

only possible if concerned Americans register as an organ donor and, subsequently, inform their family members and loved ones of their intention to donate.

That is why, as National Eye Donation Month approaches, I encourage my colleagues to work with their local eye banks, and the Eye Bank Association of America, to promote eye donation and provide more people, like Teresa Walton, with the miracle cornea transplantation provides. There is no gift more meaningful, or more profoundly important, than the gift of sight.

TRIBUTE TO W. DON NELSON

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I rise today to express my best wishes and appreciation to a staff member who is leaving my office after many years of public service.

W. Don Nelson has served with distinction as my State director in Lincoln, NE, since I was elected in 2000, which is no small job in a State that stretches 500 miles.

Although we share the same last name, we do not share a family relationship. We do share a passion for public service. W. Don, as he is known throughout Nebraska, has a long history of bipartisan government service at the highest levels.

Mr. Nelson worked for former Congressman Douglas Bereuter when he was director of the Nebraska State Office of Planning and Programming. He also served as a chief policy adviser for former Nebraska Governors Norbert Tiemann, Jim Exon, and former Wyoming Governor Ed Herschler and was chief of staff for Nebraska Governor Bob Kerrey. Before Don became my State director he was in the private sector serving as managing director for the Nebraska office of a major national securities firm.

To say that W. Don Nelson was an important and vital part of the staff for those of us whom he served is an understatement. His background as a lawyer and investment banker made him invaluable in government service but his abilities stretched far beyond that.

W. Don Nelson is one of the most fiercely loyal and completely trustworthy individuals I have ever had the privilege to know. His intellect and depth of knowledge on virtually any issue is uncanny. He has the courage to confront adversaries at the highest levels and the compassion to help those who are less fortunate. He is a gracious host and gentleman to friends, and a devoted father and husband to a loving family.

W. Don may be retiring but not to a rocking chair. The W. Don Nelson that so many Nebraskans know will never sit back and rest on his laurels. His so-called retirement will be in front of a computer screen and stalking the halls of government buildings visiting with elected and appointed officials from the other side of the desk, as a reporter.

After answering questions from reporters for much of his career, he will be asking the questions. He is crossing over to start his own newspaper, called Prairie Fire, in Lincoln, NE. Its objective is to be the progressive voice of the Great Plains offering thoughtful, bipartisan public discourse about all matters relating to politics and the arts and, I imagine, Don's passion, the environment.

All of us will miss Don, his quirky sense of humor, his vintage neckties, his sports cars, and even his outward display of pride in Cornhusker Country for his alma maters, the University of Florida and Florida State University.

We wish him every success in his new role as editor, publisher, and writer.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BIG SKY HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE PROGRAM RECOGNITION

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I am honored to speak to you today about the wonderful work being done in a school in my home State—Big Sky High School in Missoula, MT. Big Sky High School is a leader in science education and a wonderful example of how creativity and innovation can prepare students for the 21st century.

To the students, teachers, parents, and administrators at Big Sky High School, I commend you for your dedication and imagination. Big Sky High School should be an example to schools all over the country of what we can do if we make a real commitment to teaching our students the skills necessary to keep America competitive in the global economy.

Big Sky's science programs emphasize real-world applications and collaboration. For example, in the elective "Advanced Problems in Science," students work on research projects and learn how to document their results and present them to the community. Many of these projects are featured in science fairs and other competitions, giving students experience and connecting them to the scientific community.

Science teacher Jim Harkins, who has taught at Big Sky for 24 years, is an example of how a great teacher can inspire students to go into the sciences. Let me tell you about Jim's goals for science class in his own words. "I try to tell the students that the classroom, text book setting is not real science," he said. "Science is not learned in books while sitting at desks. In this class, Advanced Problems in Science, our goal is to simulate their curiosity in a real-life science setting. This program provides Montana students with competitiveness on national and international levels."

To see the success of this program, you need to look no further than the students themselves. Big Sky alumnus Jayce Getz was an active participant in these science programs and he was re-

cently honored with one of only 30 mathematical sciences postdoctoral research fellowships from the National Science Foundation. Jayce will begin a professorship at Princeton next fall. Jayce attributes some of his current success to his participation in Big Sky's science program. "Kids in Missoula, Montana, can and do get involved with important research in the sciences," he said. "The trick is to get started early on."

Yet at Big Sky, kids do start early. The halls are filled with the future scientific leaders of America. Students study the genetic code of a cyanobacterial strain and test sail designs in wind tunnels by using an innovative interdisciplinary approach.

