

taught Tlingit history, language and literature, retiring again in 1974.

You may have discovered that it is difficult to use the words retirement and Walter Soboleff in the same sentence. Every time Walter Soboleff retires he embarks on a new and ever more vital project.

Awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity by Dubuque University in 1952 and an honorary Doctor of Humanities by the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1968 he continues to serve as Pastor Emeritus of the Northern Lights United Church in Juneau and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. And lest I forget, he was the first Alaska Native to serve on the Alaska State Board of Education, where he served as chairman.

I think I can speak for the entire Senate in wishing the Reverend Doctor Walter Soboleff a happy 100th birthday. We extend our best wishes to Dr. Soboleff for continued good health and good works.●

RECOGNIZING LARRY G. SALYERS

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish today to congratulate Larry G. Salyers on his years of service as the manager of Tri-State Airport. Larry's hard work and continuous efforts have greatly enhanced this important regional airport as well as the community it serves. I am honored to have served with him and to share his story with you today.

In December 1975, Larry began working at the airport as Director of Operations and Security. He exhibited extraordinary dedication and hard work and, in March 1980 he was promoted to assistant airport manager. In 1981, he was named acting manager and by May 1982 he was appointed as the airport manager.

Under Larry's leadership, the airport has experienced many positive changes. He has overseen numerous structural renovations in Tri-State's terminal design and the conditions of the runways. At present, the airport is in the process of a major runway extension which will allow Tri-State to continue its reputation for excellence for many years to come. Larry has also diligently worked to ensure that the airport has the best maintenance vehicles and equipment possible.

Throughout his long service, Larry has seen Tri-State Airport through some of the aviation industry's hardest times. He has seen the deregulation of the industry which left many small communities across the country with significantly diminished air service. The September 11 terrorist attacks also had enormous repercussions throughout the aviation business as many airlines went into bankruptcy and new security measures were required at all the Nation's airports. Tri-State, like many small airports across the country, is often the first to feel the pain during trying times for the

aviation industry and the last to recover. Despite these challenges, Larry was able to successfully keep everything going, and I am pleased to say that in recent years, Tri-State Airport has seen significant financial and passenger growth. Between 2006 and 2007, passenger traffic increased by 62 percent, and the airport is currently producing its highest boarding numbers in over 13 years. Much of this success can be directly contributed to Larry's efforts to bring Allegiant's Air's low-fare flights to the airport. This accomplishment has helped Tri-State Airport to contribute roughly \$50 million annually to the local economy.

The hard work and dedication of Larry Salyers personifies the attitude of America and the true nature of West Virginians. When he retires, he will have left Tri-State Airport and the region around the city of Huntington better than it was when he first began his career there over 33 years ago.●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL HENRY A. "TREY" OBERING, III

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I honor a great American, a native of Birmingham, AL, LTG Henry A. "Trey" Obering III, on the occasion of his retirement after 35 years of dedicated service to our country. His passion for progressing missile defense has been imperative to its success and critical to our national security and the safety of our allies.

General Obering entered the Air Force in 1973 and received his pilot's wings in 1975. From there he went on to become a skilled air-to-air Top Gun-trained F-4E pilot and lead a very distinguished career. As an Air Force captain, General Obering was assigned to the Space Shuttle Program the year before the first orbiter flew into space. General Obering became an important part of this pioneering endeavor and participated in 15 space shuttle launches as a NASA orbiter project engineer.

I want to highlight the critical role General Obering played in developing, testing, and fielding this Nation's ballistic missile defense system. General Obering joined the Missile Defense Agency in December of 2001, the very month the United States announced its withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which had seriously impeded the development and deployment of missile defenses. He deserves credit for the tremendous progress our Nation has made in recent years in the field of missile defense. The advancement of all approaches to ballistic missile defense, BMD, including kinetic energy interceptor, KEI, ground-based mid-course defense, GMD, Aegis ballistic missile defense, and terminal high altitude area defense system, THAAD, can be attributed to the hard work of General Obering and those he has led.

