

# TRIBUTE TO NELDA BARTON-COLLINGS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend, Nelda Barton-Collings. Mrs. Barton-Collings is a well-respected Kentuckian and businesswoman, recently retired after serving 28 years on the Republican National Committee.

Mrs. Barton-Collings resides in Corbin, KY, where she was married to Dr. Harold Bryan Barton. After the passing of Dr. Barton she took on the ownership and operation of his two nursing homes. At the same time, she took night classes to become a licensed nursing home administrator. She has since grown those two nursing homes into numerous nursing homes and banks throughout eastern Kentucky.

Mrs. Barton-Collings used her vast business skills to serve her community, State, and eventually her Nation by committing to public service. She started out as a precinct chair, and then rose to become Kentucky's national committeewoman for the GOP. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan appointed her to the Federal Council on Aging. In 1990, she was the first woman elected chairman of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce while serving on the President's Council on Rural America and the National Advisory Council to Small Business Administration, through an appointment by President George H.W. Bush.

She has long been a voice of great leadership on the Republican National Committee, where she was the first woman from Kentucky to address the RNC and call the meeting to order. Her position gave her opportunities to extend democratic ideas and philosophy to the former Soviet Union. She and 40 other political and business professionals volunteered to visit the Soviet Union in 1990 to discuss the foundations of a democratic government. "They want freedom so badly; we hoped that we have helped them in some way," she said of her experience in the Soviet Union.

Nelda has given the good people of Kentucky and this Nation over 28 years of public service, and I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this committed public servant. The News Journal in Corbin, KY, published an article highlighting her accomplishments and what a champion she is for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the News Journal, May 28, 2008]  
LONGTIME SUPPORTER HONORED WITH  
PORTRAIT, CLASSROOM

On Sunday, May 18, friends and family of Nelda Barton-Collings gathered at Cumberland Inn on the campus of University of the Cumberlands to recognize this extraordinary woman at a luncheon given in her honor.

As Dr. Jim Taylor, UC president said, "Today we honor a lady who has made, and

who continues to make a significant and substantial contribution to our area, to our state, and, indeed, to our nation. Dr. Nelda Barton-Collings truly is a legend in her own time." After the luncheon, the assembly proceeded to the Hutton School of Business, where a portrait of Mrs. Barton-Collings adorns a special classroom, which bears her name, in recognition of her faithfulness and support of UC.

A native of Providence, Webster County, Kentucky, Barton-Collings attended Western Kentucky University for two years before she entered the Norton Memorial Infirmary in Louisville, where she became a certified medical technologist. In Corbin, as the wife of Dr. Harold Bryan Barton, she became active in local organizations and held leadership positions in church, political, civic, medical, youth, educational and women's groups.

After Dr. Barton's death, she took over his business, which consisted of two nursing homes, and completed the Williamsburg Nursing Home, then under construction. At that time, she enrolled in night classes at University of the Cumberlands and later became a Kentucky Licensed Nursing Home Administrator. She and her business partner continued to build or buy a total of eight long-term healthcare facilities in Eastern Kentucky. A business woman ahead of her time, Barton-Collings has owned banks, pharmacies, rental properties, weekly newspapers, a cinema, and several other businesses. The newspapers, long-term care facilities and banks have won state awards and recognitions.

In 1990, Barton-Collings became the first woman elected chairman of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. In 1982, she received a Presidential appointment from President Ronald Reagan to the Federal Council on Aging, where she served until 1987. From 1990-92, she served on the President's Council on Rural America and the National Advisory Council to Small Business Administration, appointed by President George H.W. Bush.

As an active member of the Republican Party for more than 50 years, Barton-Collings moved up the ranks from a precinct chair to Republican National Committee member representing Kentucky, a position she held for 28 years. Elected vice chair for an eight-year term and secretary of the Republican National Committee for another eight years, Barton-Collings earned the honor of calling to order the Republican National Convention in 1996.

But, this was not her first convention appearance, as she was the first woman from Kentucky to present an address at a Republican National Convention, when, in Detroit, Michigan, in 1980, she spoke on "The Business of Caring for the Elderly." During her tenure on the Republican National Committee, she was a charter member and appointed secretary-treasurer of the National Institute on International Affairs, and she served on the Foreign Affairs Committee, which allowed her to travel extensively to foreign countries to promote democracy.

