

Recognizing the enormous talent and potential in him, the Navy rewarded Captain Nowell with command at sea, entrusting him with the leadership of the guided-missile destroyer USS *Porter* and her crew from April 2002 to December 2003. During this time, Captain Nowell was called upon to lead his crew into combat, surge-deploying for Operation Iraqi Freedom into the Fifth and Sixth Fleet Areas of Responsibility where the *Porter* conducted Tomahawk strikes and Theater Ballistic Missile Defense. The crew of the USS *Porter* earned numerous accolades during Captain Nowell's command, including the coveted Battle "E" Award.

Captain Nowell's success as a war-time commander at sea ultimately led to command an entire Destroyer Squadron and to assume the role of the maritime force commander for Joint Task Force Lebanon. However, the most telling vote of confidence in his ability to lead would surely be his selection to command the inaugural Africa Partnership Station deployment, a multinational force of ships, submarines, aircraft, expeditionary partnership teams, and land-based forces charged with building partnership capacity throughout the African continent.

Today, we say goodbye to Captain Nowell after nearly 2 years of extraordinary service as the Navy's lead liaison to the U.S. Senate. During this time he led 15 congressional and staff delegations to 30 countries, often being requested by name to facilitate visits to combat zones and fleet locations for the most senior-ranking delegations. As he departs for his next challenging assignment as the head of surface warfare assignments at Naval Personnel Command, I honor him for his service to our country, his inspirational leadership, and his irrepressible drive. I call upon my colleagues to join me in wishing "fair winds and following seas" to Captain Nowell, his wife Jo, and his children Katherine, Stephen, and John III, who will be following his father's legacy as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy.●

ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY AFFILIATED PLANS

● Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, a few months ago we completed debate on one of the most significant reforms of American health care in decades. As a result of that work we will see over 30 million Americans who haven't had access to health insurance gain that access. The law that we passed helps all Americans, but especially the most vulnerable, gain access to quality, affordable health insurance. Today I rise to recognize an organization that for 10 years has been similarly working to provide care for our Nation's most vulnerable citizens.

The Association for Community Affiliated Plans, ACAP, is a national trade organization representing 51 community-based health plans in 25

States, together covering over 7 million people. Its nonprofit Safety Net Health Plan members provide health coverage through public insurance programs, primarily Medicaid, Medicare, and the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, delivering desperately needed health services to low-income and vulnerable Americans who would otherwise be uninsured. Coordinating with State and local governments, community groups and health care providers, ACAP plans, by delivering the services made possible by Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP, serve as a safety net for those who fall through the gaps in a system that largely relies on employer-provided or privately purchased coverage.

In 2000, 17 safety net plans, often started by community health centers who were serving uninsured and Medicaid patients, came together to form ACAP. In the ensuing decade ACAP plans have grown from covering 1 million people in 2000 to 7 million today. These plans, like Children's Mercy Family Health Partners in my home State of Missouri, remain deeply rooted in their communities, serving those who need help the most. Over 55,000 of my constituents receive their insurance from Children's Mercy Family Health Partners as they provide a critical safety net that makes a difference in Missouri.

I commend the Association for Community Affiliated Plans and its members for their service to our Nation's underserved populations, as well as congratulate them on their 10th anniversary of supporting the Nation's nonprofit Safety Net Health Plans.●

RECOGNIZING U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY CLASS OF 1970

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I wish to express our deep gratitude for the inspirational leadership and outstanding service to our nation by the U.S. Naval Academy class of 1970. It has been an honor to support the Naval Academy in my capacity as a Senator from Maryland and as a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Board of Visitors for over 20 years. The Naval Academy has a proud history of developing excellence in education and personal character of our past and present, and continues to prepare and train the future leaders of our nation. I am so proud of the class of 1970 for exemplifying the high quality standards of the academy.

The Naval Academy class of 1970 started their journey as midshipmen in 1966, during the height of the Vietnam war. They volunteered for the job knowing that after graduation their roles as Navy and Marine Corps officers would be during difficult and demanding times for the U.S. military. That it was such a challenging time for our nation and our military did not deter them, it made them more determined. Their service and extraordinary spirit has enriched and sustained our Nation. I come to the floor today to ensure

that their sacrifice and patriotism is remembered and celebrated.