Under General Obering's leadership, the Agency addressed current and

emerging ballistic missile threats by fielding missile defenses at an unprecedented pace to defend the United States, our deployed troops, and U.S. allies and friends around the world. During his tenure as director, the Agency emplaced ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California, developed and deployed missile defenses to defeat shorter-range threats to our troops and our allies, and successfully modified 18 U.S. Navy Aegis warships to give U.S. military commanders a highly effective regional ballistic missile defense capability.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of our missile defense to our friends, our allies, and, importantly, those that would mean us harm, General Obering presided over a series of historic flight tests of our ballistic missile defense system and spearheaded efforts to train the warfighters employing the system. These tests proved to our allies that we are prepared to defend ourselves and our allies and will pursue technologies to further reduce and eventually eliminate the threat of attack by ballistic missiles.

General Obering has pursued an aggressive development program to address future threats, such as boost phase defenses, space tracking and surveillance, and technologies to destroy multiple threat objects using a single interceptor.

General Obering recognized early on the importance of working with our international partners and he led the expansion of the Department's missile defense cooperative activities. He pursued bilateral programs with Japan, Israel, the Czech Republic, and Poland, among others, as well as multilateral programs with NATO. Working closely with the State Department and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, General Obering's vision and personal engagement resulted in a broad consensus among international leaders, combatant commanders, and the international communities on the growing need to establish long-range missile defenses in Europe.

General Obering has overseen the expansion of the Missile Defense Agency. During his tenure, while executing all of the activities in one of the most important programs in the Department of Defense, the Agency successfully underwent unprecedented organizational changes. Thanks to his guidance, this transition is proceeding smoothly.

General Obering's leadership proved critical during two real-world crises. During North Korea's provocative missile launches in July 2006, General Obering oversaw the Agency's input to the Nation's strategic response and provided situational awareness to the President, combatant commanders, and the missile defense community. His assurances that the Nation had the option of a responsive missile defense capability, had it been necessary, contributed greatly to the maintenance of international stability. And in February 2008, General Obering also led the

Agency's participation in a successful national joint mission to destroy an out-of-control U.S. satellite laden with toxic hydrazine fuel.

General Obering has consistently exemplified a true dedication to our Nation and its ideals. His vision and drive enabled the Missile Defense Agency to field a truly worldwide ballistic missile defense capability that will be a part of this Nation's defensive infrastructure for decades to come. Our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to General Obering for his outstanding leadership and service. I am proud to express my appreciation for his service.●

TRIBUTE TO JAMES HERMAN FAULKNER, SR.

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to James Herman "Jimmy" Faulkner, Sr., a friend, who passed away last month. "Mr. Jimmy" to the scores who knew and admired him, was a great Alabamian who, during his life, served as a mayor, State senator, candidate for governor, newspaper publisher, businessman, and philanthropist.

Born in Lamar County, AL, the son of a schoolteacher and a farmer, he lost his father at the age of 12. He attended college in Tennessee and the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri. At age 20, he purchased The Baldwin Times newspaper and moved to Baldwin County, AL, where he lived his life and became one of, if not the most, well known of its citizens.

Mr. Jimmy served as the Mayor of Bay Minette, AL, from 1941 to 1943, when he was called to serve in World War II as a first lieutenant, pilot, and flight instructor. Following that service, he represented Baldwin County in the Alabama State Senate, where he became an advocate for education and the State's teachers.

He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Alabama Christian College in Montgomery, and as a testament to his success in putting that institution in a position of financial stability and his personal generosity, it was renamed Faulkner University in his honor in 1985. Remarkably, because he was instrumental in bringing Faulkner State University, a community college, to Baldwin County, that State university is also named for him. Few persons, if any, have had both a private and State university named in their honor.

Mr. Jimmy believed in Baldwin County. He brought business to the county. A friend of his, Scott Hunter, told me that Jimmy told him in 1990 to buy all the real estate he could in Baldwin County because it would double in population by 2010. And it has. Jimmy was able to predict economic, demographic, and political changes with uncanny accuracy. He lived to know 14 Alabama governors and he wrote, "We have had some good ones and some not so good. Because of my longevity, it has been my privilege, and usually my

pleasure, to have known personally, and been on friendly terms, with every governor back to Bibb Graves."

