

Academy Elementary and Junior High School truly celebrates the blue ribbon standard of excellence that the No Child Left Behind Program strives to achieve. Villa Madonna Academy Elementary and Junior High School exemplifies what our Kentucky schools can achieve when we have enough faith in our students to challenge them to their full potential.

I congratulate Villa Madonna Academy Elementary and Junior High School on this achievement. The administrators, teachers, parents, and students of this school are an inspiration to the citizens of Kentucky. I look forward to all that Villa Madonna Academy Elementary and Junior High School accomplishes in the future.●

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID POYTHRESS

● Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, today I recognize the career and achievements of a great military officer, civilian leader, and friend. After a long and distinguished career culminating with nearly 44 years of service, LTG David Poythress will retire from the United States Air National Guard, with the honor of being the first adjutant general of Georgia to reach the rank of lieutenant general.

General Poythress was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1964, a time in our Nation's history when serving in the military brought with it not only a requirement to face the enemy abroad but also the willingness to serve despite a divided nation.

General Poythress received his law degree from Emory University in 1967 and was a distinguished graduate of Emory's ROTC program. Shortly thereafter, he was called to active duty and served 1 year as chief of military justice at DaNang Air Base, Vietnam. He served as a judge advocate general in the Air Force Reserve, rising from the rank of captain to brigadier general. During this same time period, complimenting his military career, he served the State of Georgia honorably as the assistant attorney general, the deputy state revenue commissioner, the secretary of State of Georgia, and the State labor commissioner.

In 1999, he was appointed as the adjutant general of Georgia, with his tenure encompassing what may be the Georgia National Guard's most dynamic and demanding period in its 243-year history. Under General Poythress's leadership, the Georgia National Guard deployed nearly 10,000 soldiers and airmen around the world in support of the global war on terror, and more than 2,200 guardsmen to help Gulf Coast States following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The Georgia Guard completed high profile/high risk security missions following September 11, 2001, and also conducted dangerous operations on the Mexican border.

General Poythress's contributions will be appreciated by generations of Georgia guardsmen far in the future.

He was successful in achieving the long-standing Georgia goal of legislation and funding for a State retirement plan for traditional guardsmen. He led the Georgia National Guard in winning the Oglethorpe Award for performance excellence. He also oversaw Robins Air Force Base's 116th Air Control Wing's transition from B-1s to a highly modernized Joint STARS unit.

General Poythress's noteworthy service and responsibilities have been widely recognized. His distinguished honors include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with one device, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one device, the Vietnam Service Medal with one device and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

The Georgia National Guard will miss General Poythress's commitment to duty, ceaseless drive for improvement, and unwavering support for guardsmen, soldiers, and airmen everywhere. Although I will miss his service in the capacity as adjutant general, I am especially pleased that he will remain in the great State of Georgia and continue to serve both publicly and privately as he has done throughout his life. I hope my colleagues will join me in wishing him well in all his future endeavors and hope that those who follow in his footsteps will continue his legacy of support to Georgia and our great Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO DICK SMITH

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, from humble beginnings as a seasonal fire fighter in Wyoming in the 1970s, Dick Smith built a fine career and developed an outstanding reputation as a Forest Service employee over his 35 years at the Agency. He retired from Federal service this fall, after achieving the position of Forest Supervisor for the Boise National Forest. Although we are thrilled that he is able to now enjoy retirement, his absence will indeed be felt, to the detriment of the Idaho foresting community. Before taking a position in the Clearwater National Forest, Dick worked seasonally in Alaska, Minnesota, and Wyoming. In the 1970s and 1980s, he developed a strong foundation in forest management, silviculture, fire and project planning and obtained a Master of Science in Forest Ecology. He worked for 15 years as a Forest Silviculturalist. From 1989 to 1999, Dick served as District Ranger in charge of overall management of the 460,000 acre Plains/Thompson Falls District of the Lolo NF, in Plains, MT. During his tenure at this position, he earned a number of awards including the Forest Service Director's Excellence Award for "Positive Action and Community Leadership" for the District's mineral management program and the Forest Service Northern Regional Forester's Honor Award for "Personal and Professional Excellence." His District received the 1995 National Salvage Award for effectively taking advantage of salvage opportuni-

ties in an environmentally sensitive manner following large bark beetle outbreaks and significant wildfire activity on the unit under his direction.

It is natural that such an individual would rise to the top in his agency, and Dick did exactly that. In 1999, the Forest Service brought him here to Washington to serve on the policy analysis staff, and it was at this time that I, too, was able to benefit from his hard work and expertise—directly. When I was first elected to the Senate, Dick came to work for me as a Brookings Institute Fellow for 6 months and I greatly benefited from his expertise and experience.

He returned to Idaho and was selected to serve as Supervisor of the 2.6 million acre Boise National Forest in 2003. This position entails coordinating forest management and supervisory activities with state agencies, other Federal agencies and the tribes. Then-Governor Dirk Kempthorne appointed him to serve on the board of the Idaho Rural Partnership and the Citizens Advisory Panel to the Policy Analysis Group for the University of Idaho.

