

Without Chuck, I doubt I would have made it through that very difficult first year [of law school]. He was always positive and upbeat, and he was constantly encouraging [us] to never give up. We could always count on Chuck to lift us up when we were down. It was important to him to make our first year journey a little bit better by sharing things that weren't available to him during his first year. I'm glad he took the time to make our first year law school world a better place.

Chuck Wilkins always made time for others. As one of his co-workers said, "He was always looking out for somebody else, never for himself." It was this sense of selflessness led Chuck to Iraq.

Chuck was a member of the 216th Engineering Battalion, based in Chillicothe, OH. When his original unit was passed over for deployment to Iraq, Chuck sought a transfer to a unit that was scheduled to deploy in February of 2004. The new unit needed officers, and the Iraqi people needed bridges and roads. Once again, Chuck gave of himself so that others would not go without. It was hard for Chuck to leave his career and his law school studies, but as his sister, Lorin, said, "He was Army, through and through. He wanted to help rebuild Iraq so people could have the same freedoms we do."

As I said earlier, Chuck Wilkins wanted the Iraqi people to "enjoy freedom and inherit peace."

Though his sense of duty compelled him to go, it still was hard for Chuck to leave his family—the family he loved so very much. Like any mother, Natalie Wilkins did not want her son to leave for war. She begged him not to go and to seek an exemption, but Chuck would just reply, Mom, I can't stay. I have to go with my men." While his deep sense of duty pulled him away from his loved ones here at home, Chuck remained a family man" in every sense of that phrase. His sister, Lorin, says that Chuck was always there for the family. She said that even with his busy schedule, if you called him, he would be there." He took good care of his mom and dad and his sisters, always making sure that his family was provided for—whether he was home in Ohio or thousands of miles away in Iraq.

Charles Wilkins, Jr.—Chuck's father—says that one of his last memories of his son is of him swimming in a pool, playing with his nephew, laughing. That is when Chuck Wilkins was happiest—that is when he was making others happy, making them feel safe and cared for and protected.

We honor the fallen because they have honored us—with their service, with their sacrifice. Charles Wilkins not only gave himself to his country, he gave a little bit of himself to everyone he met.

When Charles passed away, his mother said that the world lost a good man—a man whose life was bound by duty and good deeds. Our world is the lesser without him, but it is also the better for the time he lived on this earth. Charles Wilkins was a good cit-

izen, a good soldier, a devoted family man, and a compassionate human being. Everyone who met him was touched by him in some way. He will be dearly missed.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep his grandmother, Dorothy; his mother, Natalie; his father, Charles; and his sisters Lorin and Davina in our thoughts and our prayers.

I yield the floor.

ALASKA-MONGOLIA TIES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to and recognize the contributions of an ally to the United States, an ally that has contributed to our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq and who has worked in close cooperation with my State of Alaska.

While their contributions have not received the widespread recognition given to other countries, the nation of Mongolia has been a steadfast friend of the United States. They have not been deterred by those critics who deride the quality of the nations included in the coalition forces.

Mongolia's contributions mean a bit more to the State of Alaska. In September 2004, we marked the 1-year anniversary of the start of the Alaska-Mongolia National Guard State Partnership.

Through the State Partnership Program, a true friendship has developed between Mongolia and Alaska. Our National Guard has established broad working relationships and increased exchanges with their Mongolian partners. They stand side by side with the Mongolian Armed Forces in Iraq as they participate in the coalition fighting the global war on terror. In fact, the Mongolian Ministry of Defense specifically requested Alaska National Guard support based on Alaska's relationship with their nation.

I would like to quote MG Craig Gambell that, "[a]s long as the Mongolian Armed Forces are willing to send troops in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Alaska National Guard will continue to stand by their side."

Prior to 2000, Mongolia did not have a national policy of deploying forces beyond its borders. Yet, they were the first coalition country to contribute an infantry battalion to Iraq. The Mongolian Armed Forces are currently providing security to a logistics base in southern Iraq, escorting convoys, constructing military barracks, medical facilities, and local schools. They deserve special recognition for preventing a suicide attack that could have killed hundreds.