During his lifetime, he served as president and founder of two insurance businesses, and owner and publisher of three newspapers in Baldwin County. He was the recipient of more than 35 awards including 8 honorary doctorate degrees.

Jimmy Faulkner was a great man, and a world traveler who visited over 100 countries during his lifetime. He had a unique view of the entire world and the part of it he occupied, and he used that view and his knowledge to make Alabama and our Nation a better place. Those of us who knew him are all better for having shared his interesting life and benefitted from his brilliant mind.●

COMMENDING THE TOWN OF BELK, ALABAMA

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I wish to tell you about the small town of Belk located in Fayette County, AL. While having a relatively small population—205 in 2007—Belk has an abundance of community spirit and people willing to give of their time and energy to make it a better place to live. They exemplify the "can-do, cooperative attitude which made America great.

I visited Belk in August and was inspired by their attitude and approach. They feel greatly blessed to obtain any assistance, and use it along with their own efforts to maximize the benefits to Belk. They have a Volunteer Fire Department with 15 active members that purchased a new fire truck in 2001 with a grant and have since purchased 2 additional pumper-service trucks.

In 2004, they built a fine new Community Center using a grant from the State of Alabama and a loan of \$48,000. Holding a number of fundraising activities, including a gospel singing, silent auction, golf tournament, and bluegrass festival, they have reduced that loan balance to \$15,230. Every second Friday night they have a bluegrass festival at the center and volunteers donate food to be served in the kitchen. All revenues go to pay on the center's debt and everyone has a wonderful time.

In addition, in 2005 they constructed a community storm shelter using a small grant of \$52,000 from FEMA. The design work was donated by a local contractor, and local tradesmen donated their time to do plumbing, electrical and water line work.

This past spring they built a new outdoor stage using donations from corporations and local businesses for the design and materials, and the labor of local volunteers for the construction.

This is the kind of volunteer effort, self-help, and love of community that I grew up knowing. It is still a common trait of small communities in Alabama, but, frankly, is being lost too often today. Belk has taken on the task of making their piece of America

a better place to live. I would like to commend Mayor Ronald Waldrop, who sets the example, and every citizen who has volunteered their efforts to the greater good. I am truly honored to represent such people. They are men, women, and youth of faith, integrity, and hard work. Such are the people who have made America great.●

HONORING ALVINA ELIZABETH SCHWAB PETTIGREW

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today, out of a sense of pride and gratitude, I wish to recognize the remarkable yet unheralded work of a group of women who quite literally saved innumerable lives and made a notable contribution to the Allied victory during World War II. One might wonder what has taken us so long to honor a group of women whose efforts date back over 65 years. The reason is that the nature of their work was so secret, the women were warned that they could be shot for treason if they ever revealed their activities. And so they didn't. As a result, they never received the recognition they deserved.

I am speaking of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service), who played an instrumental role in cracking the complex codes that the Germans used to radio instructions from German headquarters to the submarines that were sinking Allied ships. And when I said I was speaking out of a sense of pride, it is because Alvina Elizabeth Schwab Pettigrew from my home State of South Dakota was among this determined group of heroes.

Alvina was born in 1919 on a farm near Mina, SD. She completed grades 1–8 in a one-room schoolhouse and graduated from Mina High School. She received a scholarship to Grand Island Business College in Nebraska in 1936. But in 1942, this everyday American embarked on a journey that would call her to do extraordinary things in the service of our Nation.

Alvina enlisted in the WAVES in October 1942 and was sent to Stillwater, OK, for 3 months of training. Following graduation, orders arrived for her to report to the Naval Communications Annex in Washington, DC. In nondescript buildings now housing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, more than 600 WAVES labored secretly in support of the war effort. German U-boats had been sinking Allied ships at alarming rates. Between January and March 1942, the Germans sank 216 ships off the east coast alone. But the Americans, improving on cryptological breakthroughs by the Poles and the British, finally cracked the German codes. The WAVES were the ones who actually operated the machines that deciphered the codes. They had the German U-boat fleet fighting for its life. The WAVES ran the machines around the clock. The noise was head-splitting, the summer heat sweltering. But they forged ahead, knowing that American lives were at stake.