From their graduation day on, the class of 1970 set a very high standard. Their accomplishments and careers are impressive. Members of this class fought valiantly in the Vietnam war, the gulf war and other conflicts during the last 40 years. They served in the air, on land and at sea. Members of the class of 1970 have served at the very highest level of our military. They served as commanding officers of warships, combatant commanders, and as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Twenty-four members of this class achieved flag or general officer rank.

Since their early years as midshipmen, they have given of themselves not just on the battlefield but also in their communities on the home front. Whether volunteering at the Boys Club and Big Brothers programs as midshipmen, teaching at our nation's military colleges or volunteering in their community they have generously contributed to the support of academics, ethics, character development, and leadership of our next generation.

Even more extraordinary than their time in uniform is the amount the members of this class have continued to give back since their military service ended. This remarkable class has continued to lead by example. They have worked to educate our children, support defense agencies, and to promote community services. Their accomplishments and achievements have reached the highest levels of government, industry, science, law, medicine, education, and religious vocations. Many have continued to fight for our freedom in their roles as leaders of corporations that are vital to our national defense. I admire the spirit of service and dedication to making our country and the world a better place.

The U.S. Naval Academy class of 1970 exemplifies the Navy ethos of "Honor, Courage, and Commitment." These values have defined their commitment and dedication to the United States. Like many others before and after them, they have sacrificed long deployments, separation from loved ones, tests and trials that most Americans can't imagine. Some even sacrificed their life doing their duty. I know that new generations of midshipmen and future Naval and Marine Corps officers will be inspired by the rich heritage of service they have passed down to them.

As the U.S. Naval Academy class of 1970 gathers to mark forty years of service to our nation and to the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Army, and Naval Academy, it is with great pleasure that I offer my gratitude for their service to our country.●

TRIBUTE TO MARY A. FRANCIS

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to an Alaskan who has devoted most of her adult life to education in Alaska. Dr. Mary A.

Francis will retire today, June 30, 2010, from her positions as the executive director of both the Alaska Council of School Administrators and the Association of Alaska School Administrators. Her leadership, advocacy, encouragement, and experience will be missed.

Mary's career in education began as an English teacher. Over the course of time, her skills and dedication brought her to different jobs in communities across Alaska. Her first assignment as an administrator was as curriculum director for the Lower Kuskokwim School District, a district that includes some of Alaska's most remote villages along the Kuskokwim River in southwest Alaska. Later, as assistant superintendent in Fairbanks, she experienced life "in the big city"—a comparative term as Alaskan cities go. The bulk of her career, though, has been spent in southeast Alaska, as superintendent in Wrangell, a 12-year tenure as Petersburg's superintendent, and most recently 8 years in Juneau serving Alaska's school administrators.

It was in Petersburg where Mary's competence was recognized on the national stage when she was selected by her peers and recognized by the American Association of School Administrators as Alaska's Superintendent of the Year in 2000.

At the time of her retirement from Petersburg, Mary briefly considered spending her remaining years playing golf and enjoying life. She quickly realized that she would be bored stiff and accepted the position as executive director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators in 2002. This is not an easy job, as Mary was asked to represent the diverse perspectives of superintendents and other central office administrators, university professors, elementary and secondary principals, and school business officials. As executive director, Mary was also asked to assist these diverse member organizations to accomplish their mission: to provide leadership for and promotion of a collective professional voice in setting the educational agenda for Alaska. Throughout her tenure, Mary provided inspiration, authentic understanding, advocacy, and encouragement to the council as a whole as well as to its individual members.

Mary Francis has done this difficult job with grace, tact, firmness, and a sense of humor for 8 years. Mary noted, in announcing her resignation, "There is never a good time to make a decision to leave a position. However, ACSA's financial position is sound and with a working Strategic Plan in place, the organization is on solid footing now and for the future."

ACSA Board President Pete Swanson remarked, "Dr. Francis' resignation has been accepted with reluctance by the Board. She will be sorely missed as she provides just the right balance of oversight for our board and the AASA board for whom she also serves in the Executive Director capacity. Her abil-

ity to advocate for and represent the school administrators of Alaska with the Legislature and many statewide committee forums is considerable. Dr. Francis leaves a legacy of working hard for the concerns and issues of Alaska's school administrators."

