

her, ferociously and protectively monitoring every detail of her care at every stage. So much so that one of the doctors joked that my father was practicing medicine without a license. Throughout this difficult time, the devotion of my parents to one another was like a shining beacon, drawing everyone to them with its intensity and warmth.

Nearly half a century ago, Father came to America to prepare a place for his young wife and their children. Now, Mother has gone to prepare a place for him and for us—an everlasting home with the Lord that will never end and where every tear will be wiped away. We are consoled by the knowledge that we will see Mother again with her usual smile, healthy and strong.

Until then, Mother is with us every day in our hearts and in our lives as an enduring inspiration, spurring us forward to contribute to society and make a difference in this world.

#### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to engage in a colloquy with my friend the distinguished Senator from Colorado, Mr. KEN SALAZAR, who I have the pleasure of serving with as cochair of the Senate Democratic Hispanic Task Force.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, I would like to spend a moment talking about the landmark 1947 discrimination case *Mendez v. Westminster*, which established the legal precedent on which *Brown v. Board of Education* was based. It is an extremely important piece of our civil rights history, but sadly, it is often overlooked. Senator SALAZAR and I would like to remedy that.

Let me illustrate the importance of this case. I want you to picture two students, both equally bright, eager to learn, and full of possibility. One student sits in a beautiful new school building surrounded by the best books, a good heating system, and a clean cafeteria. The other sits in a dilapidated old shed with torn and tattered books that are far too old. The heat doesn't work because there's no furnace, and the cafeteria doesn't exist. As you all know, this was what occurred in towns throughout our country for far too long before *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled that separate was inherently unequal.

Sylvia Mendez, a victim of separate but equal before *Brown v. Board of Education*, was only 8 years old when she and her brothers were prohibited from attending a Whites-only school in Westminster, CA, in Orange County. Her father, along with five other Mexican-American fathers whose children were forced to attend subpar, segregated schools, challenged school segregation in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, claiming their children were victims of unconstitutional discrimination. This historic court battle ultimately ended school segregation in California and set in motion the legal process that would eventually end school segregation in America.

Mr. SALAZAR. Like my colleague Senator BOB MENENDEZ, I believe it is

critical to recognize the contributions that Sylvia Mendez and her family have made to the advancement of civil rights. The Mendez family's struggle for equality is a reminder to me that we must continue to fight for equal and quality education for all our children.

Sadly, many young Hispanic students today attend schools that are lacking in resources, equipment, and highly qualified teachers. Nationally, Latinos are four times more likely to drop out of high school than their White counterparts and only 1 in 10 Latinos has obtained a 4-year college degree. Reforms to our education system are clearly needed to address these disparities and continue the legacy of Sylvia Menendez.

Education is a critical pathway to realizing the American dream. It is what allows every child to transcend the barriers of race, class, background, or disability to achieve their potential to be what they choose in life. A wise historian once said that, "Education is the means by which we exult our successes and remedy our failures and the process by which we transmit our civilization from one generation to the next."

We take this moment to recommit ourselves to uphold the legacy of Sylvia Mendez and her brothers. This is what Hispanic Heritage Month is all about.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I thank Senator KEN SALAZAR for the work he does on the Senate Democratic Hispanic Task Force on behalf of Latinos. My colleague understands, like I do, that we must not only celebrate the accomplishments of Latinos but turn to the future in to ensure that Latinos are protected by our laws and able to achieve the American dream. Sylvia Mendez, who has become a premier civil rights advocate and leader as a result of this case, is a clear example of what it means to achieve that dream.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### HONORING LOUISE SEIKEL

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, which I am honored to chair, oversees the Department of Veterans Affairs, the second largest Cabinet level department in the United States. A person who works for Veterans Affairs is joined by roughly 245,000 fellow employees, each of whom plays a role in fulfilling our Nation's obligation to those who have served. In an organization of that magnitude, there is a real risk of overlooking the importance of the contributions made by individual VA employees. Today I want to recognize one such employee, who celebrated her 50th year of working for veterans this past Sunday.