By nurturing the curiosity and creativity of these students, Big Sky teachers like Jim Harkins ensure America's youth are given the education and tools necessary to succeed in the 21st century. I applaud Jim and his students. They are examples of what makes Montana's school system the best in the Nation.

To Mr. Harkins and students of Big Sky High School, I extend my congratulations.●

RETIREMENT OF RICK SHAPIRO

• Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Rick Shapiro, who recently retired as executive director of the Congressional Management Foundation.

I became acquainted with Rick early in my Senate career, when I asked Rick to help me and my staff strengthen the management of my Senate office. That began a very useful relationship with Rick and CMF.

Under his leadership, CMF grew in size, scope, and impact. Rick has made CMF an integral part of the early organization of nearly every new House and Senate office, through CMF's practical publications and its role in new office orientations.

For many offices like mine, Rick used his skills in organizational management to help members and their senior staff improve how they run their offices and serve their constituents. His confidential counsel and evaluation, and that of a strong staff that he recruited and supported, has allowed many Senators and Members of Congress to focus on their jobs as legislators, with the confidence that their offices would be well run.

Rick also used his extensive knowledge of strategic planning to ensure offices have a strategic vision and the means to deliver on that vision. He and his staff have facilitated hundreds of staff retreats, helping House and Senate offices produce ambitious, but realistic, plans for their work.

Rick was the driving force behind CMF's research into cutting edge topics. For example, CMF's research and guidance on the Internet and electronic communications has been the single most important force in bringing many

offices into the 21st century in their use of new technology.

Before joining CMF, Rick worked in the U.S. House of Representatives, first as a staff investigator and later as the staff director of two House committees. He brought his significant knowledge of the workings of the Congress to CMF and it progressed under his leadership.

All of us who know him and have benefited from his work wish him well, and look with interest to his next project.●

REMEMBERING MIKE HALL

● Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the memory of Mike Hall, who sadly passed away this last Friday.

Mike was a longtime sportswriter, editor, and columnist with the Albuquerque Journal. Though he was born in Muskogee, OK, and began his career writing in California, there is no doubt Mike was a great New Mexican. Mike first came to New Mexico in 1983 to serve as sports editor at the Albuquerque Tribune, and in 1988 he joined the staff at the Albuquerque Journal. In his 24 years of reporting in New Mexico, both his readers and those he wrote about came to appreciate and respect Mike for his knowledge and his humor. He will be truly missed by New Mexicans.

I would also like to offer my deepest condolences to Mike's family, his wife Sondra and children Dionne, Jason, Michael, and Kathryn and his six grandchildren.

I ask that an article from the Albuquerque Journal celebrating Mike's life and career be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows.

[From the Albuquerque Journal, Feb. 24, 2007]

JOURNAL EDITOR/WRITER DIES AT 61

VETERAN OF SPORTS DEPARTMENT LIVED IN ABQ. SINCE '83; COVERED BOXING, UNM WOMEN'S HOOPS

(By Lloyd Jojola)

Mike Hall, a veteran New Mexico journalist who was best known as a sports editor, writer and columnist, died early Friday.

Most recently, Hall held the title of associate sports editor at the Albuquerque Journal and covered Lobo women's basketball.

UNM women's basketball coach Don Flanagan said Hall established an "excellent relationship" between himself and the players and staff.

"Once he got the position of our beat reporter I knew that it was going to help our program immensely just because of his background, how well he was thought of," Flanagan said. "I thought throughout his time his intention was always very positive. With our program, and I appreciated the recognition that he brought to the program."

Flanagan said Hall did his homework. The coach was often "amazed" Hall knew who the staff was recruiting without being told.

Flanagan might not have always liked the stories that were printed, he said, but Hall was still highly regarded.

"I respected him as a reporter and as somebody that would give us honest and fair coverage," he said.

Hall joined the Albuquerque Journal staff in 1988.

"Mike Hall was a real pro," said Journal Editor Kent Walz. "He loved what he did, and it showed."

"In nearly 20 years here, Mike was a good colleague and a good friend. We'll miss him." Hall died of pneumonia, his family said. The 61-year-old Albuquerque resident had battled lung cancer in recent years and had recovered.

A memorial service is scheduled for 10 a.m. Feb. 28 at French Mortuary, 10500 Lomas NE.