On behalf of the countless educators whose lives she has touched, I extend my gratitude to Dr. Mary A. Francis for her selfless dedication to advancing the cause of education in Alaska and I wish her a happy, healthy, and exciting retirement.●

REMEMBERING CEDRIC ERROLL FLOWERS, JR.

● Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Cedric Erroll Flowers, Jr., my dear friend who passed away on May 25, 2010.

Cedric was born and raised in Sumter County, AL, where he attended Demopolis High School. There, he developed an interest in English literature and world history, as well as a passion for music. He devoted his ample talents to the piano and the clarinet, the latter of which he played for the Demopolis High School concert band. This is remarkable given his failing, and eventual loss of, eyesight. Despite his blindness, Cedric excelled in high school.

Following graduation from Demopolis High School in 1951, Cedric enrolled at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind where he pursued his love of music. Without eyes to guide him, Cedric studied and mastered the art of piano tuning by ear. It was also at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind where he met Sue Akel, whom he would later marry in 1962.

After earning his degree from the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Cedric took his newly acquired skills to Savannah, GA, where he cared for all the pianos within the Chatham County and Savannah City Schools. In 1954, he came back to Alabama where he performed this same invaluable service for the concert series program at my alma mater, the University of Alabama.

In 1964, Cedric opened his own business, Flowers Piano Company. Known as the "People Who Know Pianos," Flowers Piano Company began as a specialty piano retail store and a service-based enterprise. For many years, Cedric, who was also instrumental in founding the Tuscaloosa Music Merchants Association, served as the exclusive local dealer of high-end pianos in the Tuscaloosa area. As his business flourished, Cedric expanded the store's inventory to include band instruments and sheet music and offer beginner piano lessons.

Cedric's passion for tending to pianos did not cease with the establishment of his company. His skills as a Master Concert Tuner/Technician served the Piano Technicians Guild and the National Association of Music Merchants well. In fact, while continuing to serve

and provide equipment to the University of Alabama, he worked with artists and musical groups who performed in and around Tuscaloosa and Birmingham. His expertise and precision benefitted music and entertainment throughout Tuscaloosa and Jefferson Counties.

Cedric also served the Tuscaloosa community as a deacon at the First Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa and a volunteer for many music and art-related endeavors and causes.

A faithful member of the University of Alabama family, Cedric never missed game day play-by-play radio coverage of the Crimson Tide. I can only imagine how happy he was to hear the sweet sound of the Million Dollar Band playing "Yea, Alabama" in the Rose Bowl following the Tide's BCS National Championship victory this past January.

I was fortunate to have known Cedric during his time here, and I mourn his passing. He is loved and respected throughout our community and will be missed by his beloved wife of 47 years, Sue, and his daughter, Marcia. I ask the entire Senate to join me in recognizing and honoring the life of my friend, Cedric Erroll Flowers, Jr.●

RECOGNIZING GERALD PELLETIER INC.

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, this summer, thousands of Mainers and Americans will be drawn to the town of Millinocket to enjoy the natural beauty of Maine's outdoors. This year, however, they will also have the opportunity to enjoy the bountiful meals provided by the Pelletier family at the Pelletier Loggers Family Restaurant. Besides serving up hearty Maine cooking to locals and tourists alike, the Pelletier family performs the herculean task of delivering many thousands of cords of firewood each year to the people of Maine through their extensive logging operations. As such, I rise today to honor the Pelletier family and their small business, Gerald Pelletier, Inc., which has continued to embrace the spirit of entrepreneurship by providing critical jobs to rural Mainers as well as serving the people of our State for over 50 years.

What began as a log hauling operation in 1954 by a father that wanted to put extra food on the table during the winter months, eventually developed into a successful logging operation employing family members and dozens of Mainers alike. Gerald Pelletier Inc., produces over 200,000 cords of firewood each year, much of which is hauled over the Golden Road, a treacherous logging highway cutting through the Maine woods to the Canadian border. The company's logging operation is carried out with the utmost care thanks to the training many of the workers receive through the Certified Logging Professionals program, which trains and certifies loggers in safe, efficient, and environmentally sound logging practices. The company is also a