

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, Dionne 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 . . ."

Mary Burks did not simply sit and dream. She led a 6-year campaign in the early 1970s to designate the Sipsey Wilderness area in the Bankhead National Forest as wilderness. In doing so, she won the support of the entire Alabama congressional delegation.

That is not always an easy thing to do.

After the campaign, not only was the Sipsey Wilderness created, but the Eastern Wilderness Area System was established when President Gerald Ford signed the Eastern Wilderness Act. It is fair to assume that this success would not have been achieved without Mary Burks' tireless efforts.

Today, Alabama is home to more than 41,000 acres of wilderness, including the Cheaha and Dugger Mountain Wilderness Areas. As you know, hundreds of thousands of acres have now been designated as wilderness in the Eastern United States.

All of these accomplishments have roots in Mary Burks's original push to preserve wilderness in Alabama.

Describing the importance of Mary's efforts and the organization that she founded, the Alabama Conservancy, Floyd Haskell, former U.S. Senator from Colorado, stated "If not for the Alabama Conservancy, there would be no concept of Eastern Wilderness."

There is a difference between thinking that things ought to be a certain way, and actually making them so. Too often we are quick to do the former, and slow to do the latter. But the protected resources in my home State and others are larger in size, great in quantity, and more secure in their protection because Mary Burks fought for them all her life. She left a lasting legacy in Alabama that will forever be felt by all who care about wilderness and natural places.●

AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, AHEPA, on their 85th anniversary this year. Since 1922, AHEPA has diligently served the Hellenic community and all Americans through a variety of programs and outreach endeavors.

Initially created to combat discrimination and hate, AHEPA's mission has expanded during its distinguished history. As the largest and oldest American-based, Greek heritage grassroots membership organization, AHEPA works to promote the Greek ideals of philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence within the community. Such principles can be appreciated by people of all backgrounds, and I commend AHEPA for inspiring and supporting generations of Americans.

AHEPA's work has touched people from all walks of life. The organization raised funds for U.S. war bonds during

World War II, and currently contributes more than \$2,000,000 each year to educational, medical, and other philanthropic causes. AHEPA's positive contributions stem from both the organization and the outstanding people involved. Members of AHEPA have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and have held positions in local, State, and Federal Government throughout the years.

As we honor AHEPA's many successes, we also celebrate the contributions of the more than 1 million Greek-Americans in this country, some 61,000 of whom live in my home State of New Jersey. The Hellenic community in America contributes daily to the economic, political and cultural fabric of this Nation, and the United States shares a close relationship with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. I look forward to working with my colleagues and AHEPA to strengthen America's relationship with our Hellenic friends.

I commend AHEPA's commitment to serving the United States and the Hellenic community. I congratulate them on their 85 years of advocacy, and I look forward to their bright future.●

RECOGNIZING T. DENNY SANFORD

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize T. Denny Sanford for his generosity recently represented by the gift of \$400 million to Sioux Valley Hospitals and Health System. This gift is the second largest donation to any medical institution since 2001 and will help Sioux Valley transform itself into a world-class research institution. In recognition of the donation and in honor of Mr. Sanford, the health care system has been renamed Sanford Health.

Since his birth in St. Paul, MN, in 1935, T. Denny Sanford has reached many outstanding milestones that deserve recognition and praise. After starting work at age 8 in his father's clothing distribution company, he spent most of his teen years selling his father's clothing to retail stores. He later graduated with a degree in psychology from the University of Minnesota and was recruited for a sales and marketing management position with Armstrong Cork Company.

In the 1960s, Mr. Sanford established a manufacturers' representative company and a regional distribution company. Then in 1971, he bought Contech, a specialty chemical company, from Sears & Roebuck and took it public the following year. After selling Contech in the 1980s, he created a venture capital fund to provide financing to young entrepreneurs. Out of the 28 companies he has financed, 18 have become public corporations.

In 1986, Mr. Sanford purchased United National Bank in Sioux Falls, SD. The bank, now named First Premier Bank, has expanded throughout South Dakota and includes Premier Bankcard Inc., which is a national leader in the credit card industry.

Although Mr. Sanford is well-known for his business achievements, he is even more distinguished for his philanthropy. He has donated millions to organizations that are close to his heart and even started the Sanford Foundation for charitable giving. In 2005, he gave over \$70.5 million to charitable causes in the United States and ranked 14th on the Chronicle of Philanthropy's list of America's most-generous donors. Additionally, in 2006, he was named to the Business Week Top 50 list of most-generous philanthropists in the United States.

Before his most recent donation, Mr. Sanford had contributed \$20 million to Sioux Valley for expansion with South Dakota's medical school and \$16 million for Sanford Children's Hospital, which plans to open in 2009. This recent gift of \$400 million will be used to achieve four major goals. These goals are to build 5 pediatric clinics around the country, to expand research, to build a health care campus with over 20 separate facilities, and to specialize in a specific line of medical research that will result in a cure.

T. Denny Sanford's generous gift to Sioux Valley will encourage prosperity and growth for South Dakota by generating an estimated 9,200 new jobs, adding approximately \$1.2 billion to the economy, drawing patients from around the world, and improving the wellness of our citizens. This donation will reach people from across the country and make South Dakota a leader and magnet in medical research.

T. Denny Sanford is a giving man with a passion for making a difference in the lives around him. He is even known to have a goal to "die broke." Because of his profound generosity and desire to help others, T. Denny Sanford's influence will be evident for many generations to come.

On behalf of the State of South Dakota, I am honored to rise and say: Thank you, Denny. Your significant gift will have a lasting influence not only on the people of South Dakota but on people throughout the world that will be affected by your selfless generosity.●

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 which were referred to the appropriate committees.

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