Alaska's pairing with Mongolia in the National Guard State Partnership Program is fitting, given our similar geographic size, topography, population density, and climate. The program allows Alaska's soldiers to work with Mongolian forces on professional military skills as well as in military-to-civil and civil-to-civil areas. Beyond the teamwork in Iraq, other events

have been coordinated to keep the partnership together for years to come.

Last year, an Alaska National Guard delegation met with Prime Minister Elbegdorj, as well as other senior level government and military leaders in Mongolia. Already plans to send observers both this year and next have been made.

The success that the partnership enjoyed this past year is a direct reflection of the willingness and eagerness on both sides to further our relations. The Alaska National Guard tells me that Mongolia is enthusiastic about their democratic reforms and is aggressively working to meet its goals.

I thank the leaders of Mongolia for their friendship and support, and I look forward to the continued success of this partnership between the Land of the Midnight Sun and the Land of Blue Sky.

CAMBODIAN KHMER NEW YEAR

Mr. REED. Mr. President. I rise today on behalf of my fellow Rhode Islanders to commemorate the 2549th Anniversary of the Buddha, the Khmer New Year.

This 3-day anniversary, which begins today, highlights the rich heritage of Cambodian Americans, while recognizing contemporary Khmerian accomplishments. Specifically, the New Year's festivities celebrate the ancient dance, music, and religious traditions of the Cambodian community. The event also provides older Cambodian Americans with an opportunity to pass their customs down to future generations while simultaneously allowing all Khmerians to share their culture with other Americans.

This celebration traditionally serves as a respite between the Khmerian harvest and the weeks colloquially referred to as the "rainy season." Traditionally, the Anniversary of the Buddha affords Khmerians a chance to give thanks, reflect, and welcome the spirit Tevada Chhnam Thmey. Also, in accordance with tradition, scores of Cambodian-Americans will gather with friends and family to visit local monasteries. While there, the Khmerian people will proffer food to their clergymen, pray for ancestors, give charity to the less-fortunate, and thank elders for their knowledge and care.

The Khmerian ceremonies and activities occurring this week demonstrate that each year brings new opportunities for charity, peace, and happiness. Rhode Islanders witnessed the realization of one such opportunity this year. I was fortunate to work with Miriam Hospital in Providence and Representatives Kennedy and Langevin to obtain visas to reunite Cambodian-Rhode Islander Minea Meas with his family. Three long years after Minea received political asylum in our country, his wife, Chantol Lim, and his children Monita, Sovannra, and Sinvath joyfully relocated from Cambodia to build

a positive future with Minea in Rhode Island. Consequently, the Meas family will never forget the Year of the Monkey.

As we commemorate this important time, let us reflect on recent international affairs and our Nation's continued efforts to promote universal human rights and fundamental democratic ideals. Let us also take this opportunity to honor the Cambodian Americans currently serving in our Nation's military, for helping to preserve the liberties we all enjoy.

Finally, I would like to wish all Cambodian Americans happiness, prosperity, and good health in this, the Year of the Rooster.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAX M. FISHER

• Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, he was the son of poor Russian immigrants who grew up to be a citizen of the world. He was a skilled businessman who devoted much of his time to giving away millions of dollars to charity. He was a modest man with a low profile who was sought out by world leaders for his advice.

America has lost one of its finest citizens with the passing last month of Max Fisher.

A former Member of this body, Jacob Javits, called Max Fisher "perhaps the single most important lay person in the American Jewish community." If for no other reason, his commitment to the Jewish people would have earned him the title, but the hundreds of millions of dollars he helped raise for Jewish charitable causes further demonstrated his devotion.

Presidents Nixon and Ford turned to him to serve as an unofficial emissary to Israel during times of crisis in the Middle East. His work was hailed by Henry Kissinger in his autobiography.

Though a resident of Michigan as an adult, Max Fisher was no Wolverine. He was a Buckeye through and through. Max grew up in Salem, OH and attended the Ohio State University on a football scholarship. In his time as an athlete the world got a glimpse of the competitive spirit that was to serve him so well in business. In one of his most famous plays as a Buckeye, Max sacrificed four of his teeth when he successfully blocked a punt with his face.

After his graduation from Ohio State in 1930, Max headed for Detroit and began his career as a pioneer in the oil refining business. Max saw that the automobile would transform the nation, and he had the vision to create the refinery capacity necessary to run those millions of new vehicles. He learned the business inside and out and became a legend when he built another oil company—Aurora Gasoline and its affiliate, Speedway '76—that, after a series of mergers, became Marathon Oil in 1962. Twenty years later, U.S. Steel

bought Marathon and the sale of Max Fisher's 600,000 shares added another fortune to his fortune.

