sponsored projects that not only created desperately needed jobs but employment where Catholics and Protestants worked side by side.

Marcelle and I have become close friends with Willie and his wife Mary. I know that our friendship will transcend his departure as chairman from the IFI. We look forward to visits with both of them here and in Ireland for many years to come.

The Irish Times interviewed Willie McCarter prior to his stepping down as chairman of the IFI at the end of February. I ask unanimous consent that the entire article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Irish Times, Feb. 4, 2005]

FUND CHAIRMAN PREPARES TO BID A FOND
FAREWELL

Willie McCarter, who is stepping down as chairman of the International Fund for Ireland, tells Siobhan Creaton, Finance Correspondent, of its many achievements.

After 15 years as a key figure at the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), Derry-born businessman Willie McCarter is preparing for departure.

At the end of February he will relinquish the chairman's role to Denis Rooney. Mr. Rooney is a chartered quantity surveyor and businessman from Northern Ireland whom the British and Irish governments have hailed as a skilled and able leader for the fund.

Mr. McCarter will be sad to say goodbye but says he is proud of the IFI's contribution towards creating a more stable community in Northern Ireland.

The fund, which has committed 768 million to 5,500 projects in the North and border counties, was set up by the Irish and British governments in 1986 as a vehicle to promote economic regeneration and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the six border counties.

The late U.S. politician T.P. 'Tipp' O'Neill championed the idea after a visit to Donegal and Derry.

"John Hume brought him to see his grandmother's home outside Buncrana in 1985 and later they went to Derry. That was during the dark days of unemployment and Tipp said he would try to do something to create jobs," Mr. McCarter says.

In Washington, O'Neill's quest to raise financial aid for the region was supported by President Reagan and resulted in the U.S. Government pledging \$50 million (EUR 38.4 million) for this purpose.

The British and Irish governments, which had concluded the Anglo-Irish Agreement, used the money to start the IFI in 1986.

It was a controversial vehicle and, having grown out of this agreement, was viewed with deep suspicion by Northern Ireland's Protestant community.

Mr. McCarter, a Protestant, recalls the fund's initial difficulties.

"It had very few friends. It got bound up in the political to-ing and fro-ing around the Anglo Irish Agreement."

In 1989, Mr. McCarter, who was chief executive of Fruit of the Loom, the clothing manufacturer that was rapidly expanding in Donegal and Derry, was asked to get involved. The US clothing manufacturer had invested

in Mr. McCarter's women's underwear manufacturing plant in Buncrana in 1985 and had agreed to invest GBP 18.5 million (EUR 26.8 million) and to grow its workforce in Donegal and Derry to 3,500.

"I was up to my tonsils running Fruit of the Loom," he says. "I spoke to John Holland his mentor in the US about getting involved in the fund. He said it would be very good for me and for the company."

Mr. Holland ended the conversation saying: "I am sure you would be able to do that as well as run the company".

In 1992, his involvement with the fund increased when he took over as chairman.

"The fund was a subtle way to bring people from both communities together. Instead of giving them cups of tea and saying 'let's get reconciled', it used job creation to give people an economic focus. In a low-key way, the fund brought people from both communities into projects to provide a human dynamic and develop relationships that would not have existed in a divided society."

Some of its flagship undertakings include the re-opening of the Shannon-Erne waterway, while many town centres have been given a face-lift with its support.

Mr. McCarter believes the fund's ability to be the first to put its cash on the table to back new projects has been a tremendous asset in terms of providing a kick-start for fresh ideas. Its role in the Shannon-Erne waterway, he says, is a good example of what the fund can do.

"When it was first mentioned, it was regarded as a completely mad project. The fund commissioned a GBP 1 million feasibility study that showed it might work. We later put another GBP 5 million into it and attracted other investment. If the fund hadn't put GBP 1 million down initially, the Shannon-Erne waterway wouldn't have happened," he says.

The fund claims to have played a central role in bringing about the joint marketing of Ireland as a tourist destination by the authorities in the North and the Republic. It has also fostered closer linkages between Cork, Trinity and Queen's universities in the field of microelectronics.

"A lot of initiatives have worked but the fund's role has been forgotten," according to Mr. McCarter. "I am glad that the fund is seen as a fair and reputable dealer. I have worked with very gifted people on the board and in the communities who have made a great contribution."

While US presidents have played a crucial role in supporting the peace process and the IFI's work, its contribution to the fund has been reduced from \$25 million to \$18.5 million under the Bush administration due to budgetary pressures.

Mr. McCarter says this figure is "not half bad" and suggests that the Bush administration has been misjudged in terms of its commitment to Ireland.

"President Bush may not have the same personal interest as President Clinton but the administration has a very tangible interest in Ireland, the peace process and the fund. Support in the Senate and the House of Representatives remains extremely strong. These people are made of stern stuff. They will see things through until there is a stable society," he says.

While the peace process is currently at an impasse, Mr McCarter believes there is little danger that the enormous strides made, in terms of improving relationships and raising prosperity, will be reversed.

"I don't think it will unravel. Too many people can see the benefits. I have lived in a border area all of my life and can see a tangible change."

Mr McCarter was ousted from Fruit of the Loom in 1997 following differences with its

then owner, US corporate raider Bill Farley. The exit of the McCarter family from the business was a blow for the workforce and signalled the end of an era in terms of job security. The workforce has dropped to around 500, with the entire operations to be moved to Morocco over the next three to four years.

"When it goes to Morocco, it will be after 20 years in the north-west. It did a lot of good. Fruit of the Loom led to a lot of people making lives for themselves and was influential in improving the local infrastructure. I will be sorry to see it go. I am very fond of Donegal and Derry, which now need a substantial investment."

In the future, Mr McCarter says his main interest will be in Cooley Distillery, the independent whiskey maker founded by his long-time friend, John Teeling. Mr McCarter is a director and is also on the board of Norish. He is keen to get involved in other businesses.

"I already do quite a lot of work at Cooley and am looking for more non-executive roles," he says. "I would also like to find some way of retaining the many US connections I have made over the years."

HONORING PATRICIA R. FORBES

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor the work, dedication and career of Patricia R. Forbes, a champion for this Nation's small businesses. In just a few days, Patty will be retiring and my office will be losing a truly superb staff member. I cannot think of many people who have contributed as selflessly and as competently in a wonderfully bipartisan fashion as she has.

Prior to joining my staff, Patty served 11 years at the Small Business Administration and spent 4 years directing the staff of then-chair of the Senate Small Business Committee, Senator Dale Bumpers from Arkansas. During Senator Bumpers' chairmanship, Patty served as his majority counsel and later as his deputy staff director and counsel. In her tenure as my staff director and chief counsel on the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, she has proven to be an invaluable asset to me and the committee.

Patty joined my staff shortly after I became the chair of the Small Business Committee in 1997. Whether it has been developing and implementing an effective small business legislative agenda, preparing legislation, ensuring that adequate appropriations are directed to small business initiatives, preparing hearings, correspondence or speeches, Patty has been an exemplary leader to the staff of the Small Business Committee. Her ability to craft and negotiate meaningful and responsible legislation affecting SBA's programs and the Nation's small businesses has been a driving force behind the bipartisanship and effectiveness of this committee. Senators on both sides of the aisle have grown to respect her expertise, her commitment to small businesses, and her unflinching devotion to her work.

During her career, Patty Forbes has made a significant impact on the lives of millions of entrepreneurs. For 13