Louise Seikel, a certified registered nurse anesthetist in Brooklyn, NY, has spent the last half century serving those who have served our country. To

put this into perspective, I note that Louise has done this under 10 U.S. Presidents, and had provided care to veterans for over three decades before the first Secretary of Veterans' Affairs was appointed to the President's Cabinet. When she began, she and her colleagues cared for wounded warriors who were born in the 19th century, and today she is part of the health administration caring for those wounded in the conflicts of the 21st century.

Louise has served countless numbers of veterans, and I cannot put into words the immeasurable impact she has made. What I can do, however understated it may be, is give her my heartfelt thanks. Louise has earned it.

In that spirit I say to Louise Seikel, on behalf of every life you have touched and the grateful Nation you continue to serve, mahalo nui loa. Thank you so very much for your public service.●

##### IN RECOGNITION OF JANET TURCOTTE

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize one of my constituents, Janet Turcotte of Bowie, Maryland. I was fortunate to meet Janet in March of this year when she visited my Washington office. She came as part of C3, the Colorectal Cancer Coalition, a group whose mission is to eliminate suffering and death due to colorectal cancer.

Janet is a talented embroiderer, and for more than 20 years she has been decorating saddlecloths for the thoroughbreds at Maryland's Pimlico Race Course. For the past 2 years, she has added the colorectal cancer "Blue Star of Hope" to the saddlecloths of the contenders for the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico. Recognizing that the Preakness has more than 17 million television viewers each year, Janet aims to use this symbol to encourage early screening for colorectal cancer, and to save lives. Janet graciously brought me one of those "Blue Star" saddlecloths, which is now displayed in my personal office.

Janet Turcotte is far more than an advocate for colorectal health. She is also a patient. First diagnosed with stage IV colorectal cancer 4 years ago, she is currently battling her third recurrence of the disease. Last week, Janet's doctors told her that she does not have much time left.

Janet's message to Congress and to all Americans is an urgent and important one. It is that early screening, diagnosis and treatment of colon cancer can save lives. The American Cancer Society, whose members will visit Capitol Hill soon, reports that in 2006, more than 150,000 new cases of colon cancer were diagnosed and more than 50,000 Americans died from the disease, including more than 1,000 Marylanders.

I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our appreciation to Janet Turcotte, a dedicated and courageous advocate for colorectal health, for her

selfless efforts to promote a healthier America.●

#### HONORING ELEANOR McGOVERN

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to publicly honor and recognize one of South Dakota's favorite daughters, Eleanor McGovern, who died on January 25, 2007, at the age of 85. A memorial service is being held today for Eleanor, and I know my colleagues all join with me in expressing our sympathies to the McGovern family. While we do mourn her passing, we also celebrate her extraordinarily successful life working to better the lives of the people of South Dakota and people around the world.

Born in Woonsocket, SD, in 1921, Eleanor grew up on a farm during the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s. Her strong work ethic and her lifelong concern and compassion for others were instilled in her by her childhood experiences. When her mother died when she was 12 years old, Eleanor and her twin sister, Ila, took over all household responsibilities, helping their father raise their younger sister. Eleanor attended high school in Woonsocket and met her future husband, former Senator George McGovern, while attending Dakota Wesleyan University. After graduation she worked as a legal secretary before marrying Senator McGovern on October 31, 1943.

Throughout her life, Eleanor achieved many impressive accomplishments. She was a board member of Dakota Wesleyan University, the Psychiatric Institute, the Child Study Association, the Erickson Institute of Chicago, and Odyssey House of New York. Eleanor also volunteered for the Child Development Center. She was named an Outstanding Citizen in 1975 by Dakota Wesleyan University and awarded an honorary doctorate in humane letters in 1997.

In addition to all these accomplishments she was a devoted mother of five. Throughout the years, she provided a stable and loving home environment for her children and helped facilitate her husband's service to the Nation. During Senator McGovern's Presidential campaign, he described her as his most helpful critic and most trusted adviser.

