

addressing a 1965 antiwar rally at Madison Square Garden in New York City, while also serving as a liaison to international peace and justice organizations.

Over the years, she was active in preserving the memory of her husband and in other political issues. After her husband was assassinated in 1968, she began attending a commemorative service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta to mark her husband's birth every January 15th and fought for years to make it a national holiday, a quest that was realized in 1986, when the first Martin Luther King Day was celebrated and which we just recently celebrated 2 weeks ago.

In her own right, Mrs. King was vocal and influential on many issues, including opposing apartheid; opposing capital punishment; opposing the 2003 invasion of Iraq; and advocating for the rights of women, lesbians and gays, as well as AIDS/HIV prevention.

I was disturbed to hear of Mrs. King's hospitalization in August 2005 after suffering a stroke and a mild heart attack but encouraged by her progress in regaining some of her speech and continued physiotherapy at home. I understand that on January 14, 2006, Mrs. King made her last public appearance in Atlanta at a dinner honoring her husband's memory and that, fittingly, she will be buried in Atlanta next to her husband at The King Center.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King were remarkable people who led remarkable lives. Our Nation is a better place for their actions, and they will continue to live in our collective memory for many years to come. I wish to offer her family and friends my deepest condolences.

Mr. LEVIN. We first came to know Coretta Scott King as Dr. Martin Luther King's wife, but we came to treasure her for the more than 50 years of courageous and inspiring leadership she gave to our Nation. During Dr. King's tragically brief yet profoundly important time as America's most prominent civil rights leader, Mrs. King played an indispensable role, speaking before church and community groups, serving as a pastor's wife, and raising four children. She was Dr. King's rock during one of the most turbulent times in our history.

Mrs. King's heroism and unyielding determination to continue the struggle for justice and equality for all could not be more evident than in how she responded to a despicable incident in 1956. Mrs. King was in her home with her infant daughter, Yolanda, while Dr. King was away on one of his many missions for the civil rights movement, speaking at the First Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL. Someone threw a bomb into the Kings' home, and the bomb exploded. Even though Mrs. King and little Yolanda narrowly escaped physical harm that day, the bombing failed to deter her. Instead, Mrs. King's involvement in the civil rights movement intensified.

Following her husband's assassination, Coretta Scott King picked up his mantle and made clear that his dream, of a just America, was her dream too. Over the nearly 40 years that followed, her fight for that dream took her to every corner of the world and into every heart that loved justice. She established the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. She worked to advance the cause of justice and human rights around the world, speaking out for racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, religious freedom, full employment, health care, and education. She championed the national holiday in honor of Dr. King's legacy. And, as she carried on Dr. King's message, she became an icon of the civil rights movement in her own right.

In September 2004, the Senate passed legislation to honor Mrs. King and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., posthumously, with Congress's highest honor—the Congressional Gold Medal—for their contributions to the Nation. It was my great honor to deliver this news to Mrs. King the next day at an awards ceremony sponsored by the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus, where Mrs. King was honored with their Leadership and Achievement Award. Over the next few months, my staff worked with Mrs. King, along with the U.S. Mint and Congressman JOHN LEWIS's staff, in designing the gold medal. In March 2005, Mrs. King contributed these words, from some of her favorite lines from Dr. King's speeches, to appear on one side of the medal: "I suggest that the philosophy and strategy of nonviolence become immediately a subject for study for serious experimentation in every field of human conflict, by no means excluding the relations between nations. This may well be mankind's last chance to choose between chaos and community." Mrs. King offered these lines less than a year ago, reflecting her steadfast commitment to nonviolence throughout her entire life.

Coretta Scott King moved our Nation forward, and we owe her a debt that we cannot repay. As we mourn Mrs. King's passing today, let us celebrate her exceptional life, and let us honor her by recommitting ourselves to the dream the Kings shared of freedom, justice, and equality for all people.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Yolanda, Martin III, Dexter, and Bernice King and all of the King family.

#### SPACE SHUTTLE "CHALLENGER"/ "COLUMBIA"

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to remember two events, one which occurred 20 years ago this past Wednesday, and another which took place 3 years ago today. These dates mark profound tragedies in the history of the U.S. space program.