Hall launched his newspaper career in the San Francisco Bay Area as a sports reporter for the Berkeley Gazette, covering such teams as the Oakland A's and the Oakland Raiders. He then served as sports news editor at the Wichita Eagle-Beacon before leaving in 1979 to become weekend editor and assistant news editor at The Clarion-Ledger in Jackson, Miss., according to past news stories.

Hall was named sports editor at The Albuquerque Tribune in 1983 and also served as the evening newspaper's city editor and as a columnist, before moving to the Albuquerque Journal to become sports editor.

He became a Journal associate sports editor in 1996 and focused his reporting on UNM women's basketball and boxing.

Local boxer Danny Romero said Hall had been writing about him since he was a very young, unknown fighter.

Romero's skills in the ring helped, he said, but Hall's "the one who made me famous."

While stories can sometimes generate contentious relationships between reporters and their subjects, Romero said respect was never lost for Hall.

"You didn't always have to have your guard up. As an athlete, you always have to watch out with you guys," the fighter said, referring to newspaper reporters. "With him, you didn't. It was always open arms. He would let you speak your mind and make you sound good."

Born in Muskogee, Okla., in 1945, Hall was raised in Wichita, Kan., and studied journalism at Wichita State University, said Sondra Hall, his wife.

Hall played a lot of sports in his younger days, including boxing as an amateur, added Kathryn Hall, his daughter.

"He was never very good at it, he always told me, but he liked it," she said.

Hall loved the crunch of sports reporting: the road trips, the demanding game-time coverage, the interviews and simply getting the story.

But ultimately, "he liked to write," Kathryn Hall said.

"I always thought he just liked to write (newspaper) articles but it turned out he wrote a lot of stuff," she said, referring to journals the family found. "We were reading a lot of it last night."

"He just wrote all the time."

Hall's work, with his easygoing style, was recognized multiple times by his peers.

Among his awards, in 1990 Hall received, along with now Tribune Editor Phill Casaus, the best sports story award from the Albuquerque Press Club for stories on the NCAA's investigation surrounding a UNM track sprinter. The following year, he picked up the top sports writing award from the New Mexico Press Association for stories on athletic spending at UNM. And in 1993, the press association again honored Hall with a first-place award for two sports columns.

"He was humorous and fun-loving," Kathryn Hall said, "and very strong and courageous." Hall was preceded in death by his parents, Harold Rea Hall and Jewell Gray. His survivors include his wife of 30 years, Sondra; children, Dionné Mantaoni, Jason Hall, Michael Bolton and Kathryn Hall; and six grandchildren.

Contributions can be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, Tenn., 38105.●

CONGRATULATING CONSUL SERGIO AGUILERA

● Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the important service of Consul Sergio Aguilera upon his retirement from the Mexican Foreign Service.

During his leadership of the Mexican Consulate in Indianapolis, my staff and I have enjoyed working closely with Consul Aguilera to strengthen the political, economic, social, and cultural ties between our two nations. By working closely with the Federal, State, and local governments, as well as schools, businesses, and community organizations, Consul Aguilera has ably represented the people of Mexico and served the needs of the Mexican community in the Midwest.

In addition to his official duties, Consul Aguilera has given generously of his time in service to the Indianapolis community through work with the Mexican Scholarship Fund and the Central Indiana Community Foundation. The Indianapolis community will continue to benefit from Consul Aguilera's leadership as he seeks to expand his charitable work in retirement.

I am especially pleased that Consul Aguilera and his wife Lori have chosen to remain in Indianapolis as they pursue new and exciting experiences together.

I appreciate this opportunity to congratulate Consul Aguilera and wish him good health and success upon his retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO MARY BURKS

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Mary Burks, founder of the Alabama Conservancy, mother of the wilderness movement, and champion of the Sipsey Wilderness in the Bankhead National Forest.

Last week, Mary Burks passed away in Birmingham, at the age of 86.

Her passing is a loss, not just for Alabama or the conservation movement, but for every person who has ever explored and enjoyed Alabama's vast wilderness. She helped protect those natural areas, and, without her, our children might not be as able to enjoy them as they do today.

Her lifelong struggle to protect and conserve sensitive lands provides a record of accomplishment that deserves both recognition and celebration.

John Randolph, author of a book titled *The Battle for Alabama Wilderness*, described Mary Burks's passion for what she did. Randolph says, "If one believes in fate, then surely Mary Burks was fated to become the mother of Alabama wilderness preservation. Passionate, tough, and resilient, a lover of all things wild and natural . . ."