While under Dick's leadership, the Boise National Forest was one of the first national forests to complete and implement a fuels management project under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. Dick's diligence and commitment to intentional and effective forest management has placed the Boise National Forest at the forefront of implementing hazardous fuels treatment and initiatives that support aquatic restoration, noxious weed mitigation and recreation management. These endeavors are all the more challenging considering the growing wildland urban interface that characterizes the Boise National Forest.

While excelling at his job, Dick maintained his involvement in professional and community organizations. In addition to membership in the American Society of Foresters, Dick has been involved in Boy Scouts, Little League, Jaycees, Lions Club, and various leadership positions with the Rotary Club in the communities in which he has lived over the years.

Dick and his wife, Sandy, plan to stay in the Boise area for retirement, enjoying the outdoors hiking, camping, fishing, backpacking and skiing—fitting pursuits for a man who has worked so hard to preserve and manage Idaho's beautiful natural resources for future generations. I appreciate Dick's wisdom and insight over the years; I have depended on his analysis and advice on many forest management issues, and I wish him and Sandy well in the next chapter of their lives.●

RECOGNIZING DON AMERT

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Don Amert for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to

eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Don Amert with East Central South Dakota Habitat for Humanity is a partner in Amert Construction of Madison, SD. He has provided leadership as the East Central South Dakota Habitat for Humanity's construction chairman. Along with help from volunteers, Don completed the first 2 houses for East Central South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. Not only did Don provide affordable housing, but he also taught his volunteers proper building techniques.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Don Amert and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING OWEN BAIN

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Owen Bain for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Owen Bain works with the Habitat for Humanity of Beadle County. He is a hobby carpenter and has volunteered more than 180 hours of labor in Habitat's recent projects. Owen played an integral role in the building process, all the while maintaining his humble disposition. Owen is a model volunteer who has contributed greatly to the success of Habitat for Humanity.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Owen Bain and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING BENCHMARK FOAM, INC.

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Benchmark Foam Inc. for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

Benchmark Foam Inc. is partnered with Watertown Region Habitat for Humanity and is based in Watertown, South Dakota. The Benchmark team has produced and provided expanded polystyrene and other specialty plastics for the construction of Habitat homes. Benchmark has developed a longstanding relationship with the Watertown Region affiliate. Benchmark and its employees have made their mark on the Habitat for Humanity progress in the area.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Benchmark Foam Inc. and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING CLARK'S RENTALS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Clark's Rentals for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

Clark's Rentals is partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Yankton County. Clark's Rentals began operating in 1991, and after only 5 years they supported the new Yankton affiliate of Habitat for Humanity by providing equipment without cost. Through their support of Habitat's mission, Clark's Rentals has enabled the Yankton affiliate to expand their goal of providing affordable housing. Special recognition is due to Larry and Joan Clark of Clark's Rentals as well as their supportive staff members, Carl Clark, Ray Dorat, and Jimmy Olson.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Clark's Rentals and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING CAROLYN DOWNS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Carolyn Downs is the outgoing executive director of The Banquet in Sioux Falls, SD who is stepping down after 20 years of service to the Sioux Falls community.

The Banquet, an ecumenical ministry, has been providing free meals to the Sioux Falls community since 1985. In the past year, The Banquet served 137,000 guests. Since she started her work with The Banquet in 1988, Carolyn has organized thousands of volunteers and served countless meals. Carolyn learned from her mother at a young age that sharing meals was a way that people show their love to others. The secret to her success is her ability to put herself in other people's shoes. Carolyn encourages her volunteers to not only provide food to those that come to her center, but also to express compassion and understanding through conversation and interaction. Carolyn's love for others is reflected in her perpetual smile and her giving spirit.

South Dakota's communities are held together by dedicated individuals like Carolyn Downs who commit their time and energy to helping those around them. She is truly an example of what it means to serve others. Her leadership and dedication to The Banquet will be greatly missed. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Carolyn on a successful career and wish her the best on her retirement.●

RECOGNIZING DAVE FLECK

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dave Fleck for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Dave Fleck works with the Greater Sioux Falls Habitat for Humanity. His company, Sioux Falls Construction, has donated construction management services to the Greater Sioux Falls Habitat affiliate. Dave has taken on leadership roles in the construction and site selection for 8 years now. He has participated in Habitat activities at every level. Dave is also a member of the chamber of commerce. The Greater Sioux Falls Habitat for Humanity truly benefits from the support that Dave Fleck provides.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Dave Fleck and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING THE JOHN T. VUCUREVICH FOUNDATION

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the John T. Vucurevich Foundation for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

The John T. Vucurevich Foundation works with the Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanity. With the impressive financial support the John T. Vucurevich Foundation has shown, the Black Hills Area Habitat affiliate has been able to obtain a ReStore Outlet. The John T. Vucurevich Foundation has shown its continued support by providing construction materials and furthering the goals of the Black Hills Area affiliate in many ways.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize the John T. Vucurevich Foundation and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

HONORING JUNE JAMES

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor June James of Hazel, SD. June was chosen as the 2007 Spirit of South Dakota Award winner. This impressive award reflects June's vision, courage, and strength of character in the development of her family, community, and State.

June is a lifelong South Dakotan who reflects the values and traditions that make our State great. She is dedicated