Recently honored by the Kentucky Commission on Women as a "Kentucky Woman Remembered" for her many achievements, Barton-Collings's portrait now hangs in the Kentucky State Capitol.

Through the years, she has received numerous other awards and honors, including an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from University of the Cumberlands, as well as the Kentucky Medical Association's Outstanding Layperson Award, the John Sherman Cooper Distinguished Service Award from Kentucky Young Republicans and the Dwight David Eisenhower Award.

Currently, the chairman of the board of Bretara, LLC and Tri County Cineplex, LLC,

Barton-Collings also serves on the Kentucky Economic Development Partnership Board; as secretary of the University of Kentucky Center on Aging; and as chair of University of the Cumberlands Board of Visitors.

Married to Dr. Jack Collings of Owensboro, Kentucky from March of 1992 until his death in 2000, Barton-Collings is the mother of five, grandmother of ten, step-grandmother of twelve, and great-grandmother of two.

Dr. Jim Taylor, University of the Cumberlands president, said, "It is entirely appropriate that Mrs. Barton-Collings's picture hangs in this room where our students will study business principles and practices, for she certainly exemplifies the ideal of a true businesswoman."

Through her remarkable career and her stellar service to her fellow humans, she is a role model for our aspiring business leaders, and we are honored that she is an alumna of University of the Cumberlands, Nelda, as we say here in these beautiful mountains, "You do us proud."

## WEST VIRGINIA DAY 2008

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as a Senator from West Virginia, I wish to pay tribute to our State on the commemoration of our admittance into the Union on this day in 1863—and to honor the nearly 2 million people who are proud to call it home.

When people think of West Virginia their thoughts turn to our mountains, our rolling green hills, and rivers. It is a place of immense natural beauty and scenic wonders. Still others may think of our most abundant natural resource, coal, or even our steel. Every fall, many college sports fans turn their thoughts to our incredible football teams.

West Virginia, without question, is all of these things. But what truly sets us apart from other places is our people. West Virginians are the hardest working, nicest people you all ever have the chance to meet. They are the reason that so many people choose to come back again and again to our State. They are real people who possess an abundant spirit of hope, optimism, and authenticity. More than anything else, they are the heart and soul of our great State.

So it seems only fitting on this West Virginia Day that we pause for a few moments and think about the lasting contributions that our coal miners, steel workers, teachers, public servants, and next door neighbors have made not just on our State, but on our Nation.

West Virginia is rooted in rich culture. Our Appalachian heritage is immortalized in song and prose. It is a place where the pioneering spirit is still alive and well. Our communities are not just bound together by ZIP Codes but in sharing responsibility to care for and look out for each other. We are still a place where neighbor helping neighbor is a way of life, and our children are raised to honor their family and to love our country.

West Virginia is place where values such as compassion, self-reliance, loyalty, love, unselfishness, and faith are both timely and timeless.

This is the West Virginia that embraced me and later my family. These are the people who helped to give me a true sense of purpose and shape me deep into my core.

This Senator is incredibly proud of our coal miners that do the hardwork of mining the coal that provides the Nation with its electricity and of our steel workers who forged the tracks for our Nation's railroads, the girders for our skyscrapers, and the bridges that span the country; I am proud of those West Virginians who are now building planes, trucks, and doing cutting-edge research into disease prevention and biometrics; of those West Virginians who have dedicated themselves to be our communities' guardians as first-responders, or in the National Guard; and of those in our State who have entered into public service—especially our teachers—and of those rural health care professionals who provide essential and life-saving services to some of our most vulnerable.

And of course, our entire State is tremendously proud of those West Virginians who have earned the honored title of veteran.

Emblazoned on our State flag is our motto, "Mountaineers Are Always Free." It is in that spirit that West Virginians have always answered the call of duty in our country's time of need.

Earlier this week, the Senate honored Frank Buckles, the last surviving soldier from World War I, who now lives in Charles Town. As a teenager, he went to war to defeat the Kaiser, and he was imprisoned by the Japanese for 3½. He is truly a living legend, a touchstone to our past, and we are so proud to have him in WV.

West Virginia's sons and daughters have fought on the Korean peninsula, in the jungles of Vietnam, the mountains of Afghanistan, and the desert of Iraq—and in conflicts in between.

We always have a special place in our heart for our Gold Star Mothers—and for those who gave their last full measure of devotion and now rest in fields that were once made infamous by war.