As my colleagues will remember, the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded just minutes after takeoff in 1986, claiming

the lives of five men and two women, among them Christa McAuliffe, who was to have been the first teacher in space. She is quoted as saying shortly before the flight, "One of the things I hope to bring back into the classroom is to make that connection with the students that they too are part of history, the space program belongs to them." I believe this statement represents very well the spirit of curiosity and the hope for the future that both these brave explorers and the space program represent.

Then, just 3 short years ago, seven men and women lost their lives when the space shuttle *Columbia* exploded as it reentered the atmosphere. So many individuals pulled together to help in recovery efforts after this national tragedy. The police departments, firefighters, local VFWs and emergency services, as well as the thousands of volunteers from East Texas and across the State, worked remarkably well together to handle the crisis and to prevent further tragedy on the ground. Law enforcement officials, NASA, and FEMA faced such a difficult time in the aftermath—and they handled the stress with grace.

The NASA community suffered a profound loss with these tragedies. This dedicated team of professionals is a symbol of our passion for science, exploration, and the discovery of places and worlds as yet unknown, and we appreciate the service of all of these men and women.

The seven heroes who lost their lives that day had dedicated themselves to the future of our Nation's space program, seven men and women who knew the risks of climbing into a rocket, leaving the Earth, and exploring the heavens, seven men and women who volunteered for an extremely dangerous but critically important mission:

Shuttle Commander Rick Husband  
Pilot William McCool  
Payload Commander Michael Anderson  
Mission Specialist Kalpana Chawla  
Mission Specialist David Brown  
Mission Specialist Laurel Blair Salton Clark

Payload Specialist Ilan Ramon

These brave seven, as well as the crew lost with *Columbia*, as well as the three who lost their lives to the *Apollo 1* fire in 1967, are all shining examples of the courage, enthusiasm, and awe that runs through the veins of all the men and women of NASA—and all the eager children across this Nation who look to the stars and see the beginning, not the end, of their universe.

These brave astronauts throughout the space program inspire not only our Nation and our children—they inspire the world. Their actions, bravery, and achievement are a challenge to humankind. A challenge to dream, to achieve more and to reach farther than ever thought possible. I thank these courageous explorers—and those they left behind—for their sacrifice for our country.

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

## CONGRATULATING DR. LEILA DAUGHTRY DENMARK ON HER 109TH BIRTHDAY

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, Dr. Leila Daughtry Denmark is truly a remarkable person; she is someone to be greatly admired. Her accomplishments as a doctor and a humanitarian are exceptional. It is with great pleasure that Julianne and I extend our warmest congratulations to her on her 109th birthday.

Today, Dr. Denmark's loved ones gather around her to celebrate her birthday and recognize a lifetime of achievement. Her tireless, selfless, compassion for others is an example to all of us.

Edna Jones, a friend of Dr. Denmark, said it best when she described her as truly a "one of a kind lady." Edna's remarks are right on target, she is a true pioneer. After being the third woman to graduate from Georgia Medical College, she became Egleston Hospital's first intern, as well as Georgia's first pediatrician. She quickly gained expertise and respect, joining with her colleagues to develop the D.P.T. shot which immunizes against whooping cough and tetanus. This breakthrough has saved countless lives all over the world.

Dr. Denmark's kindness and compassion as a human being along with her brilliance and talent as a doctor have earned her considerable praise and recognition. She has been commended by both Georgia's Senate and House legislative bodies—Dr. Denmark has even had a highway intersection named in her honor. In 1998, she was named as one of Atlanta Business Chronicle's Health Care Heroes.

She also published her book, "Every Child Should Have a Chance" in 1971. Her message to parents was how to raise happy healthy children who are well adjusted and well mannered, children who are of virtue and of strong character. Her book and her wisdom have had an impact on numerous parents and children alike and continue to serve as a guide to many.

For 56 years, Dr. Denmark volunteered once a week at Atlanta's Central Presbyterian Clinic, and chances are, if you were a patient of Dr. Denmark, she wouldn't charge you more than \$10 a visit. In everything she does, Dr. Denmark exemplifies a true humanitarian and remains committed to her healing profession. We could all stand to learn from a person like her.