Eleanor also authored her memoir, "Uphill: A Personal Story," which was published in 1973. Following the death of her daughter Terry in 1994, she showed remarkable courage by speaking publicly about the tragedy of alcoholism and how it impacted her family. In addition, she helped establish the McGovern Family Foundation for researching alcoholism.

Throughout her life she worked tirelessly to improve the lives of others, especially the lives of women and children; she published articles on child development while also traveling the Nation to address the problems facing

American families. There are few people who have done as much to better the lives of the women and children of South Dakota.

Eleanor is survived by her husband Senator McGovern; 4 children—Ann McGovern, Susan McGovern, Mary McGovern-McKinnon, and Steve McGovern—10 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren.

It is with great honor that I speak of the accomplishments of Eleanor McGovern and with great sadness that I mark her passing.●

#### HONORING MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Montclair State University, MSU, on its 100th anniversary. Over the past century, MSU has grown from its humble beginnings as the New Jersey State Normal School with just 187 students into one of the premier educational institutions in the State of New Jersey.

Montclair State University began as a teacher's college and, to this day, continues to train the Nation's finest educators. However, the school's curriculum has expanded to include a comprehensive range of first-class undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. With over 16,000 students and 465 full-time faculty members, MSU is currently the second-largest and fastest-growing university in New Jersey, and has a diverse student body that reflects New Jersey's population.

Much of the University's success can be attributed to its steadfast dedication to outstanding faculty, exceptional teaching, and quality of scholarship. The university is led by a dedicated and talented team focused on meeting the many needs of its students and the surrounding community. MSU manages to provide the individual attention of a small college, while also offering a vast array of majors and concentrations.

Mr. President, the students and alumni of Montclair State University have much to be proud of as they celebrate 100 years of academia. I applaud MSU for its many years of service, and I wish the university continued success in the years ahead.●

#### THE HONORABLE H. EMORY WIDENER, JR.

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I have a heavy heart. It is with great regret that I share with the Senate that the Honorable H. Emory Widener, Jr.—one of our country's extraordinary jurists, an exceptional Virginian, and a good friend—has passed away. For 38 years, he served our Nation and Virginia as a member of the Federal judiciary.

Our Nation has lost one of its finest jurists, someone who was universally

admired for his dedication to the Constitution, to the laws passed by the Congress and subsequently enacted, and to the impartial treatment of those who appeared before him.

Emory Widener started his career in public service by entering the Naval Academy in Annapolis. Responding to the call of duty, he served as an officer in the final year of World War II. He later served in the Korean war and received an honorable discharge in 1958. Following 2 years in the Naval Reserves, he began law school at Washington and Lee University, and upon graduation he returned to that region of Virginia which he loved so dearly, southwest Virginia, to enter private practice in Bristol.

In 1969, Emory Widener was nominated for a lifetime appointment to the Federal court as a U.S. district judge for the Western District of Virginia and was promptly confirmed by the Senate. After an unusually brief period of time, only 2 years, he became the chief judge of this Federal court. In 1972, he was nominated for a seat on the Fourth Circuit and again received an expedient confirmation by the Senate.

By his extraordinarily well written opinions, Judge Widener became a legend on the Fourth Circuit. Judge Widener's exemplary judgment and integrity were profound assets to this important court, and I always have had a deep admiration and respect for this magnificent man and jurist. He was a legal giant in Virginia, a legal giant in America's Federal courts, and his service as a jurist should be a model for others.

Without question, southwest Virginia has lost one of its dearest friends. Yet the region can everlastingly point with great pride and admiration to the achievements of one of its greatest sons. He will be missed not only in Abingdon, VA, where he kept his office, but also by his fellow jurists, those who practiced before him, and throughout the Commonwealth and the Nation.

We all join in extending our deepest sympathies to his family and his friends as they mourn his passing.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)