I could go on and say many more flattering things about our beloved State, our people, and our future, but as West Virginians we know that we are truly blessed. Perhaps that is why humility is one of our greatest virtues, because we know that no matter what challenges we face, as a State we will stand together, harness our "can-do" spirit, and overcome them. That is what we do. We are fighters, in every sense of the word.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT TYLER E. PICKETT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute and express our Nation's deepest gratitude to a remarkable young soldier and his family. I was saddened to receive word last week that on June 8, 2008, Army SSG Tyler E. Pickett of Saratoga, WY, was

killed in the line of duty while serving our country in the war on terrorism. Staff Sergeant Pickett died from injuries he sustained when his unit came under attack by enemy forces using improvised explosive devices in Kirkuk Province, Iraq. He was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq, and had also served a tour in Afghanistan.

Staff Sergeant Pickett served with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, of the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, NY. He moved to Wyoming at the age of 14 and joined the Army shortly after his graduation from Saratoga High School in 1999. His mother said that serving his country in the Army was always a part of his plan. He came from a family with a strong history of military service, and he knew what he wanted to do. He made friends everywhere he went, and it didn't matter where he was—he was always touching someone's life. He looked forward to retiring from the service one day and spending his life in the mountains of Wyoming.

It is because of Tyler Pickett that we continue to live safe and free. America's men and women who answer the call to service and wear our Nation's uniform deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they willingly bear. They put everything on the line everyday, and because of them and their families, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

This past weekend, Americans celebrated Flag Day. Like so many before him, Staff Sergeant Pickett fought under the flag of the United States of America. He fought and died for the Republic for which it stands. Words cannot express the gratitude we owe him.

In the book of John, Jesus said that, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friend." SSG Tyler Pickett gave his life, that last full measure of devotion, for you, me, and every single American. He gave his life defending his country and its people, and we honor him for this selfless sacrifice.

Staff Sergeant Pickett is survived by a loving family including his wife Kristin and their children, his mother Sheri Peterson and father Ed Pickett. He is also survived by his brothers and sisters in arms of the U.S. Army. We say goodbye to devoted family man and an American soldier. Our Nation pays its deepest respect to SSG Tyler E. Pickett for his courage, his love of country, and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life and he remains a hero in death. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation, is proud of him. May God bless him and his family and welcome him into his home on high.

#### ETHIOPIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, Ethiopia has increasingly been an active participant in the international com-

munity and a leader on the African continent—as a charter member of the United Nations, a cofounder of what are now the African Union and Inter-governmental Authority on Development, and a key partner in combating international terrorism. After decades, and some would say centuries of civil strife, the 1994 Constitution and election of the coalition Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF, in 1995 seemed to herald the beginning of an era of peace, democracy, and development. Efforts to reform the economy and political dynamics, while slow, reversed the devastating impact of the Derg and gave the people of Ethiopia some hope that a robust democracy was really taking root. In fact, in the runup to the 2005 elections, there was a deliberate and significant opening of political space—which included broad media coverage of opposition parties, relatively unimpeded access for opposition candidates to their constituents, and live televised debates between opposition candidates and ruling party incumbents. But in the aftermath of that May 2005 election—which ended in a deeply flawed process and aggressive tactics against the opposition—the ruling party has ratcheted up its rhetoric while backtracking significantly on its commitment to democracy. A newly proposed bill, called the Charities and Societies Proclamation, is the most recent indication of this backsliding.

Indeed, for years, the U.S. State Department has reported "widespread human rights abuses" in its annual country report on Ethiopia. Among the most consistent violations listed are the intimidation, beating, abuse, and arbitrary arrest and detention by Government security forces of journalists, opposition supporters, union leaders, and others who dare to challenge the ruling party. Some of the more egregious examples associated with the growing opposition began in 2005 and include the arrest and prosecution for capital offenses of 131 major opposition leaders and the arbitrary detention of 30,000 to 50,000 civilians without charge. The ruling party also forcibly closed opposition political offices that same year and kept them closed through the eve of local elections this past April. Such conduct is a clear violation of regional and international human rights laws, to which Ethiopia is a signatory, and directly contradicts the country's own Constitution, still only 12 years old.

Over the past year, I have become increasingly concerned by reports coming out of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia regarding military attacks on civilians and Government blockades of essential humanitarian and commercial supplies. National and international aid organizations with field missions in the area describe security forces burning villages and Government officials ordering entire village populations to move to specific "resettlement" locations that lack sufficient