Never content to rest on his laurels, Max's business interests continued. He had successful ventures in food processing and real estate, including as a partner in the purchase of the 77,000 acre Irvine Ranch in Orange County, CA, which was the largest private real estate transaction in American history at the time.

One of the traits of Max Fisher that I admire most is that he never abandoned his friends in time of trouble. When others might have told him he had reason to do so, he remained loyal. After his friend Richard Nixon resigned the presidency and entered a long winter as a political pariah, Max reached out to him with encouraging words, writing that "history will record the great contribution you have made to the world." He stuck by his friend Gerald Ford when Jimmy Carter narrowly defeated him in 1976.

Some say that after Ohio State, Detroit was Max's first love. When riots erupted in Detroit in the late 1960s, Max did everything in his power to try to bring people of all races and faiths together. At his funeral, a retired Federal judge told the story of how Max Fisher went down to City Hall to demand the release of African American citizens who were jailed for peaceful protests. Max never gave up on Detroit—and nearly everyone will tell you that without Max, Detroit might not have survived as a viable urban core.

Max had the grace to see the innate value of people as children of God. I always felt good when I met with Max. His honesty was consuming and he made you feel like you were the only person he cared about. His example of giving generously and doing deeds of loving kindness inspired others to follow suit. No one will ever be able to calculate the money that would not have been given without Max's example.

I will never forget the wonderful program that was held to honor Max when we cut the ribbon to open the Max Fisher College of Business at the Ohio State University. I am sure it was a special moment for Max to think about what it meant for the son of an immigrant to have the College of Business named for him at one of the Nation's largest universities. And as an Ohio State alumnus and former football player, I'm sure it was special to know that just a stone's throw away was the Horseshoe where he played football as a student. It was a fitting tribute to a great American who made a difference for his fellow man and country.

Like the Ohio State University's College of Business, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's performance hall also bears Max's name. These twin monuments to Max Fisher are a fitting tribute to a man who was a genius in business and every bit the passionate humanitarian.

Ours is a better Nation and world for him having been in it. Thank you, Max.●

EZION-MOUNT CARMEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 200th anniversary of a true Delaware institution, Ezion-Mount Carmel United Methodist Church. Ezion-Mount Carmel stands as a testament to the power of faith and community. It has survived through several incarnations to become a beacon of light in Wilmington, and a constant reminder that we can—and we must—triumph over adversity.

Ezion-Mount Carmel's history is as complex as one might expect from such a venerable institution. Its genesis was when the African-American members of the Old Asbury Methodist Church, unsatisfied with being forced to worship from the church's balcony, founded their own congregation and helped establish the freedom to worship in Delaware. That congregation would ultimately come to be known as Ezion-Mount Carmel United Methodist Church, and it has survived war, fire and community strife with a clear purpose and mission.

Beyond its extraordinary past, Ezion-Mount Carmel is a dynamic force for good today. One of Wilmington's community outreach leaders, the church offers numerous programs which have a real, positive effect on the often troubled community in which it resides. As it has for two centuries, Ezion-Mount Carmel continues to be a place of refuge and hope for those in need. It is where a congregation and a community gather to gain strength from each other and from God, and to continue a legacy of remarkable achievement.

For its noble past, its exciting present and its promising future, I ask that the Senate join me in congratulating Ezion-Mount Carmel United Methodist Church on its 200th anniversary.●

SOO LOCKS ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, this year marks the 150th anniversary of completion of two of the four Soo Locks in the St. Marys River. These locks, completed in 1855, provide the link between Lake Superior and the rest of the Great Lakes at Sault Ste. Marie, MI. These locks have proved to be vital to the economy of the Great Lakes region as well as the nation as a whole. The locks, in fact, handle more cargo than the Panama Canal annually. The history of the Soo Locks is really the story of the settlement of the Midwest and the rise of the region's industrial legacy.

Lake Superior is separated from Lake Huron by the St. Marys River. Prior to the locks, rapids made navigation of this river impossible. The Ojibway Indians, and later white settlers, were forced to portage their small