Dr. Denmark has a sincere, no-nonsense devotion to others. She has been an example and an inspiration to generations. I am impressed by her lifetime commitment and service to others. And I know that Georgians are proud to count Dr. Denmark as one of our own.

Mr. President, again, my wife, Julianne, and I are delighted to wish her a happy 109th birthday and continued happiness and health.●

## AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

• Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Pierz Public Schools, in Pierz, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

The Pierz Public School District is truly a model of educational success. Mr. George Weber, the superintendent of the Pierz School District, describes "the overall feeling of pride the citizens have in our schools and in our work ethic, which has resulted in a broad sense of excellence." The District's accomplishments are even more impressive, given that they have occurred during an era of revenue reductions at the State and Federal levels, in a relatively poor community where more than 40 percent of the children qualify for free and reduced lunches, and in a part of the State experiencing falling enrollment and economic decline.

Despite repeated State revenue shortfalls, the Pierz Public School District has managed to preserve a balanced budget. The district operates on a very lean administrative staff, whose superintendent and business manager perform all central administrative functions, including curriculum, human resources, plant management, student services, transportation, and food service. This restraint has allowed the district to devote the vast majority of its resources to the classroom.

The district's commitment to its classrooms has allowed the schools to keep class sizes small—ranging from 19 to 27—with half of the classrooms kept to fewer than 23 students. By contrast, in Minnesota, the number of students per classroom averages between 27 to 30. The district also provides all-day kindergarten for all, which is not supported by the State's school revenue formula.

The Pierz School District has also demonstrated its commitment to providing exceptional facilities for its students. The district has added a new computer lab in each of the past 3 years; remodeled an old gymnasium into a new performing arts center; and built a new gymnasium, an eight-lane running track with state-of-the-art electronic timing equipment, two irrigated baseball fields, and a newly remodeled football stadium.

Much of the credit for the Pierz Public School District's success belongs to Superintendent George Weber, elementary school principal Lealen Swoboda, high school principal Paul DeMorett, and their dedicated teachers. The students and staff at the Pierz Public Schools understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success in life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at the Pierz Public School District

should be very proud of their accomplishment.

I congratulate the Pierz Public School District in Pierz, MN, for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

## AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

• Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Riverside Elementary School, in Brainerd, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Riverside Elementary School is truly a model of educational success. On my recent visit to Riverside, 10 fourth-graders shared with me their essays on what makes Riverside a special place to learn. Toni Gohman, Amanda Kunde, Allison Morris, Tom Stoxen, Kallie Konklin, Gretchen Gramer, Paige Phillips, Kaela Middleton, Anna Razidlo, and Emma Higgenbotham are to be commended for their exceptional writing ability and for superbly reading their essays at an all-school assembly.

I would like to quote briefly from several of the essays to offer a true flavor of the exceptional educational achievements at Riverside Elementary.

Amanda Kunde writes, "I feel safe and happy here at Riverside. . . . Mrs. Engler, the teachers and the teachers' assistants are awesome. It's nice to know that people care about me."

Allison Morris writes, "Our teachers make learning fun, interesting & exciting. They . . . not only teach the standard subjects like reading and math, they help teach us to be responsible for our actions, and to respect one another."

Gretchen Gramer writes, "Every student has a different personality. We help each other when we are stuck and when we are hurt. . . . We get rewarded when we are good by a new program called 'Caught Being Good.' . . . We have other great helpers at our school. The custodians, the nurse, the office staff and the cooks all do a great job."

Toni Gohman writes, "Riverside is an awesome school. It has an awesome principal, great teachers, and respectful and kind students."

Tom Stoxen writes, "All of the people at our school are really friendly and helpful to all of the kids. . . . The cooks are really nice and cook good food. We even get seconds sometimes, but not on the dessert."

Paige Phillips writes, "Every day when I come to school I feel safe, and to me that is very important. . . . When I get hurt I always know someone's ready to take care of me."

Kaela Middleton writes, "I am going to tell you what we do in our everyday school day so you know that it is not always fun and games, but that it can also be very hard work."

Anna Razidlo writes, "Riverside deserves this award because we have so